Artificial Intelligence

Adversarial Search (Game Playing)

Chapter 5

Adapted from materials by Tim Finin,
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Outline

- Game playing
  - State of the art and resources
  - Framework
- Game trees
  - Minimax
  - Alpha-beta pruning
  - Adding randomness

State of the art

- How good are computer game players?
  - **Chess**:
    - Deep Blue beat Gary Kasparov in 1997
    - Garry Kasparav vs. Deep Junior (Feb 2003): tie!
    - Kasparov vs. X3D Fritz (November 2003): tie!
  - **Checkers**: Chinook (an AI program with a *very large* endgame database) is the world champion. Checkers has been solved exactly – it's a draw!
  - **Go**: Computer players are decent, at best
  - **Bridge**: "Expert" computer players exist (but no world champions yet!)

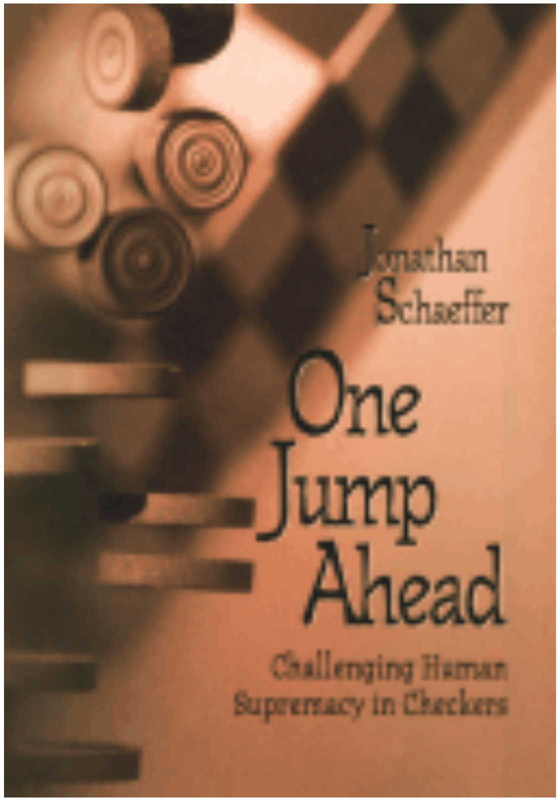
- Good place to learn more: http://www.cs.ualberta.ca/~games/

Chinook

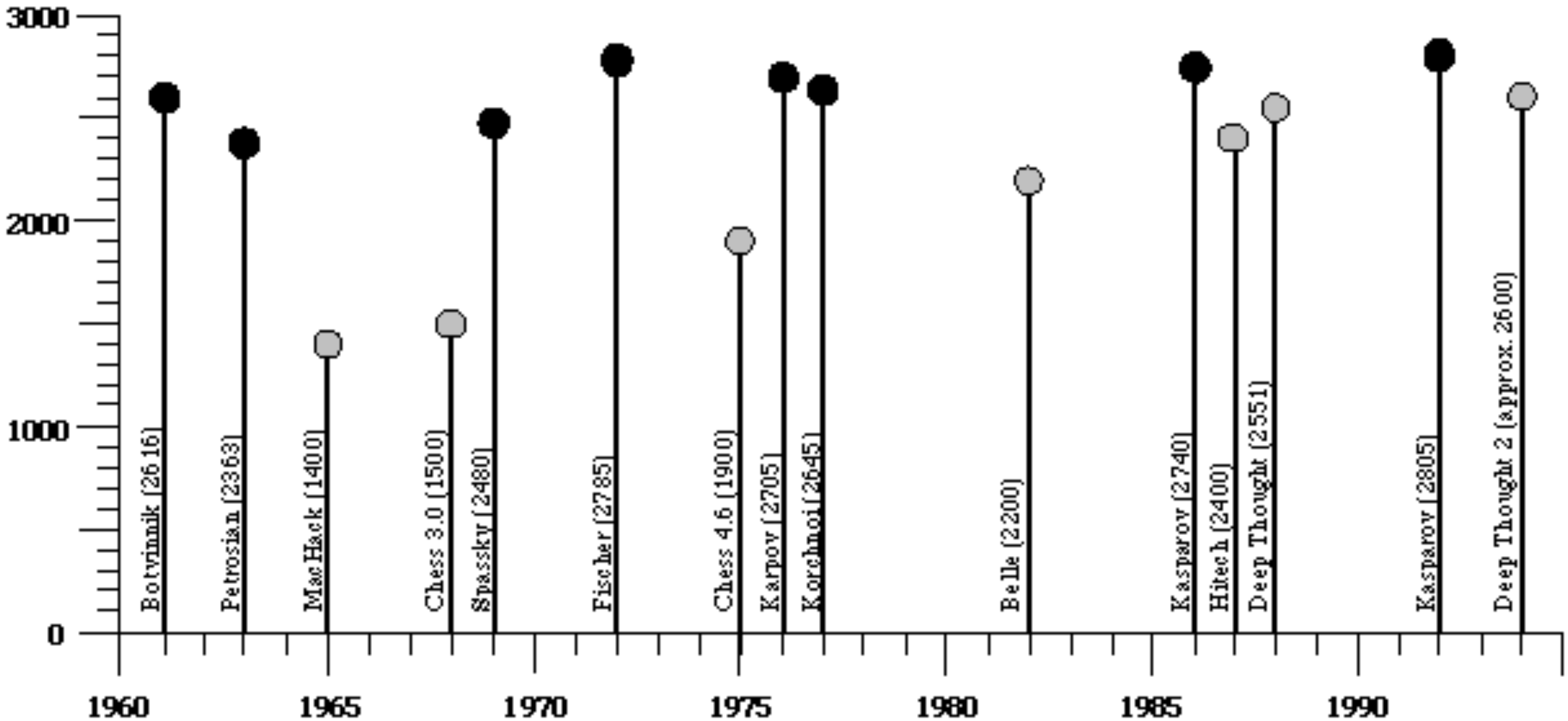
- Chinook is the World Man-Machine Checkers Champion, developed by researchers at the University of Alberta.
- It earned this title by competing in human tournaments, winning the right to play for the (human) world championship, and eventually defeating the best players in the world.
- Visit http://www.cs.ualberta.ca/~chinook/ to play a version of Chinook over the Internet.
- The developers have fully analyzed the game of checkers and have the complete game tree for it.
  – Perfect play on both sides results in a tie.
- “One Jump Ahead: Challenging Human Supremacy in Checkers” Jonathan Schaeffer, University of Alberta (496 pages, Springer. $34.95, 1998).

The board set for play

Red to play



Ratings of human and computer chess champions




Kasparov vs. Deep Blue: The Rematch - Netscape
File Edit View Go Communicator Help
Bookmarks Location: http://www.chess.ibm.com/home/html/b.html
may 11th game 6 : may 11 @ 3:00PM EDT | 19:00 GMT kasparov 2.5 deep blue 2.5
Home The match The players The technology Community
Deep Blue Wins 3.5 to 2.5
KASPAROV VS DEEP BLUE
the rematch
OVERVIEW
EVENT COVERAGE
MATCH NEWS
MAIN STORIES
With a dramatic victory in Game 6, Deep Blue won its six-game rematch with Champion Garry Kasparov
Commentary
George Plimpton on chess, Kasparov, and the limitations of computers
Read the article
Commentary
Vishwanathan Anand on the legacy of Kasparov vs. Deep Blue
Read the article
Club Kasparov
Visit the virtual home of the world's greatest chess player.
Guest essays
Thoughts on chess, computers, and what it all means
Read the essays...
Community
During the rematch, more than 20,000 people from 120 countries joined the community to talk about the match.
Clips from the rematch
Video footage from the games
Highlights from the games
Press room Chess reference Feedback Site guide
IBM
Document: Done

Typical case

- 2-person game
- Players alternate moves
- **Zero-sum**: one player's loss is the other's gain
- **Perfect information**: both players have access to complete information about the state of the game. No information is hidden from either player.
- No chance (e.g., using dice) involved
- Examples: Tic-Tac-Toe, Checkers, Chess, Go, Nim, Othello
- Not: Bridge, Solitaire, Backgammon, ...

How to play a game

- A way to play such a game is to:
  - Consider all the legal moves you can make
  - Compute the new position resulting from each move
  - Evaluate each resulting position and determine which is best
  - Make that move
  - Wait for your opponent to move and repeat
- Key problems are:
  - Representing the "board"
  - Generating all legal next boards
  - Evaluating a position

Evaluation function

- **Evaluation function** or **static evaluator** is used to evaluate the "goodness" of a game position.
  - Contrast with heuristic search where the evaluation function was a non-negative estimate of the cost from the start node to a goal and passing through the given node
- The zero-sum assumption allows us to use a single evaluation function to describe the goodness of a board with respect to both players.
  - **f(n) >> 0**: position n good for me and bad for you
  - **f(n) << 0**: position n bad for me and good for you
  - **f(n) near 0**: position n is a neutral position
  - **f(n) = +infinity**: win for me
  - **f(n) = -infinity**: win for you

Evaluation function examples

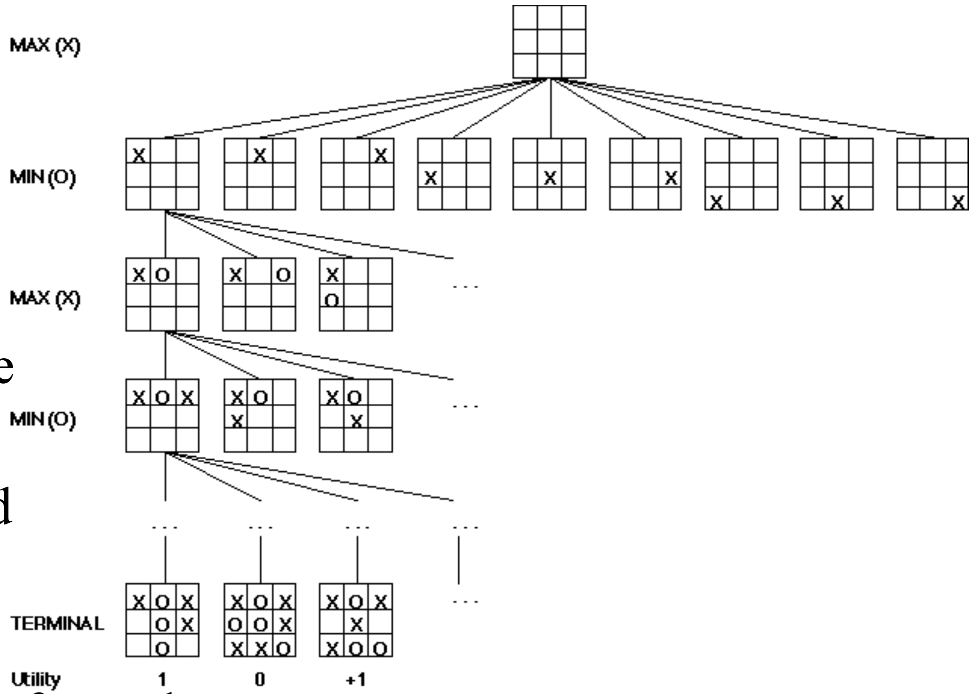
- Example of an evaluation function for Tic-Tac-Toe:

  f(n) = [# of 3-lengths open for me] - [# of 3-lengths open for you]

  where a 3-length is a complete row, column, or diagonal
- Alan Turing's function for chess
  - **f(n) = w(n)/b(n)** where w(n) = sum of the point value of white's pieces and b(n) = sum of black's
- Most evaluation functions are specified as a weighted sum of position features:

  $f(n) = w_1*feat_1(n) + w_2*feat_2(n) + ... + w_n*feat_k(n)$
- Example features for chess are piece count, piece placement, squares controlled, etc.
- Deep Blue had over 8000 features in its evaluation function

Game trees

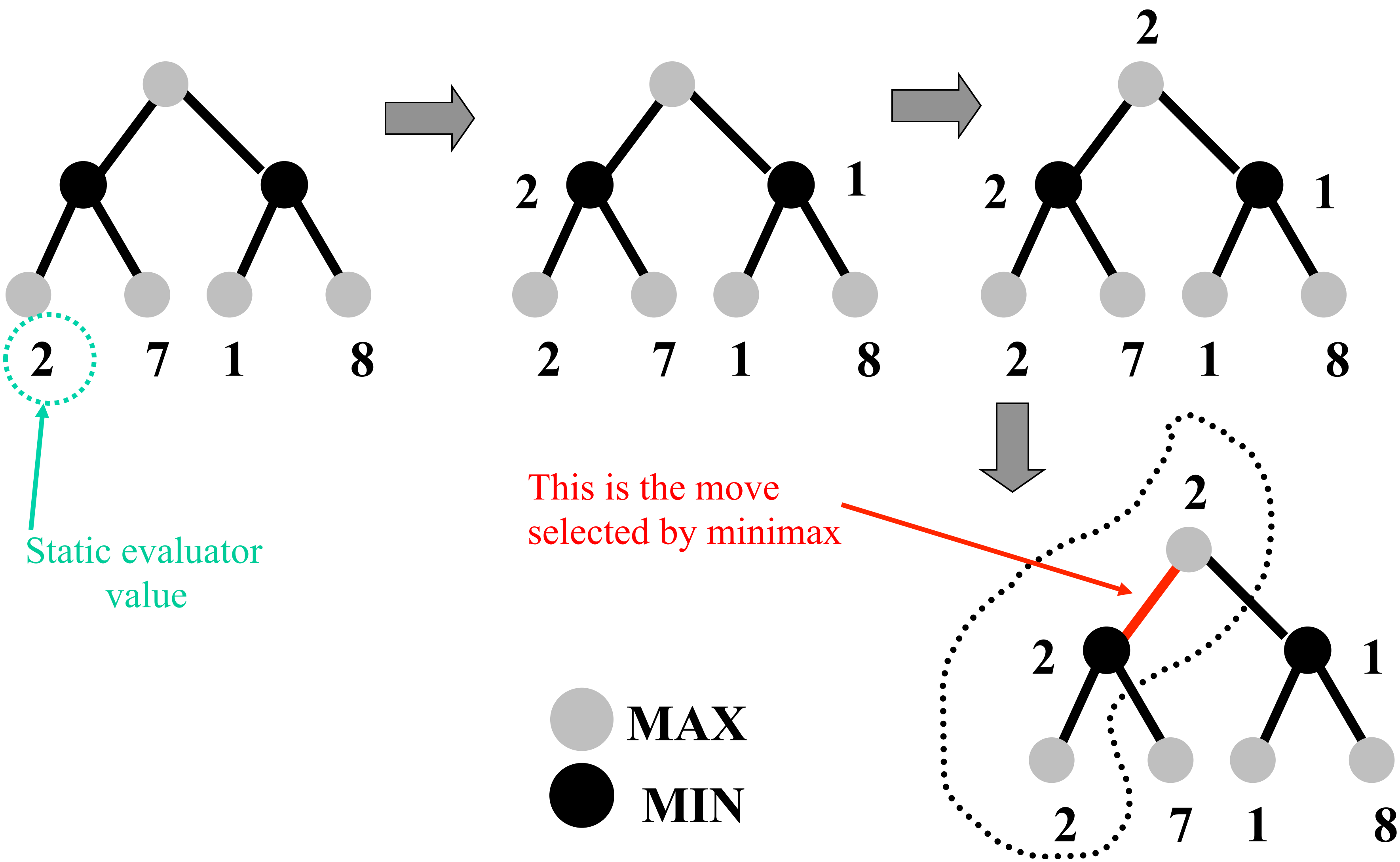


- Problem spaces for typical games are represented as trees
- Root node represents the current board configuration; player must decide the best single move to make next
- **Static evaluator function** rates a board position. f(board) = real number with f>0 “white” (me), f<0 for black (you)
- Arcs represent the possible legal moves for a player
- If it is **my turn** to move, then the root is labeled a "**MAX**" node; otherwise it is labeled a "**MIN**" node, indicating **my opponent's turn**.
- Each level of the tree has nodes that are all MAX or all MIN; nodes at level i are of the opposite kind from those at level i+1

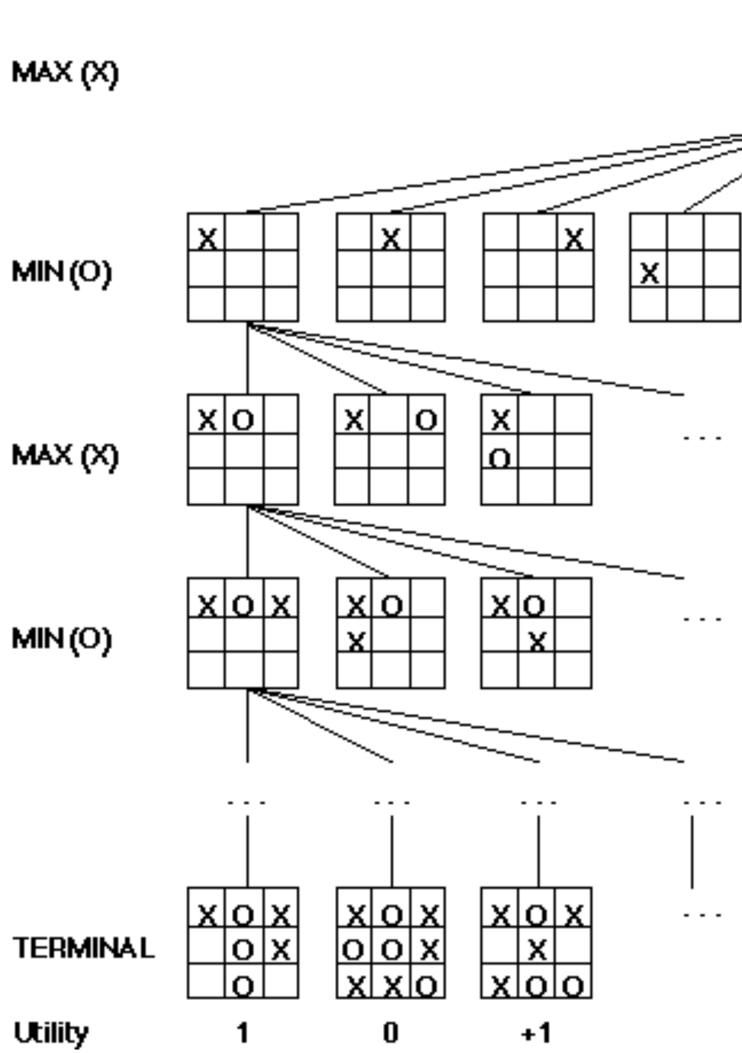
Minimax procedure

- Create start node as a MAX node with current board configuration
- Expand nodes down to some **depth** (a.k.a. **ply**) of lookahead in the game
- Apply the evaluation function at each of the leaf nodes
- "Back up" values for each of the non-leaf nodes until a value is computed for the root node
  - At MIN nodes, the backed-up value is the **minimum** of the values associated with its children.
  - At MAX nodes, the backed-up value is the **maximum** of the values associated with its children.
- Pick the operator associated with the child node whose backed-up value determined the value at the root

Minimax Algorithm

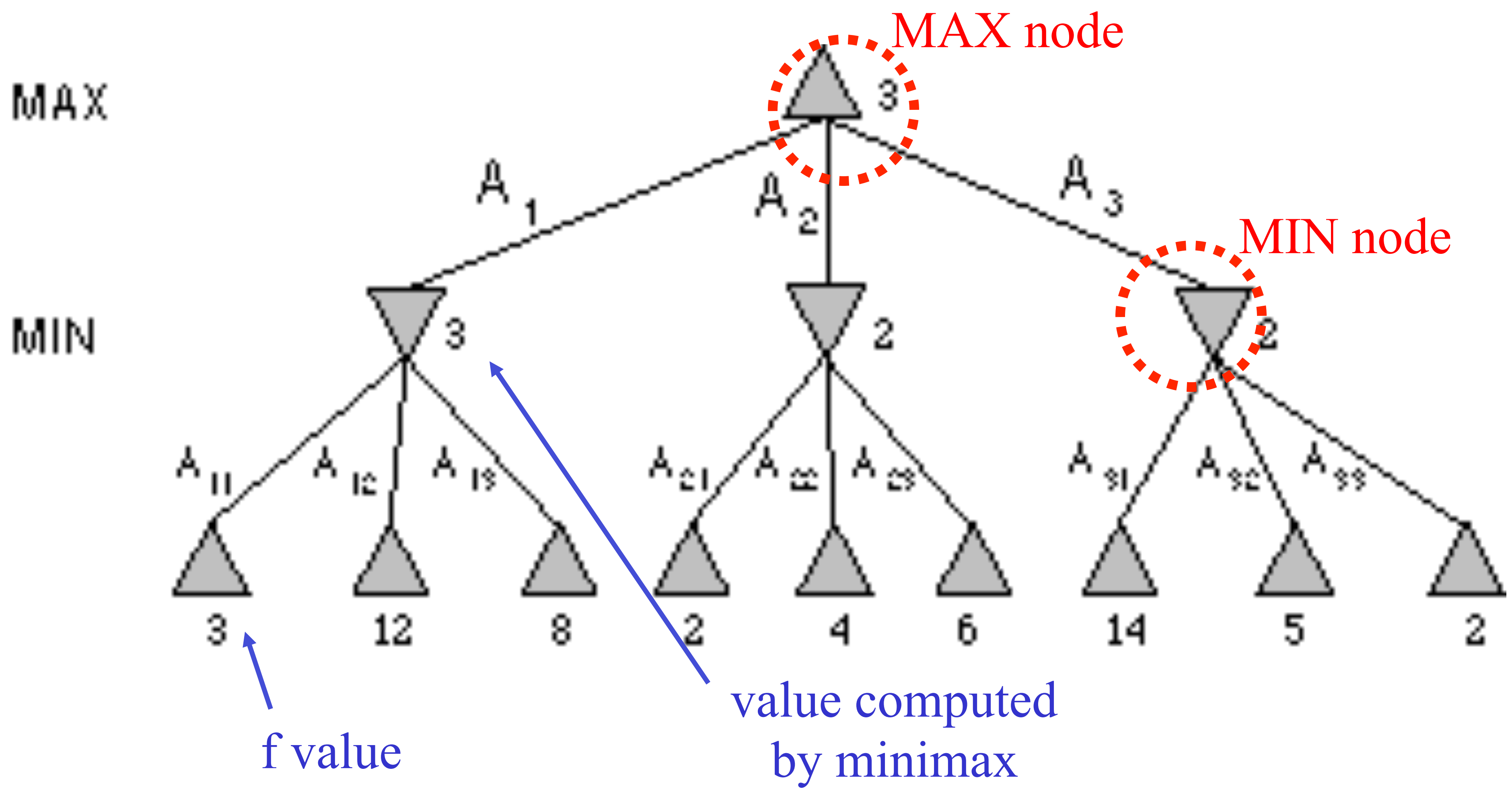


Partial Game Tree for Tic-Tac-Toe



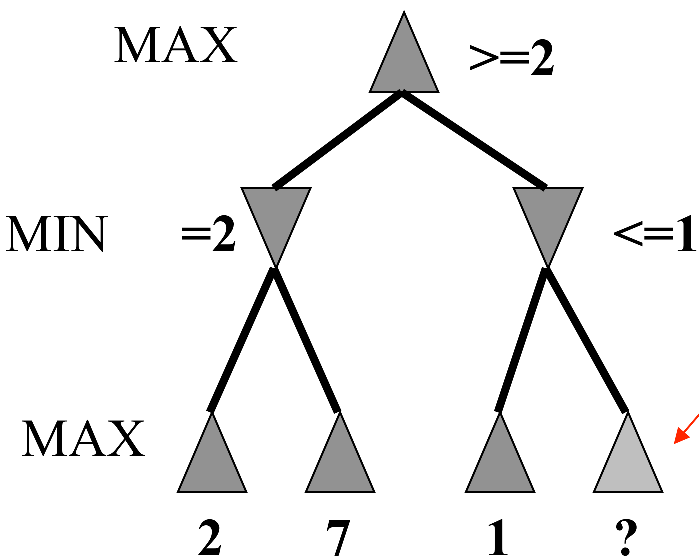
- f(n) = +1 if the position is a win for X.
- f(n) = -1 if the position is a win for O.
- f(n) = 0 if the position is a draw.

Minimax Tree



Alpha-beta pruning

- We can improve on the performance of the minimax algorithm through **alpha-beta pruning**
- Basic idea: *"If you have an idea that is surely bad, don't take the time to see how truly awful it is."* -- Pat Winston

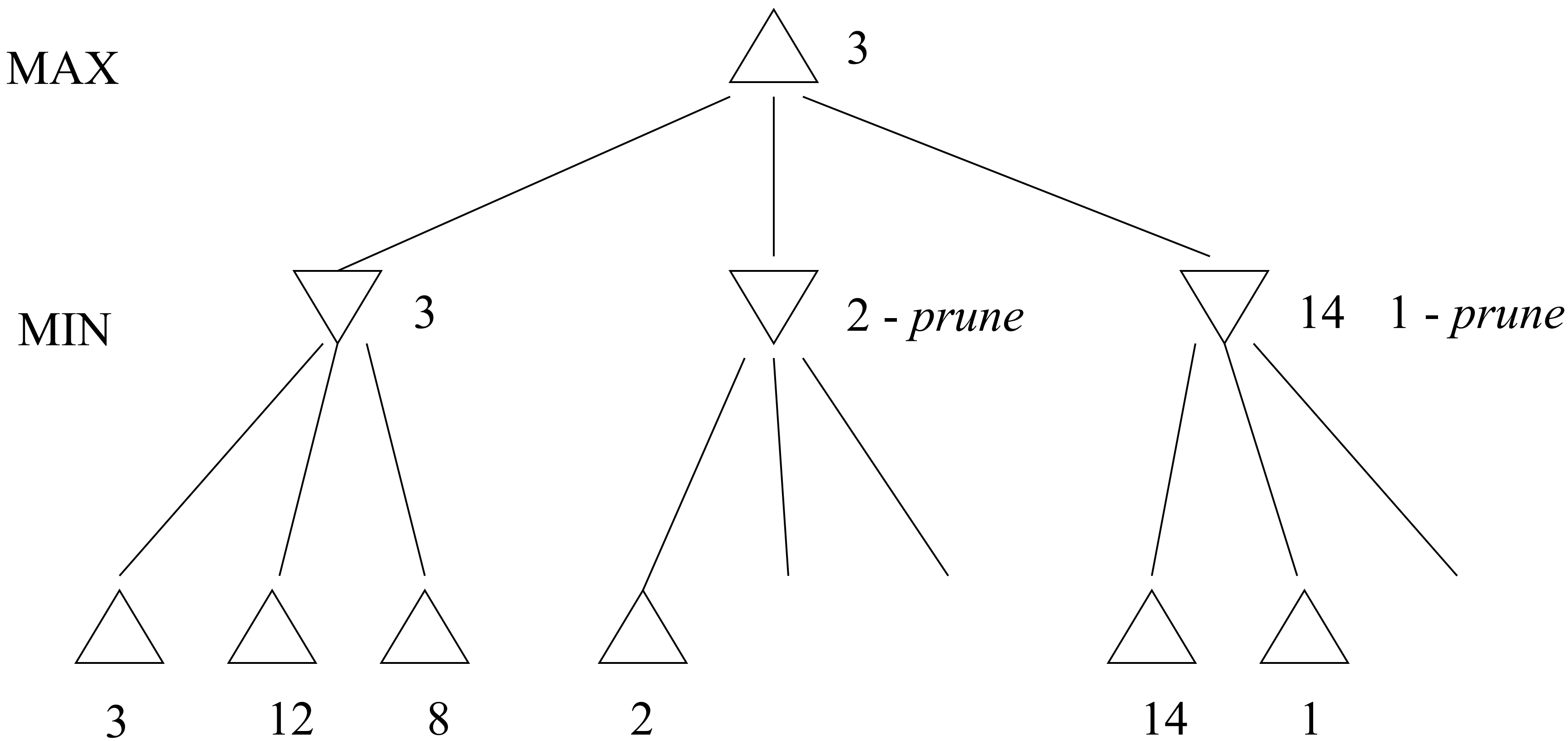


- We don't need to compute the value at this node.
- No matter what it is, it can't affect the value of the root node.

Alpha-beta pruning

- Traverse the search tree in depth-first order
- At each **MAX** node n, **alpha(n)** = maximum value found so far
- At each **MIN** node n, **beta(n)** = minimum value found so far
  - Note: The alpha values start at -infinity and only increase, while beta values start at +infinity and only decrease.
- **Beta cutoff**: Given a MAX node n, cut off the search below n (i.e., don't generate or examine any more of n's children) if alpha(n) >= beta(i) for some MIN node ancestor i of n.
- **Alpha cutoff:** stop searching below MIN node n if beta(n) <= alpha(i) for some MAX node ancestor i of n.

Alpha-beta example



Alpha-beta algorithm

```
function MAX-VALUE (state, α, β)
    ;; α = best MAX so far; β = best MIN
if TERMINAL-TEST (state) then return UTILITY(state)
v := -∞
for each s in SUCCESSORS (state) do
    v := MAX (v, MIN-VALUE (s, α, β))
    if v >= β then return v
    α := MAX (α, v)
end
return v

function MIN-VALUE (state, α, β)
if TERMINAL-TEST (state) then return UTILITY(state)
v := ∞
for each s in SUCCESSORS (state) do
    v := MIN (v, MAX-VALUE (s, α, β))
    if v <= α then return v
    β := MIN (β, v)
end
return v
```

Effectiveness of alpha-beta

- Alpha-beta is guaranteed to compute the same value for the root node as computed by minimax, with less or equal computation
- **Worst case:** no pruning, examining b^d leaf nodes, where each node has b children and a d-ply search is performed
- **Best case:** examine only $(2b)^{d/2}$ leaf nodes.
  – Result is you can search twice as deep as minimax!
- **Best case** is when each player's best move is the first alternative generated
- In Deep Blue, they found empirically that alpha-beta pruning meant that the average branching factor at each node was about 6 instead of about 35!

Games of chance

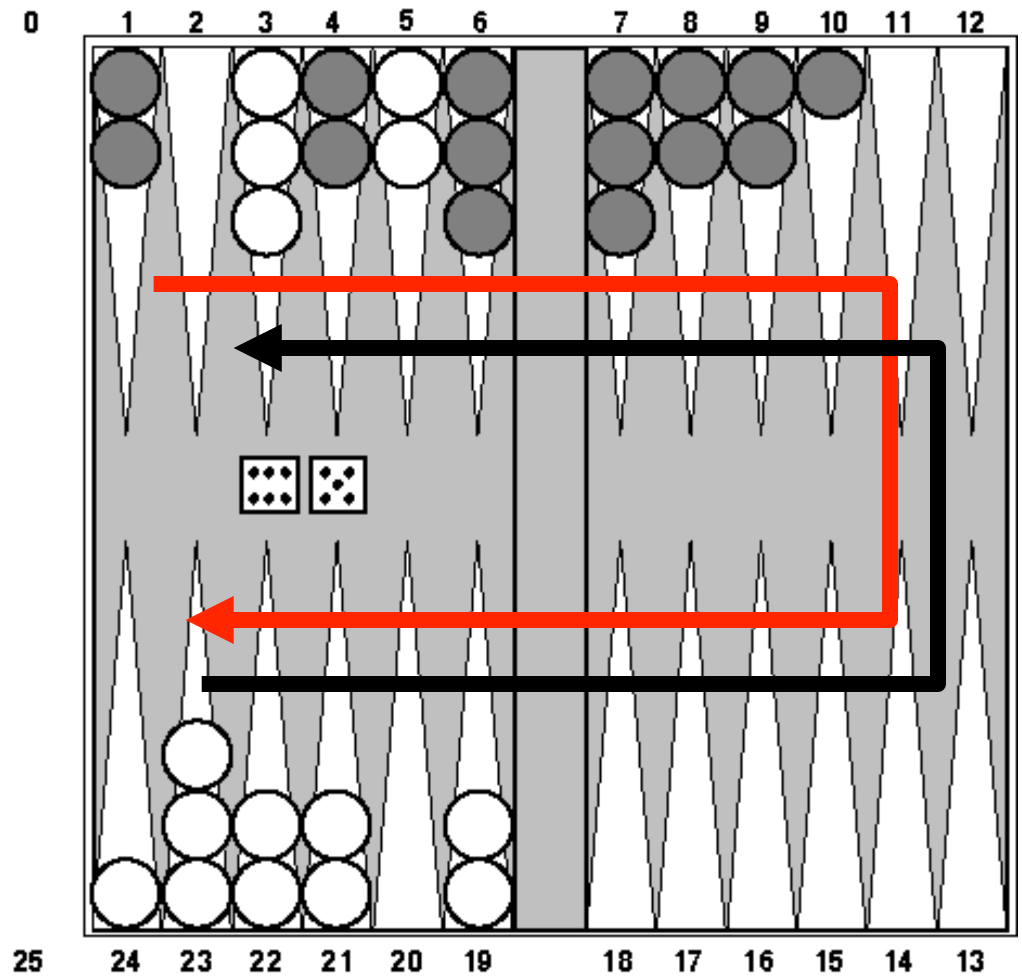
• Backgammon is a two-player game with **uncertainty**.

•Players roll dice to determine what moves to make.

•White has just rolled *5 and 6* and has four legal moves:

- • 5-10, 5-11
- •5-11, 19-24
- •5-10, 10-16
- •5-11, 11-16

•Such games are good for exploring decision making in adversarial problems involving skill and luck.



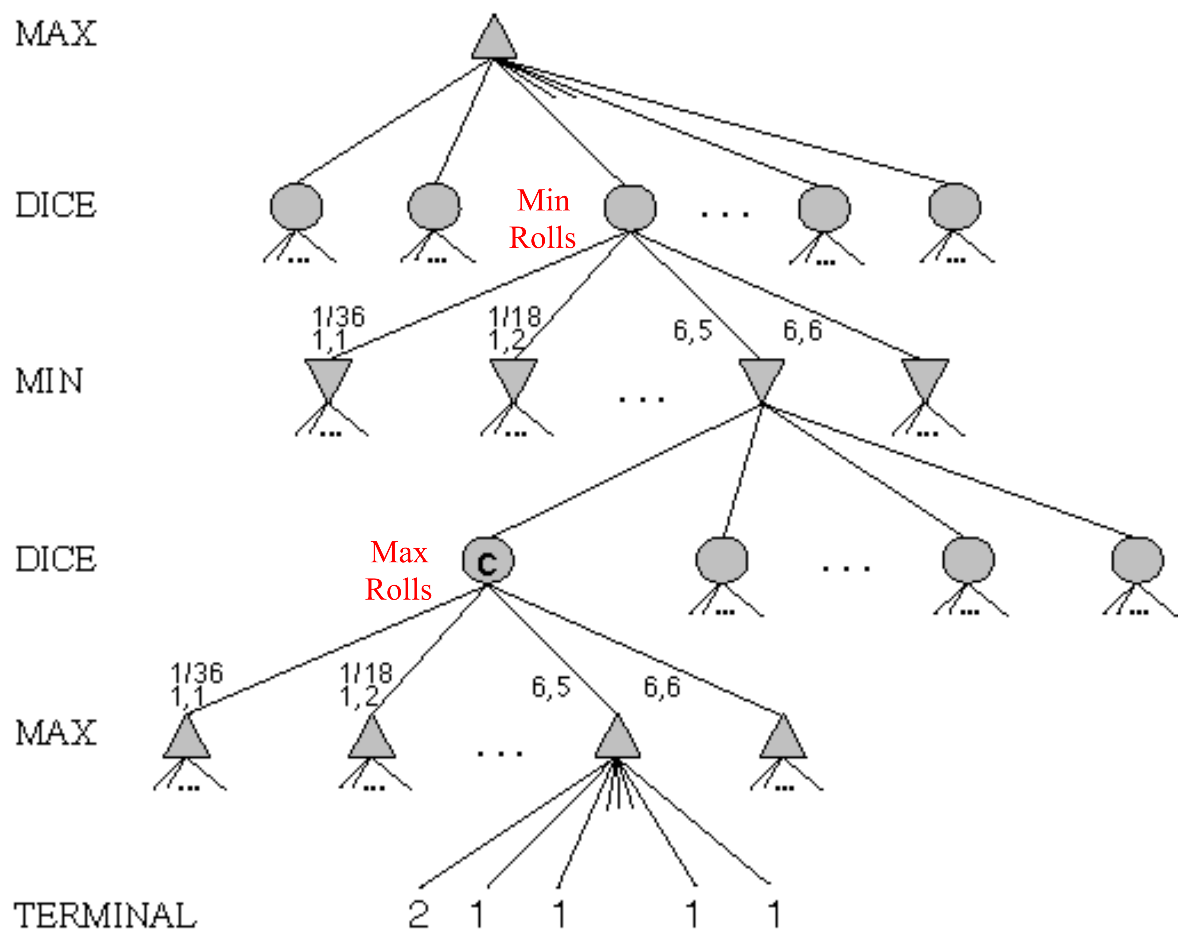
Game trees with chance nodes

- **Chance nodes** (shown as circles) represent random events
- For a random event with N outcomes, each chance node has N distinct children; a probability is associated with each
- (For 2 dice, there are 21 distinct outcomes)
- Use minimax to compute values for MAX and MIN nodes
- Use **expected values** for chance nodes
- For chance nodes over a max node, as in C:

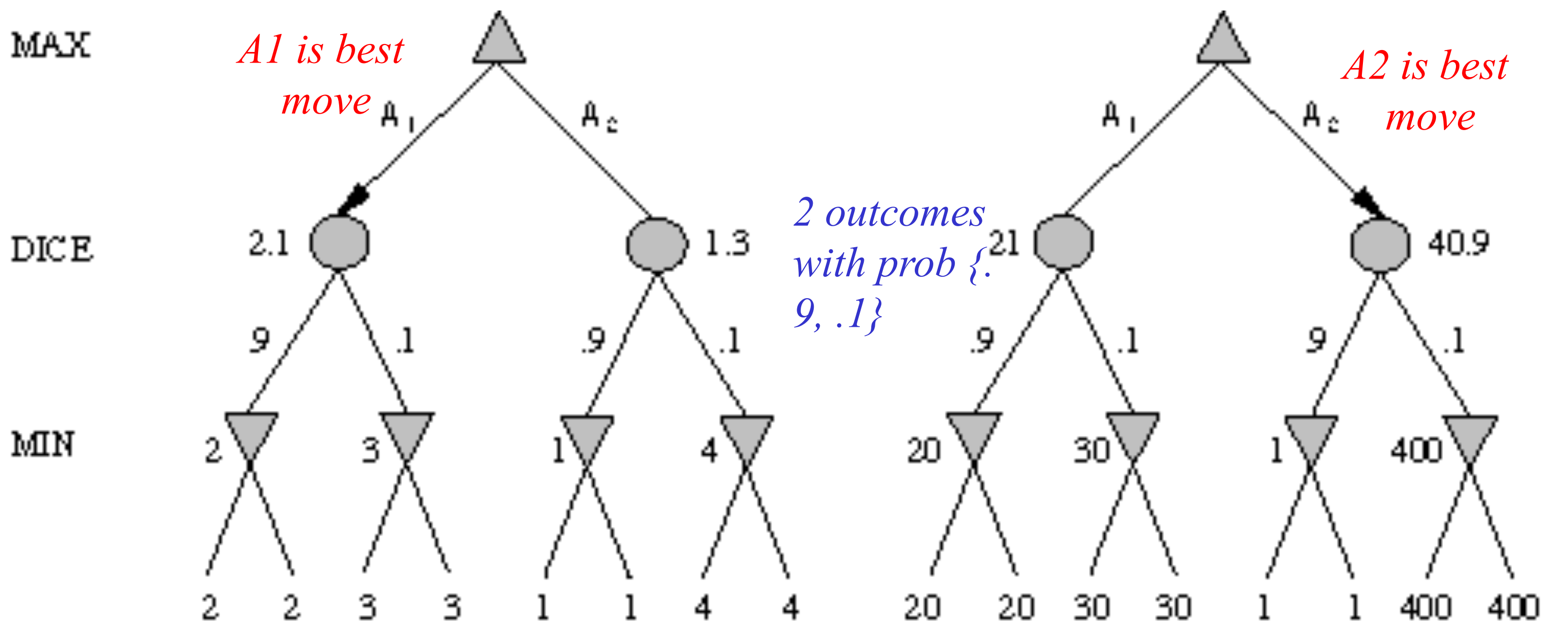
expectimax(C) = $\sum_i (P(d_i) * \text{maxvalue}(i))$

- For chance nodes over a min node:

expectimin(C) = $\sum_i (P(d_i) * \text{minvalue}(i))$



Meaning of the evaluation function



- Dealing with probabilities and expected values means we have to be careful about the "meaning" of values returned by the static evaluator.
- Note that a "relative-order preserving" change of the values would not change the decision of minimax, but could change the decision with chance nodes.
- Linear transformations are OK