

**ONINO
BASIC
PLAYS**

by

Henmar Ruskin

ONINO

BASIC PLAYS

by

HENMAR RUSKIN

International Onino Champion

GABRIEL-NEALEY COMPANY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Copyright 1942
by
Gabriel-Nealey Company

CONTENTS

<i>The Fundamentals.....</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>The Terminology.....</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>The Play.....</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>The Leading.....</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>The Basic Formations.....</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Thirty-Three Basic Plays.....</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Some Practice Problems.....</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Official Rules.....</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>50</i>

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ONINO

The object in playing any game is to win at it, and to play and win one must have a knowledge of the basic plays involved. This is more important in some games than in others but in Onino it is far more important than in any other game.

Onino is not a gambling game, —no more so than bridge, backgammon, or other popular games— but, like with all other games, many players feel they must play it for a tenth-of-a-cent-per-point or some other wager to give it proper zest. This is not true. The very need of matching wits and the dependence wholly on skill and mental alacrity that the play of Onino demands makes it always the one game that's never dull and is ever entertaining and intriguing on a basis of friendly competition alone. It is purely a skill game and one that furnishes its zest by its taxing of and challenging of your mental capabilities.

Bridge and all other card games are as much a matter of luck as of skill, due to the elements of chance presented by the shuffle and dealing of cards. Backgammon and all other dice games bring luck foremost due to the element of chance that's presented in the shake and roll of the dice. Even dominoes, mahjongg, etc., are more dependent upon luck than skill, due to the element of chance one encounters in the shuffle and draws of the tiles. Chess, checkers, and other such games in which no shuffle or deal or dice throws are involved, most often are skill games but the degree of skill re-

quired by each varies directly with the number of possible plays and moves in the game. It is for this reason that proficiency at chess requires so much greater skill than at checkers —and it is by this same reason (and one other) that proficiency at Onino requires far greater skill than chess or any other known game.

Though in Onino there are only eleven basic formations from which all Oninos are accomplished there are uncountable variations of each of them. To give you some idea of this— *There are exactly 71 simple basic double play variations of the basic formations; there are 480 basic two-way play variations; there are 34,009 basic two-line combination play variations; there are over 500,000 triple play and three-way play variations; there are over 60,000,000 multiple-line combination play variations; there are quadruple plays, four, five and six-way plays, two-play, three-play, and even four and five play scrambles, etc., that bring to more than 500,000,000 the total of these few here mentioned.* Add to this the pairing of plays, the complication of other pieces on the board, plus a criss-cross of your and your opponent's plays and the figure goes way beyond a billion billion. In addition *every formation (or play) in Onino looks different from all of the four sides of the board. So different in fact that each play is really not just one but four plays.* Considering these facts and the uncountable multiple variations they thus present we soon reach to such numerical computing as is beyond that of even astronomical estimates.

These figures and facts were recited for no other reason than to convince you of the skill or mental alacrity required by Onino —and to at the same time convince you of the ridiculousness plus futility of trying to become proficient through a

memorizing of plays. You never could memorize so great a number and unless you did memorize all of them you might find yourself consistently defeated by the ones you hadn't memorized.

The important thing is to learn and to memorize the 11 basic formations from which an Onino can be completed. They are the key to winning or to not losing and if a player will learn those 11 basic formations and learn to recognize them from no matter which side of the board they face he is then able to guard against his opponent formulating those designs —and if he does that he can be certain of not losing for every double play, two-way play, combination play or any other play that assures an Onino is but a pattern variation built for one of the basic formations *and can always be blocked if the blocking mark is placed at the key point of the formation in time.*

To do this you must not only be able to recognize the basic formations and their variations when used but must also recognize them *while they are in the making.* In other words, *foresee* them. This cannot be emphasized too strongly because no matter how well you know the basic formations unless you can foresee them or recognize them in an uncompleted stage you can never win at Onino —for recognizing them after they are made is too late— *once made, they can't be beat!*

From the very beginning you should on every occasion take cognizance of one fact and remember it always as you play: *In playing Onino it isn't your opponent that defeats you, —it is your own carelessness and lack of foresight!*

You will greatly diminish the chances those faults afford your opponent if the following easy to remember fundamentals are always observed, —or

are at least kept foremost in your mind:

A. When your opponent makes an open three, or an unblocked three, you must block it or steal the lead. If you do not do this he will make the three into an Onino four on his next play, —and **an Onino four cannot be blocked from an Onino.**

B. For that reason *you must never allow an opponent to make two open threes (double play) at once* —because then, though you blocked one line he would make an Onino four of the other.

C. And for the same reason, *you must never allow an opponent to make two blocked rows at one time (two-way play) or a blocked row plus an open three at one time (combination play)* because then as you blocked one of them he would complete that left unblocked.

D. Therefore, the only time you dare allow an open three, a double play set-up, two-way play set-up, or combination play set-up to be left unblocked *is when you can take or hold the lead for yourself with fours.*

E. But don't forget —if you have not made an Onino by the time your fours run out, *you must block* —or lose the game.

F. And *you must block scrambles at the key point always for no other block will head off all plays.*

These fundamentals are the whole key to not losing at Onino. Later we will give the most important fundamentals for winning but right now it is of most importance to know how to —**not lose!** This because the best knowledge of all the tricks and scrambles in the game would be worthless when you could not prevent an opponent from using them

before you did. For this reason every experienced player adheres strictly to the following —the only known safe course of play:

1. If his opponent has first play he plays tight against his opponent's markers until he can steal the lead.

2. He always cuts through his "connecting" lines wherever possible at the outset.

3. *He is always on guard against any formations that will set up plays or scrambles and*

4. *He never fails to block them.*

5. *He always blocks scrambles at their key point and always blocks plays at their key points except when he can safely take the lead with some line block.*

6. He never deviates from this procedure a particle unless he is *sure* he can safely take the lead and will *gain by doing so.*

7. *Without deviating from the foregoing* he maneuvers his blocking (whenever possible) with a design to set up plays or scrambles and steal the lead.

8. *He is most suspicious of any dumb plays by his opponent,* —his experience has taught that most often those plays aren't so dumb and, unless deciphered and blocked in time, will defeat him.

Every player will do well to read those few fundamentals and points of play over and over and to refer to them from time to time. Any who wish to question the necessity for this can get all in the way of proof they want by verifying this fact —that all the games they lose are lost by simply having failed to observe one of those points.

THE TERMINOLOGY OF ONINO

In order to save words and to avoid confusion in explanations Onino has come to have some terms of its own that are both concise and fully descriptive in their references. As a result it has developed into a terminology that is commonly used and understood by all Onino players. For this reason and because the use of them helps to simplify the explanation of plays we give a list of them here.

An **ONINO** is a solid row of five markers in a straight line in any direction. (ooooo)

A **BLITZ ONINO** is a row of five markers the first and fifth of which are separated or parted from the middle three by a vacant square, but by no more than one vacant square. (o ooo o) Obviously, when the opponent blocks in one empty square the player completes an Onino with a mark at the other vacant square.

A **FOUR** is any row of four markers with not more than one vacant square and not cut by marks of an opponent.

A **SOLID FOUR** is a four without vacancies.

A **SKIP FOUR** is a four with a vacant square in either end. (ooo o) Obviously, when you fail to block the vacant square your opponent is going to mark in it and make an Onino.

A **SPLIT FOUR** is a four with a vacant space in its middle. (oo oo) Obviously, when you

fail to block the vacant square your opponent is going to mark in it and make an Onino.

An **ONINO FOUR** is a solid four unblocked at either end. (o o o o) Obviously, when you block either end your opponent makes an Onino at the other end.

A **DEAD FOUR** is a solid four blocked at the both ends. (● o o o o ●)

An **END FOUR** is a solid four blocked at one end only. (● o o o o)

A **31 FOUR** is a skip four that is unblocked or blocked only at its short end. (o o o ●) Obviously, when you block the vacant square your opponent can still make an end four at the three end.

A **13 FOUR** is a skip four blocked by a mark at its long end. (o o o o ●)

A **22 FOUR** is a split four which is blocked at an end. (o o o o ●)

A **1-21** is four markers with an open square separating the end markers from the two that are between. (o o o o)

A **2-11** is four markers with an open square between the first two and the third markers plus another open square between the third and fourth markers. (o o o o)

A **BELLY FOUR** is a skip four or split four, blocked at both ends in either case, or in other but rare cases an end four with a blocking piece one square away from its open end. (● o o o ●) (● o o o ●) (● o o o ●)

A **BLITZ FOUR** is four markers with a vacant square after each. (o o o o) Obviously, if left unblocked it is made into a blitz Onino.

A **DUD** is a blitz four that has been cut in the middle. (o o o o)

A **BLOCKED ROW** is any solid, split, or skip row of four that is blocked at one end. (31 four 13 four, 22 four or end four)

An **OPEN ROW** is any solid, split, skip four or three or a blitz four with all ends open.

A **THREE** is any row of three markers having no more than one vacant square and not cut by an opponent's markers.

A **SOLID THREE** is a three without any empty or vacant square breaking it.

A **SKIP THREE** is a three with but one empty square and with no ends blocked. (o o o)

A **TRIPLET** is a solid three that has no end blocked. (o o o) Obviously, unless you block this your opponent makes an Onino four of it, as is true also of the skip three.

A **SIAMESE TRIPLET** is a double play made up of triplets. (Nothing so denotes the amateur or unskilled player as his being defeated by one of these. These are the eleven basic formations of Onino and are the easiest to foresee of all, and are the simplest to block.)

A **DEAD THREE** is a solid three with its two ends blocked. (● o o o ●)

An **END THREE** is a solid three with but one end blocked. (o o o ●)

A **21 THREE** is a skip three blocked at only its short end. (o o o ●)

A **12 THREE** is a skip three blocked at only its long end. (● o o o) Obviously, these are made worthless by a block at the open end.

A **BOXED THREE** is a skip three blocked by a mark at both ends, or an end three with a blocking mark one square off its open end. (●○○●) (●○○●●)

To **MARK** is to play a marker, and marker so played is also called a **MARK**.

A **MARKER** is one of the discs used in play.

A **DOUBLE PLAY** is one in which two triplets or other open rows cross or meet each other at a square common to both and in which the making of the mark at the common square creates or sets up both rows simultaneously.

A **TWO-WAY PLAY** is one in which two blocked rows that cross or meet each other at any common square are created by marking at that square.

A **COMBINATION PLAY** is one in which an open row and a blocked row cross or meet and are created by marking at a square common to both.

The **KEY POINT** is the square common to both rows in a play or set-up for a play. Also it is the square at which a mark would or does allow a scramble.

A **CONNECTING LINE** is the vacant square, or row of vacant squares, between two or more marks that are not adjacent but lie in the same vertical, diagonal or horizontal playing line.

A **CUT** is the placing of a marker in an opponent's connecting line.

A **BLOCK** is a marker placed where it blocks or prevents the extending of a row at one or the other of its ends (called an **END BLOCK**); also a block is a marker placed at the key point in any opposing play or scramble to prevent it from being completed (called a **KEY BLOCK**); also a mark-

er placed to occupy a hitherto vacant square inside a split row, skip row or blitz row (called a **BLOCKING CUT**).

A **PLAY SET-UP** is the making of or existing of two or more part rows that form the basis for or nucleus of a play and lack only a mark at the key point for completion.

A **TRIPLE PLAY** is one involving three lines of open rows instead of two.

A **THREE-WAY PLAY** is one involving three of the blocked rows instead of two.

A **THREE-LINE COMBINATION PLAY** is a play in which one or two open rows combine with two or a single blocked row instead of just one of each.

A **TWO-PLAY SCRAMBLE** is the setting up concurrently of two separate plays by placing a key mark at the point that effects the two plays simultaneously, i.e., the set-ups for the two. It should be obvious that if one set-up is blocked, or partly blocked, the other can still be worked to completion and that therefor a scramble is as sure a winning play as an Onino four or blitz in most cases.

A **THREE-PLAY SCRAMBLE** is a scramble making three set-ups simultaneously instead of two.

A **SCRAMBLE SET-UP** is the making of or also the existing of a formation or pattern to which, when placed at the proper vacant square, another marker would thus complete simultaneously two or more play set-ups in the form of a scramble.

A **FORCE PLAY** is one that forces your opponent to block at one certain point.

A **RUN-OUT** is the extending of an end three

to a four or the building of a four from a 21 or 12 three.

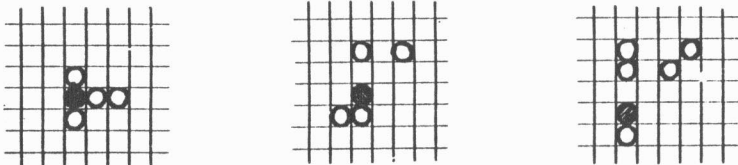
A **PLAY-OUT** is the running out of all three formations to fours after your opponent has managed to set up an unbeatable play or scramble or double blitz four. Whenever a player is "caught by" any unbeatable formation he should always be sure he has completed every possible run-out before making his futile blocks of the formations. Sometimes 10 or 15 points can be gained by playing out this way and there have been cases where a play-out has effected a draw and thereby saved the player from what would otherwise have been a certain defeat.

A **DRAW** is a game in which each player uses all 105 of his markers without an Onino ever being declared.

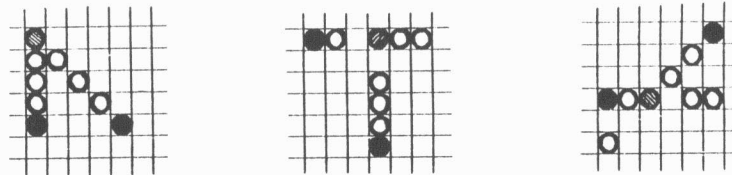
From the preceding definitions the readers hereof should also be able to interpret other of the terms sometimes used. These include **QUADRU-
PLE PLAY, FOUR-WAY PLAY, FOUR-LINE COMBINATIONS,
FOUR-PLAY SCRAMBLES**, etc.

Some examples of each type play are set up in diagram form here for your easier understanding. The key point of each is shown by a shaded circle.

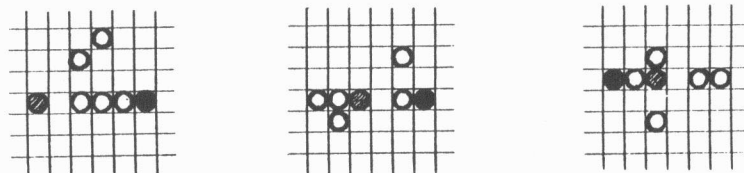
DOUBLE PLAYS



TWO-WAY PLAYS



COMBINATION PLAYS



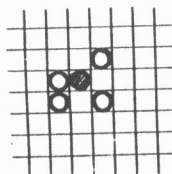
Take your Onino markers and lay out all of the above diagrams on your board and then rotate the board and study each of these plays from one side of the board after another. Do this slowly and try to get the general idea of each play and its key point firmly fixed in your mind. Now set the board aside for awhile and then after a half hour or so try to set up the plays again only do it this time without the aid of the diagrams and by putting in the key mark of each last.

When you feel you are fairly good at these and know pretty well what a play is and how play set-ups can be recognized you can proceed to the complexities of scrambles. Suggesting such step by step procedure may seem juvenile but you will find that that course will save you a lot of unnecessary confusion. You must be able to recog-

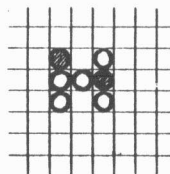
nize play set-ups before you can hope to foresee scrambles. In other words, if you cannot recognize play set-ups before the plays are made what chance have you of recognizing the play set-up a move before it is made. Besides, play set-ups a move before the play is completed are minus only one marker, —but scramble set-ups a move before the scramble is completed are minus at least anywhere from three to ten or more markers.

TWO-PLAY SCRAMBLES

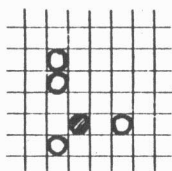
This:-



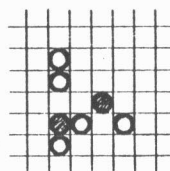
sets up
the two
double
plays
here:-



This:-



sets up
the two
double
plays
here:-



Set these scrambles up on your board, then remove the key marker from each. In each it now should leave but four markers —the four you are to study as your scramble set-up.

Without referring to the diagrams try your hand at filling in the scramble key and then the keys to the plays. When you have all of them in place check them against the diagrams.

THE PLAY OF ONINO

We have already discussed the importance of not losing and have set forth the fundamentals of defensive play. One thing needs constant emphasis, —the need of foresight and the urgency of a block in time.

From what has already been said and by diagram illustrated you can easily understand why we constantly remind you that *after* a play, scramble or blitz Onino or Onino four is made *is too late!* There is no way to block a blitz Onino, a two-way play, or an Onino four. And except for two trick exceptions there is no way to block double plays, combination plays, or any other plays.* *In order to block any play you must recognize the set-up—and block the set-up at its key point before your opponent can MAKE it a play!*

And there is no way to block any scramble—except where all the set-ups in it would be plays made up entirely of threes and you could block on every line but one by making a four on the block. And such instances are too rare to be counted on.

*(The only two exceptions are:- 1. Making a four with the mark with which you block one row of any double play composed of threes, and then blocking the other row on the next turn at play. 2. Making a four with the mark with which you block the row of four in a two-line open three combination play and then blocking the open three on the next turn at play.)

To recognize and block set-ups demands constant alertness on your part and requires a highest degree of analytical intelligence. The acuteness of diagnostic perceptivity it demands is far greater even than that required by the complexities of medical and other scientific diagnoses and analyses. *And it demands that you revise each of your considerations with every play and reconsider and adjust them to every new possibility which is presented by each marker your opponent adds to the board.*

To do this latter is far from as simple for a beginner as it at first sounds, —but it at the same time is not quite as difficult or impossible as it seems when you first try it. Nevertheless, it does require a bit more than just normal adult intelligence. However, this should not frighten you for there have been children as young as five years of age who developed such keen foresight as to seldom fail to foresee a play or the key point of one. Scrambles, though, are a different story for even very few adults ever become adept at the composing of them —and even fewer at recognizing and blocking their set-ups.

All of this adds up to no small-sized brain task and even if this was all that was needed for assuring your not losing at Onino you would still find it difficult to become proficient enough not to ever lose, —let alone proficient enough to be able to win. Unfortunately though for those persons who like their games easy to master, this is only the beginning of proficiency at Onino.

Several things add to the difficulty. All other skill games become simpler as the play progresses. In checkers, as the number of pieces is lessened and the play resolves to a battle of the

two or three remaining kings, all attention is on only those few possible moves of those pieces. In chess the same thing is true. In Onino, though, as the play progresses there are more and more on the board and the possible plays is multiplied at every play you make.

Furthermore, in chess, checkers, etc., each piece is limited in its moves and thus presents a limited number of possibilities. In Onino though every piece plays in eight directions and besides may be placed on any one of the 225 squares. This again tremendously multiplies the possibilities.

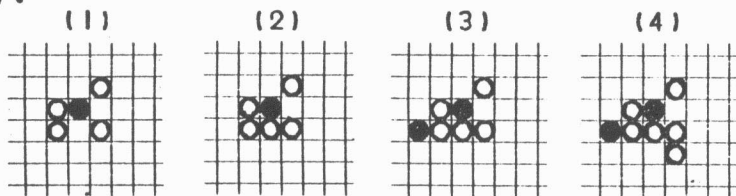
Then again, in chess and checkers there can only be a visible foci of attack. In checkers we have but one objective and it is always before us —the capture of all the opposing pieces. Chess has as its lone objective the capture of your opponent's king. In both those games each player's objective is as visible to one opponent as to the other. But not so in Onino. In Onino there is no king to attack nor any of his complement to capture and make simpler the attaining of the objective, —and besides a player's objective is wholly within his mind —not on the board— *and your opponent can not see it until it is within one move of completion!* Nor can you see his sooner.

As we have said, all of these things necessitate a most rigid employment of both an unusual foresight and an extremely alert intelligence for *they require that possibilities be deciphered before they exist.*

In ordinary plays it is easy enough to keep from losing by foreseeing them in the set-ups and then blocking at the key points. However, experienced players seldom bother with single set-ups. As a rule their playing always builds toward four

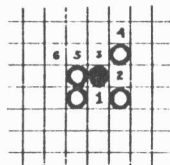
or more plays hidden in scrambles and in such as this *you must not only foresee the plays but you must foresee the set-ups and prevent them*, —or block the scramble's key. If you don't do these things you lose.

For instance, let us consider the first of the examples given of a two-play scramble. As it stands, i.e., out in the clear that way, it happens to be an unbeatable play that even blocking at the key point cannot stop. This will show you why:—



In other words, when Dark blocks key point of the two-play scramble (1) Light makes triplet and sets up double play simultaneously (2). Dark is forced to block the triplet to prevent a sure Onino four (3) and Light makes double play (4).

The only way this could have been prevented by Dark would have been for him to have stuck cut blocks in all of Light's connecting lines as they were made. To merely have cut all but once would have done no good at all. Take your Onino set and set-up the play just as it is in (1) and then fill in the proper squares according to the diagram and description that follow:



If Dark had cut only at the middle and the square numbered 1 Light would have followed with a mark at square 3 and thereby had built another two-play scramble. If Dark blocked one of these double play set-ups at square 4 Light would then complete the other at square 5, and vice versa.

On the other hand, if Dark had cut only at the middle and square 2 Light would have built a triplet with a mark at square 1. Dark would be forced to block the triplet and Light would then mark at square 5 making another triplet and also setting up a double play. Dark would next block this new triplet and Light would complete double play with a mark at square 6.

Therefore, and as already stated, this was an unbeatable play as long as any one of the opponent's connecting lines was left uncut. This is one of the simplest and most elementary plays in Onino and should for that reason impress upon you the importance of playing tight against your opponent's markers and not letting him set up an open group. It is difficult enough to block any of the banked set-ups (set-ups stretching out of a filled surface) but it is impossible to surely block properly executed open set-ups.

This brings us to the second fundamental—*Open up your own play, close up your opponent's.* Remember that the first fundamental of winning a game is to not lose it. If you will observe the two of these jointly nothing can prevent victory for you except your own inability to see or take advantage of situations that present themselves. In fact, if you fully guard against losing while at the same time you open up your own plays with the closing of your opponent's, you will stumble inadvertently but often enough upon play set-ups

that developed for you without any planning view or design on your part.

THE LEADING OF ONINO

Assuming that you have mastered the art of not losing at Onino we must now set out to learn the art of winning at Onino. Obviously, if you are to win you must not only be able to block an opponent's leads but must also be able to cut in and steal the lead from him —for unless you get the lead you cannot complete winning plays. Our next concern then is getting the lead.

Four things must be remembered:-

1. As long as your opponent has any playable four you cannot take the lead. And, corollarily, as long as you have a playable four it is indisputably your lead.

2. As long as your opponent has an open or unblocked three you can't take the lead with any play less than a four or blitz Onino. And likewise as long as you have an open three he cannot take the lead with anything less than a four.

3. If you leave your opponent with an open three while you take the lead with a four —*you must go back and block your opponent's three immediately after playing your last four!*

4. As long as your opponent has no four or an open three you can take the lead with an open three of your own *but at no other time can it be done.*

Those are the elementary fundamentals that

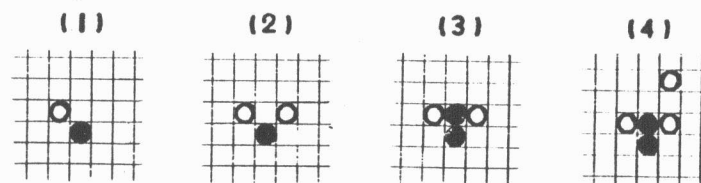
guide all leading. Unfortunately a book of this size doesn't allow us space for the many tricks, blocking maneuvers, and other subtleties by which masters of the game steal the lead away from one another. For those players who are interested in mastering the finer technicalities of Onino play there are two books giving these and we here recommend them both for the interesting diversions their content affords and for the selfconfidence one gains through an acquaintance with the plays and maxims they present. "ONINO AND HOW TO MASTER IT", gives all the fine art of both offenses and defenses with dozens of diagrammed illustrations. "ONE HUNDRED UNBEATABLE ONINO PLAYS—HOW TO MAKE THEM AND BLOCK THEM", gives much more in fact. It includes all 71 basic variations found in simple double plays, many variations for two-way plays, important trick variations founded on combination plays, and a large number of easy to compose but deceptive scrambles.

In a book this size though we must confine ourselves to only the basic fundamentals. Taking these progressively we must now take up the getting of the lead as being the next essential.

It stands to reason that if you start with first play you have the lead to start with. When that is the case your object is to set up a play and execute it before your opponent can take the lead away from you. If your opponent is as good as you are—or even only nearly so—that is an almost impossible feat. There is no game so far recorded where an experienced player has defeated another equally experienced one without three or more changes of lead.

From this then it stands to reason that an adeptness at getting the lead is most essential.

If the game starts with your opponent having the lead you must so maneuver your blocks as to set up formations by which you can take leads on both threes and fours should he effect a play or scramble. To illustrate this let us now once again consider that unbeatable play and block an opponent trying to set it up.



At this point Dark could make a triplet to take the lead if he cut the diagonal rather than the vertical. (You should also notice how Light blocking such a triplet would set-up a two-plays scramble.) An inexperienced player might grab a chance to make a triplet but Dark being an experienced player saw that it would be to his favor not to take the lead yet, —that taking the lead now would only be to lose it immediately after a block by Light and to be surely defeated without getting a chance to regain it, —on his twelfth play, in fact, even if he blocked perfectly. As a consequence of foreseeing these things, he cut the vertical.

Light could then have placed his next mark where it is shown in the original diagram but if he did so Dark would make a diagonal triplet, then a horizontal triplet, then a vertical triplet, then a diagonal triplet to the left —thus setting up a combination play—and as Light now blocked this last triplet Dark would complete on the combination by running out the first diagon-

al to an end four, making simultaneously a vertical triplet and thereby winning with an Onino a second play later.

Or Light could relinquish his original plan and with his fourth mark make a diagonal triplet—but if he did he would lose to Dark even sooner unless he restrained himself from then rashly making a crossing diagonal. If he did restrain himself and made the proper mark (between Dark's two on the bottom horizontal) he would set up by this set up a double play for himself. If Dark should block this at the key point, both players would then be on even terms. However, if Dark's block should be placed tight against vertical or at the bottom of the diagonal the advantage then would remain with Light and Dark would again become hard pressed —would in fact lose were his following block misplaced.

Assuming each player had made proper plays and that Dark blocked at the key point Light has now only one open three to make and doesn't dare make it because Dark's block of it would give an evident three chances to steal the lead and make set-ups. That is what is meant by the statement that both players would be on even terms if Dark blocked at the key point. Light would be unable to safely create another open three on his go or turn and as a result Dark would be relieved from defending. Thus, neither player would have hold of the lead and both would jockey for it on even terms.

Taking the lead prematurely is commonly an error of inexperienced players. True, in general the maxim is "take the lead when you are sure it can be had"—but you must remember that if your taking of the lead will allow your opponent some

opportunity to set up a play with a block you at such time are better off by blocking that chance than by taking the lead.

Masters at the game of Onino commonly make it a point to withhold from taking the lead when they will not be able to block out some opposing play with it or complete an Onino. The only exception to this is the play-out.

Another mistake of less experienced or new players is the running out of their end three at once for no other reason than to hold the lead a little longer. As a result, a little later when they are in a tight spot and need a run-out with which to pull through they are without any—and as a consequence have to lose the game.

Besides this danger from building fours to no purpose there is also the fact that such puts more of your opponent's markers in the open. It is well to remember: Open your own play, —close your opponent's. And be sure that any blocks in the open by your opponent are well scattered.

Still another reason for not needlessly or purposelessly building fours is that when all of your run-out possibilities are held in reserve a constant threat of them is held over your opponent and he must so design his plays that none of your blocks can form what would be connecting or filling marks between run-outs.

This latter point is one you must remember constantly when you yourself have the lead. *If a lead of yours will permit an opponent to block at a point that would be in line with two unmade run-out marks you don't dare make that lead.* The one and only exception is *when you are sure that you can complete an Onino before he can run out.*

In spite of the admonishment to "open your own play", inexperienced players too frequently defeat themselves by leading in such a manner as to enable their opponent to box them in with his blocks. To avoid this, always design your leads to form the basis of one of the basic formations of Onino —and as soon as you have set up such a formation fill in the key mark.

Always remember that (between experienced players) almost all games are won by "hidden" or trick plays and that the surest way to block and prevent these is to rigidly observe all the fundamentals we have here set forth. Though there are innumerable "unbeatable" plays, trick plays, and "hidden" plays, there is no such thing as an unblockable play, —*any play can be blocked during its process of being set up.* There are only 11 basic formations from which to accomplish any Onino and every play aims at one or more of that eleven. Block anything that can be converted to one of them and you block the play —fail to and you lose the game.

THE BASIC FORMATIONS OF ONINO

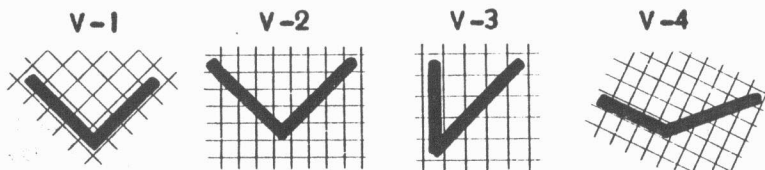
Except between rankest amateurs *no game in Onino is ever won except from some pattern variation of one of the 11 basic formations.* Though there are millions of variations to these formations, in their completion all variations assume one of these eleven forms or a coupling form including two or more of them. Therefore, preventing an opponent from ever completing one of them prevents an opponent from winning. On the other hand, if you in the meantime complete one of the formations yourself you cannot be prevented from winning.

Too great emphasis cannot be put on either of those statements. The player will find a new interest in the game as soon as he takes them as the facts they are and changes his habit of play accordingly. Between experienced players a winning of game from anything less than a two- or a three-play scramble is almost unheard of for one never permits the other to complete even complex variations of ordinary plays. And remember this —*a scramble is but a combination whereby two or more of these basic formations would be simultaneously set up.* Therefore, *if the scrambles are blocked before a mark can be filled in for their completion at a key point, the formation set-ups cannot be made.*

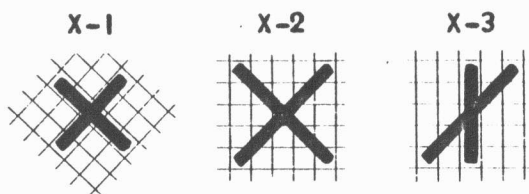
For the beginner, the easiest way to think of the formations is to think of how vexed -vxt-

he would be if his opponent completed one. When you do that it is easy enough to remember the 11 formations for four of them are V-shaped, three are X-shaped, and four are T-shaped. Here is the pattern they make on the board:-

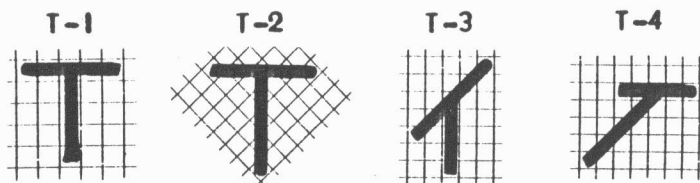
V Formations



X Formations



T Formations

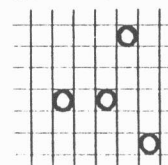


In order to prevent these formations being formed other than from scrambles you need remember only one thing:- *Block any two rows of your opponent's markers that may meet or cross at any point not more than two squares from the ends of*

both and block them by marking at that square at which they *would* cross or meet.*

The player must keep in mind that these do not show as solid rows in most cases. If formations showed always as solid rows (triplets plus end fours) there would be little chance of failing to see them. Instead though they show ordinarily only when in your mind's eye you envision the missing markers. It is a player's skill for making the foundations of his formations deceptive that most generally determines the winner of the game.

Let us consider the following example:-

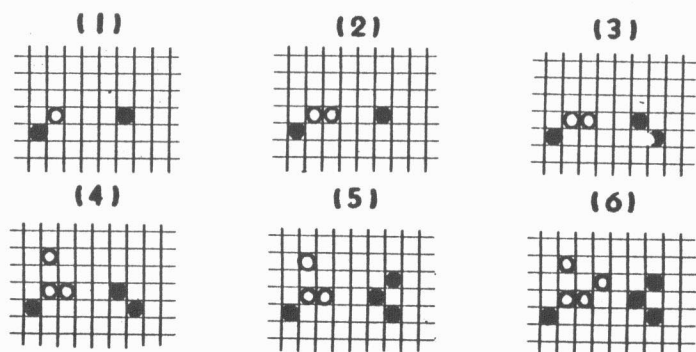


The inexperienced player would commonly be unaware of the double play set-up in that formation and as a result would probably cut the horizontal line. His opponent would then place his mark directly above (at the key point), completing a double play (two diagonal skip threes in a T-2 formation).

Following is an example of solid rows that occurred in a recent amateurish game. Dark had first play, Light played adjacent to him diagon-

* (As explained in the book on how to master the game there are two notable exceptions to this in certain cases but space does not permit the diagramming or explaining of them here. Furthermore those exceptions are safely observed only by the highly skilled player and explaining them to the beginner would only serve to confuse him.)

ally, and then Dark played four blocks away. The diagrams give the play from there on:



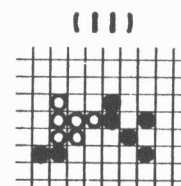
At this point Light had a double play set-up. Dark saw the set-up but blocked one line at the top right instead of blocking the key point.



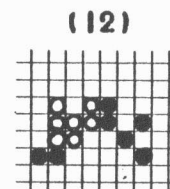
At this point Light could have made a two-play scramble by marking one square to the right of where he did mark.



Light at this point marked where he should have marked on his previous play. As a result of not marking in that square at the proper time he now has only a triplet and a double play set-up, both of which should be easily disposed of.



Dark's block of Light's triplet gave him a triplet and a double play set-up of his own.



Light's block of Dark's triplet has turned his double play set-up into a triple play set-up and given him a two-play scramble set-up and two run-out set-ups for double plays.

Dark at this point saw Light's triple play set-up but not the others. He also saw his own double play set-up—but he saw that if he would complete his own double play Light could run the diagonal three to a four for a block of one line and then block the other line after his own four block. As a result, Dark decided to block Light on the triple play set-up and thereby collect an

extra double play set-up for himself, —which he did.

Light then marked at the key point for his two-play scramble and Dark had to block the vertical triplet. Whether he blocked at the bottom or top made no difference but he chose to make a block at the bottom in order to complete his own double play. Light of course then ran out for a four on his first vertical to complete on one of his combination play set-ups that completing the scramble had given him. (Running out the horizontal at the top could have completed the other) Dark had to block the run-out four and let Light make an Onino four of the diagonal triplet. Dark blocked one end of the Onino four and Light made an Onino at the other end.

The point to all this is that if Dark only had completed his first double play he could for a much longer time have stayed off his defeat, a thing one should always do. At the same time he would have had the chance of not being beaten, a chance that always comes with each extension you force in the play. But even disregarding these, there is the fact that the longer you hold off a defeat the less points you lose. He lost a game (or at least lost it as quickly as he did), just because from the very beginning he didn't follow the fundamentals of play —especially with regard to studying *all* possibilities. If you want to win at Onino *you must study every possibility on the board before you make a mark!*

And you must always keep this in mind too: *Even when you have the lead you must always keep on the defensive against your opponent's blocks. However, never fail to take the lead whenever an opponent completes a play or scramble, —that is*

your only chance of wiggling out of these and it cuts down your opponent's score even if you find you can't wiggle out. In any event, *never fail to take or keep the lead as long as you can gain anything at all by doing so.* But, once more, be sure that in your leading you do not mark in any manner that might permit your opponent to set up plays with his blocking marks.

Work constantly to build open threes along with fours and form them in a pattern from which plays can be completed.

Constantly be on the alert for formations, patterns or set-ups that will assure you game or a lead toward it —and never fail to take advantage of them when the opportunity is presented.

Review the playing area frequently. Carefully study every possibility that exists, —and do not proceed until you have a definite plan in mind and a definite reason for the mark you contemplate making.

And once again we warn you —always beware of any "dumb" plays by your opponent for most of them generally turn out to be not so dumb if you ignore them, —in fact unless deciphered in time and blocked they will probably defeat you.

And if an Onino you make is to win for you it *must be declared as you make it.* Not before and not after —but as you make it, —afterward might be too late. Inexperienced players, —and sometimes even experienced players — are on some occasions so intent on various plans in mind and so oblivious to all else that in their leads and blocks they accidentally make an Onino without a suspicion or knowledge of having done so. Consequently they do not declare it and if, either a

play or several or a dozen plays later, an opponent makes an Onino and declares it the opponent wins —despite the fact that they may have had a completed Onino on the board for a long time.

Because these situations do occur in play, —and because no credit is due a player who only "accidentally" makes an Onino —and especially a player who doesn't even know he has made such an Onino— the Official Rules of the International Onino Association read:

Rule 11.— Player first declaring a completed Onino shall be declared the winner of game, even though and regardless of whether his opponent may have one or more completed but undeclared Oninos.

Rule 12.— In the event two players declare completed Oninos simultaneously, then the player having made last play is declared the winner.

Whether you are playing in a league or are competing in a tournament or just friendly games Onino, like any other game or sport, is the more interesting for you and the other participant if you adhere strictly to the rules. Violating any rules is like cheating, whether it be willful or due to ignorance of them, and no one should play any game without knowing and observing all those rules or regulations that govern its play. (The rules for Onino are printed in the last pages of this book.)

As already mentioned, the book "ONINO AND HOW TO MASTER IT" is of inestimable value to any who seek the utmost entertainment from the game. The book of plays —"ONE HUNDRED UNBEATABLE ONINO PLAYS — HOW TO MAKE THEM AND BLOCK THEM" —is a

thorough and complete introduction to the finer points of the game. It has made Onino enthusiasts —singles, doubles, and solitaire players— of the most hard-shelled and rigid objectors to games. Either of these books will enable you to add greatly to your skill and enjoyment in playing the game. Both of them will do doubly so.

In the meantime you can increase your proficiency and find much diversion through working out plays of your own. As a start at this it is suggested that you lay out on the board just one of the eleven basic formations and then make all the double play variations of it you can. Doing this with one after another will acquaint you to a fair degree with the basic double plays and if you follow the same procedure with two-way plays and combination plays you will have the required foundation for scrambles and advanced playing.

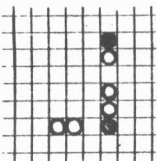
Remember this:— *If you follow the few and proved fundamentals and rigidly observe each and every rule Onino is at one and the same time the simplest and most difficult game in the world as well as the most entertaining. No other game can compare with it. It is the one game that anyone —winning or losing— finds hard to set aside. I can't set it aside. No two games of it are ever alike and its play and tricks are so fascinating that even the constant loser never gets tired of it. It's a challenge to each individual's mental capability, alacrity, and ingenuity, —and every loser knows that his own failings are his one and only alibi, —an alibi all of us hate to give and very few of us ever admit.*

THIRTY-THREE BASIC PLAYS OF ONINO

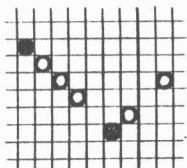
Earlier we mentioned that, from the eleven basic formations, there are 71 basic double play variations (i.e., double plays consisting of two open threes only), 480 basic two-way play variations, and 34009 basic two-line combination play variations. Complex and extended variations run into many thousands while triple plays, quadruple plays, three-way plays, etc., run into uncomputable fantastic numbers, —but in all cases they are but one or another combination of the simple patterns of the double plays, two-way plays, and two-line combination plays. Obviously, if these double plays, two-way plays and two-line combination plays are recognized by you there is never a chance of the others going unseen.

To reproduce all of even just the basic or simpler variations would require a tremendously large volume. We couldn't do it here and we believe it would be purposeless anyway, —this for the simple reason that they are too numerous for memorizing and because if one will learn the key point principle on which all are founded and depend he will have no trouble recognizing any new play his opponent uses. In the following pages we give one variation of each type for each formation, i.e., one double play variation of each of the 11 basic formations, one two-way play for each, and one combination play for each. Just as before, key points are shown by a shaded mark.

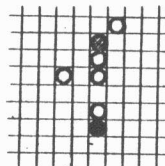
A Combination
Variation Of
Formation V-1



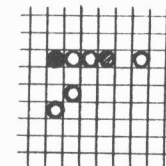
A Combination
Variation Of
Formation V-2



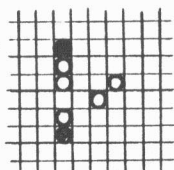
A Combination
Variation Of
Formation T-3



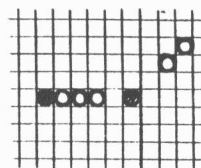
A Combination
Variation Of
Formation T-4



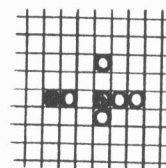
A Combination
Variation Of
Formation V-3



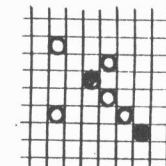
A Combination
Variation Of
Formation V-4



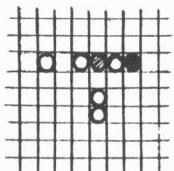
A Combination
Variation Of
Formation X-1



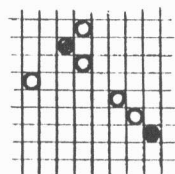
A Combination
Variation Of
Formation X-2



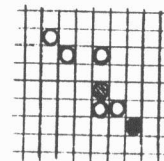
A Combination
Variation Of
Formation T-1



A Combination
Variation Of
Formation T-2



A Combination
Variation Of
Formation X-3



SOME PROBLEMS FOR
ONINO PRACTICE

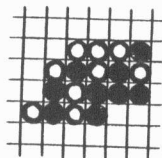
Every mark your opponents make presents new problems for you. Ordinarily you might not recognize all the factors of such and so to accustom you to the proper analysis of problems we present five simple ones here.

Set up each of these (separately, not all at once) and try to work them out on the board. Do not turn to the pages containing the proper solution until you have carefully analyzed each problem and worked it out for yourself. Then check your solution against the proper one.

A word of caution: Do not jump to what at first seems the most obviously correct offense or defense. Too often the most obvious turns out to be a trick play whose obviousness was made to trap you.

PROBLEM #1

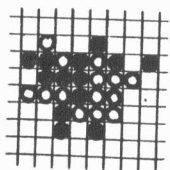
Dark has just marked and it is now Light's turn:



What is Light's proper play? What is Dark's proper following play? Why?

PROBLEM #2

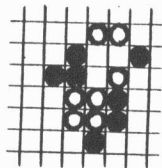
Light has just marked and it is now Dark's turn:



What is Dark's proper play? What is Light's proper following play? Why?

PROBLEM #3

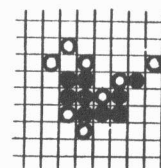
Dark has just marked and it is now Light's turn:



What is Light's proper play? What is Dark's proper following play? Why?

PROBLEM #4

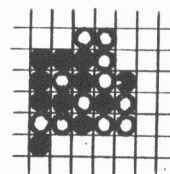
Dark has just marked and it is now Light's turn:



What is Light's proper play? What is Dark's proper following play? Why?

PROBLEM #5

Dark has just marked and it is now Light's turn:



What is Light's proper play? What is Dark's proper following play? Why?

CORRECT SOLUTIONS

PROBLEM #1— Light should mark in the square above his left lowermost marker for a diagonal triplet (setting up a combination play).

Dark should now see the game is lost and should therefore follow with his two run-outs before blocking Light's triplet.

Light should (after blocking Dark's run-outs) make a 13 four on the top horizontal to complete the combination play.

Dark makes a blocking cut on the 13 four and Light makes an ONINO four of his vertical skip three, winning with his next mark.

PROBLEM #2— Dark should set up a combination play by running his horizontal end three to an end four, which Light must block. Dark should then run his vertical end three to a 13 four to complete the combination play. Light must make a blocking cut on the 13 four and Dark then makes an ONINO four of his diagonal skip three, winning with his next mark.

PROBLEM #3— Light should set up a combination play by making a triplet on the top horizontal with a mark in the square to the right of the open two.

Dark must block the triplet but it doesn't matter at which end he does so.

Light should then make a 13 four in his vertical row to complete the combination play.

Dark must make a blocking cut of the 13 four and Light then makes an ONINO four of his diagonal skip three, winning with his next mark.

PROBLEM #4— Light should not block Dark's double play set-up at the key point. He should block with a mark at the lower end of its diagonal line. If he marks anywhere but at this point he is defeated in four to six more turns at play.

PROBLEM #5— Light should make a combination play by making a 13 four of his end three that extends from the lower left corner toward the upper right.

Dark must make a blocking cut on the 13 four and Light then makes an ONINO four of his horizontal skip three, winning with his next mark.

OFFICIAL RULES OF
ONINO

RULES OF PLAY
As Adopted 1942 by

THE INTERNATIONAL ONINO ASSOCIATION

The following rules shall be Official and govern the play in all International Onino Association sponsored or approved tournament league, exhibition and championship play.

PLAY:

1. Each player or team shall have 105 markers of an approved color that contrasts with the approved color of the opponent's markers.
2. Choice of first play in the first game shall be decided by flipping a coin and the winner of the toss shall then elect to play first or second.
3. Choice of first play in subsequent games between the same opponents shall be left to the loser of the last previous game, but if the last previous game was a draw, then the player who had last play shall have the choice.
4. Player having first play shall not mark at center until after his opponent has played at least once without occupying center.

5. A marker is considered played as soon as it has been placed on the board and released by the player.
6. If a marker is not properly centered on a square the opponent shall bring it to the player's attention and the player must then center it on the square it occupies but, other than this, once a marker is played it must not be withdrawn, moved, or touched by either player.
7. Other than as is provided in Rule 6, players shall not direct the attention of opponents, partner, or bystanders to any moves, plays, formations, "blocks", probabilities, or marks unless such is done solely to direct attention to an infraction of these rules and then only at the time infraction referred to was committed or before a subsequent play is made.
8. No penalty shall be invoked unless the infraction on which it is claimed is declared before any subsequent play is made, nor shall any penalty be invoked at any time other than that set forth in the penalty rule applying to the infraction committed.
9. Players shall play alternately and in proper turn (clockwise in doubles play), playing only one marker for each turn at play, and shall not make a play or start a play or indicate a play until opponent has completed his play (except where opponent has no play due to being penalized a loss of turn at play.)
10. Making a claim of ONINO or game, making remarks or assertions that game or an ONINO is assured, or making any other statements relative to the play or progress of the game before an ONINO is completed and declared,

shall be construed as an infraction of Rule 7 and be subject to the penalties applying thereto.

11. Player first declaring a completed ONINO shall be declared the winner of game, even though and regardless of whether his opponent may have one or more completed but undeclared ONINOS.
12. In the event two players declare completed ONINOS simultaneously then the player having made the last play is declared the winner.
13. Players disputing a claimed infraction, a penalty, a ruling, a play, a scoring, or any other point that pertains to the play of the game, its outcome, or its score shall refer their differences to the judges of the league or tournament. Should dispute continue the differences shall be referred to the Committee on Rules of the International Onino Association and their ruling shall govern.

PENALTIES:

14. Player making a play out of turn (Rules 2, 3, 9) shall remove the so-played marker from the board and shall lose his (or his team's) next turn at play.
15. Player having first play and marking at center on that play (Rule 4) shall remove his marker from center square to any othersquare and shall lose his (or his team's) next turn at play.
16. Player withdrawing, moving, or touching played markers (Rule 6) shall restore any moved markers to the squares they had originally occupied and shall lose his (or his team's) next turn at play.

17. Player directing attention to any move, play, formation, "block", probability, or mark (Rules 7, 10) shall lose his (or his team's) next turn at play.
18. Player failing to declare an infraction or failing to claim the penalty for it before making a subsequent play (Rule 8) shall forfeit his right to invoke the penalty.
19. Player failing to invoke a claimed penalty in accordance with the penalty rule governing it (Rule 8) shall forfeit his right to invoke the penalty.

SCORING:

20. Player winning game shall be credited with as many plus points as his remainder of markers (or, number of markers used in winning subtracted from 105), that is, shall have that many points added to his score.
21. Player losing game shall be charged with as many minus points as his opponent's remainder of markers, that is, shall have that many points subtracted from his score.
22. Players ending in a draw or deadlock (that is, having used all their markers or had 105 turns at play without an ONINO being declared) shall neither be credited with any plus points nor charged with any minus points but shall be scored a zero and the score and game shall be tallied and used in computing their totals, averages, and ratings.
23. Games completed under protest shall not be scored nor tallied nor computed in the players' totals, averages, and ratings until the judges have rendered a decision.

24. Player forfeiting a game by not continuing play or by not abiding by these rules or a decision of the judges shall be barred from continuing in competition in the league or tournament in which he defaulted and all scores credited to or charged against other contestants for games in which he competed shall be stricken from the tally and not used in computing the totals, averages, and ratings of those other contestants. However, in cases where the forfeiting player is a member of a league team having alternate players or approved substitutes, previous scores of the teams and other players shall not be affected and an alternate player or approved substitute shall replay the forfeited game and take the place of the player forfeiting in all further league competition but shall not receive the advantage or handicap of that player's total, average or rating.
25. Player defaulting for reasons beyond his control shall be given the opportunity of reply, but should he then again default he shall forfeit and be subject to the stipulations of Rule 24.

RULES OF COMPETITION

TOURNAMENT PLAY:

26. All Members of the International Onno Association shall be eligible for competition in any district, national, or international tournament.
27. All Registered teams of the International Onno Association shall be eligible for competition in any district, national, or international tournament, providing all participating players on the team are members of the Association.
28. All members and teams entering a tournament must qualify either by rating or through elimination play.
29. All judges for official tournaments shall be appointed by the Rules Committee of the International Onno Association.
30. The names of persons wishing to qualify as judges must be submitted to the Rules Committee at least 30 days prior to the opening date of such tournament.
31. Any member in good standing for not less than one year prior to date of application and able to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the rules and play shall be eligible for consideration and appointment as a judge.
32. Any player forfeiting shall be barred accord-

- ing to penalties rules 24 and 25 but not from competition beyond that stipulated except that should a member consistently forfeit by refusal to abide by the Official rules, the rules of the Association, or the rulings of judges he shall be suspended from membership for a period of one year and thereby be ineligible for competition during that time.
33. Players or teams wishing to participate in any official tournament must file an entrance application not less than 15 days prior to the starting date thereof.
 34. Unrated players or teams, and players or teams unqualified by rating, shall participate in preliminary elimination play under the direction of the judges in order to qualify and that player or team having the highest score in each qualifying pool shall qualify thereby for participation in the tournament play.
 35. Each tournament shall be governed by the rules of the Association and shall be conducted in a manner approved by the Rules Committee.
 36. Player ratings, doubles ratings, and team ratings shall only be accepted when accompanied by proof in the form of score sheets verified by an Association official or an official of an Association authorized league.
 37. Entrance registration fees and participation fees shall not be charged unless authorized by the Rules Committee and shall in no case exceed such amount as the Committee may stipulate and authorize.

LEAGUE PLAY:

38. Doubles, individuals, and teams participating in league play shall be subject to all the rules of competition except such as apply only to qualifying play and ratings for tournament participation.
39. To register and be approved a league must submit the names and records of those nominated for office to the Rules Committee and shall then elect its officers and judges from among those approved.
40. To register and be approved a team must submit the names of its players to the Rules Committee along with their membership numbers as shown on their membership cards.
41. League officials shall record the names of all teams, their membership numbers, and the date of their membership expiration and shall bar any team from competing beyond the date of its membership's expiration unless prior to that date membership has been renewed.
42. League officials shall record the names of all players, their membership numbers, and the date of their membership expiration and shall bar any player from competing beyond the date of his membership's expiration unless prior to that date membership has been renewed.
43. Team captains and league secretaries shall keep an accurate record of all matches, including the individual and team scores, according to the official rating record method set forth by the Rules Committee. *No other record except this or an official tournament record will be acceptable for qualifying ratings.*

RULES OF MEMBERSHIP

PLAYER MEMBERSHIP:

44. Membership for players shall be open to all persons except those who have once been members and have been barred from future membership because of dishonesty, dishonorableness, or other acts justifying their disbarment.
45. Membership shall be granted upon application and approval thereof, and shall be considered to have begun on the date of approval.
46. Applications for membership shall be accompanied by the first years dues of one dollar (\$1.00) and by a one dollar and fifty cent (\$1.50) entrance fee, and both fees shall be returned if application is unapproved.
47. Dues in the Association shall be one dollar (\$1.00) per year and shall be due on or prior to the date of approval of membership and on that same date each year thereafter.
48. Members shall be furnished a membership card bearing their name, address, membership number, and date of beginning and expiration of membership.
49. All members shall have the right to participate in the meetings and affairs of the Association and the right to be present and participate in the nominating and election of officials.

50. All members of good standing and more than two consecutive years active membership shall be eligible for office in the Association.
51. No person shall be considered a member or retain his status and privileges of membership beyond the expiration date of his paid-up membership.

TEAM MEMBERSHIP:

52. Membership for teams shall be open to all teams composed wholly of player members in standing.
53. Applications for team membership shall be accompanied by a listing of the names of the players composing the team and their membership numbers; by an entrance fee of one dollar (\$1.00); and by the first year's dues of three dollars (\$3.00).
54. Team dues in the Association shall be three dollars (\$3.00) per year and shall be due on or prior to the date of approval of membership and on that same date each year thereafter.
55. Team captain shall be furnished a team membership card bearing the team name, address, membership number, and date of beginning and expiration of membership.
56. No team shall be considered a member or retain its status and privileges of membership beyond the expiration date of its paid-up membership.

LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP:

57. Membership for leagues shall be open to all leagues composed wholly of team members in good standing.
58. Applications for league membership shall be accompanied by a listing of the names and membership numbers of the teams composing the league; by a registration fee of four dollars (\$4.00); and by an additional registration assessment of fifty cents (50¢) for each team in excess of eight teams if the league is composed of more than eight teams.
59. There shall be no dues for league membership but league registrations shall expire yearly and must be renewed on or prior to date of expiration if membership is to be retained.
60. League officials shall notify the Secretary of the Association of any new teams or players admitted to competition and in the case of new teams must accompany such notice with a registration assessment of fifty cents (50¢) for each new team.