

On The First Mini Quincala End Position with 8 Towers

Update on 26 January 2013

To load a score into Quincala Game Viewer, just *copy* the relevant “QSF-string” (enclosed by < >), then click the *Paste* button in the software (or use the keyboard to type Alt + v). If you cannot see the Paste button click the “Fn.” button until you see it.

In Acrobat Reader, to enable selection and copying, you might have to click “Select” on the top bar before you can highlight and copy the QSF-string. (Note: loading game scores will be much easier with the next version of the software.)

Update on 26 January 2013, by Ulf

This document updates my previous thoughts on the 8 tower end positions in mini-Quincala knocking game.

Expanding the idea of *exhaust material exchange* presented in the document “End Game Tactics with Many Towers” to an *unforced exchange*, which starts with a double knocking but the defender is not forced to knock back. The thinking is that it is wise for the defender to clear, ie knock back, but not to leave the pieces on the tower in order to threaten to knock the sown largest piece – the attacker then proceeds to knock again, and will win in the end. But even if the defender does not open himself to such a chain reaction the attacker can try and double knock somewhere else, keeping the favourable exhaust exchange going.

Performing a single knock attack often leads to a knock back of two pieces – a loss in material which would likely prove fatal to the attacker. Although interesting, and possibly useful in cramped position, the *short straight dart* does therefore often allow the defender to achieve an advantage in material.

The best attack listed in my 20 August edit below might be defended by clearing using the vulnerable tower in turn 25, like this:

```
<=QSF;0.1&Quincala;KM;6463636a69696263632637a69557  
48488696966869699695957788884455553948487584849988  
889384848858585533336373733555463737845454373645  
5455444554444448464544x958464544445546464584746454  
63764544554546958474645546353544554543747474536473  
74645544546;0.2&title=guarded_dart_attack_4_branch_1>
```

Note that White clearing/knocking back in move 25 is in some way forced, since if it is not done, Black could separate the two targets pieces and recover the material disadvantage:

```
<=QSF;0.1&Quincala;KM;6463636a69696263632637a69557  
48488696966869699695957788884455553948487584849988  
889384848858585533336373733555463737845454373645  
5455444554444448464544x95848445464684645445445454;  
0.2&title=guarded_dart_attack_4_branch_2>
```

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Exploring the double knock idea from the end of the drawn match, with a well played defence, also this looks like ending in a draw, or at least a hard to win position:

```
<=QSF;0.1&Quincala;KM;6463636a69696263632637a69557  
48488696966869699695957788884455553948487584849988  
88938484885858553333363737335555463737845454588888  
547474374747555353885858x;0.2&title=2010-09-12_Rnd  
_2_Brd_1_Andrew_Br_v_Aled_double_knock_1>
```

Trying to *split the towers* (create two towers with two pieces each from the one tower with three pieces) at the end does not seem to lead to any obvious win for either player:

```
<=QSF;0.1&Quincala;KM;6463636a69696263632637a69557  
48488696966869699695957788884455553948487584849988  
88938484885858553333363737335555463737845454588888  
54747437474755535388585863454748494757474745545747  
477484844736365363543658473647478487694758695858x9  
58574636358475869698786584736365464696868748586866  
8484747868888363535;0.2&title=2010-09-12_Rnd_2_Brd  
_1_Andrew_Br_v_Aled_double_knock_1_branch_1>
```

Conclusion 26 January 2013:

Currently, not finding good attacks, the end position with 8 towers starts to look like a real draw?