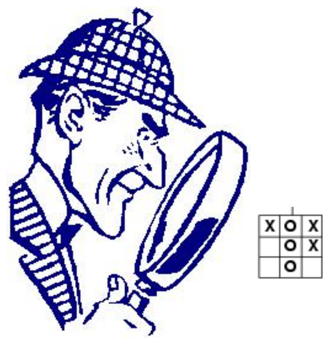
CSE 473

Lecture 7

Playing Games with Alpha-Beta Search

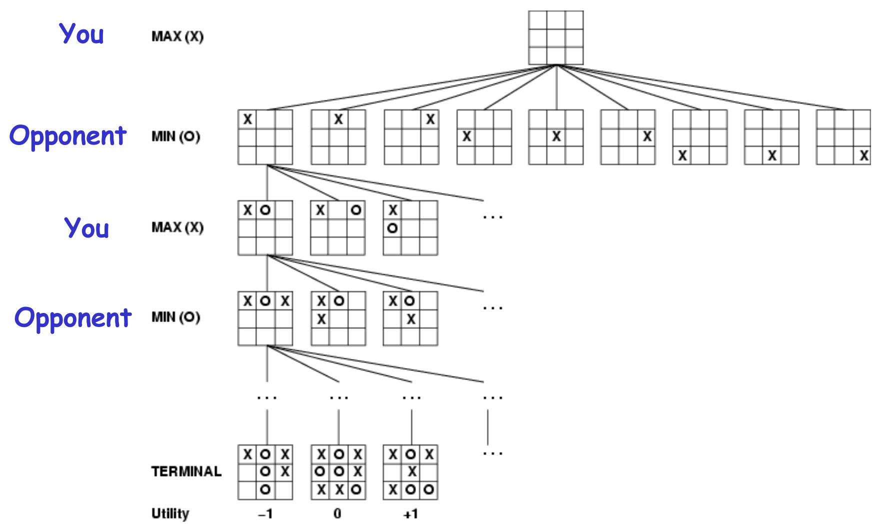


Today

- Adversarial Search
  - Minimax recap
  - α-β search
  - Evaluation functions
  - State of the art in game playing

Recall: Game Trees

From current position, unwind game into the future



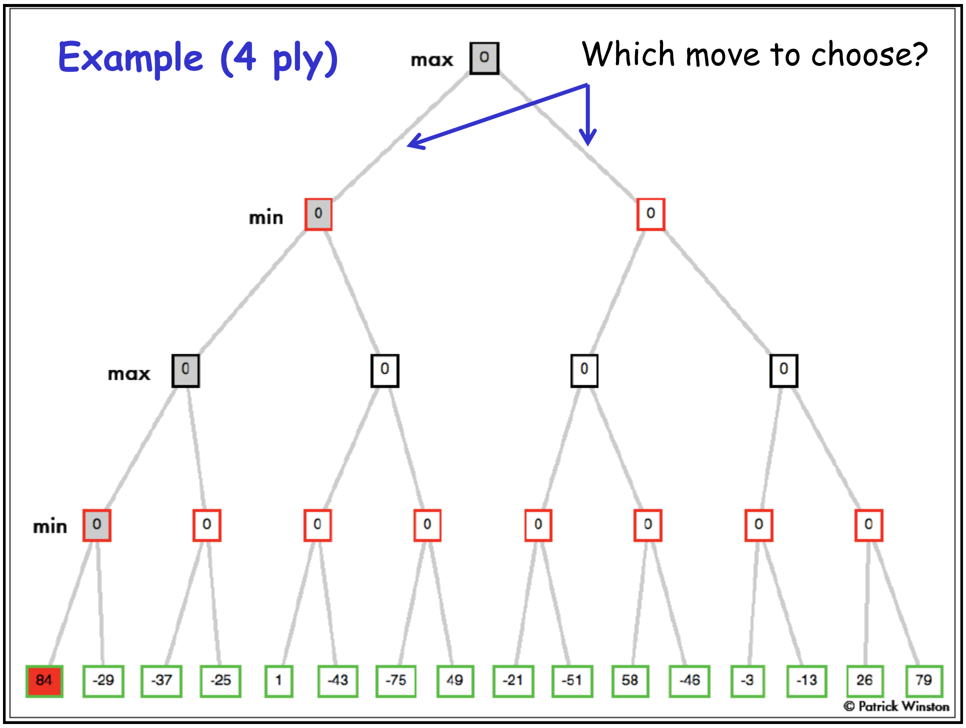
Recall: Minimax Search

- Find the *best current move* for MAX (you) assuming MIN (opponent) also chooses *its* best move

- Compute for each node *n*:

MINIMAX-VALUE(n)=

UTILITY(n)	if n is a terminal
$\max_{s \in succ(n)}$ MINIMAX-VALUE(s)	if n is a MAX node
$\min_{s \in succ(n)}$ MINIMAX-VALUE(s)	if n is a MIN node


Example (4 ply)
max
Which move to choose?
min
max
min
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0
0
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0
0
0
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0
84
-29
-37
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1
-43
-75
49
-21
-51
58
-46
-3
-13
26
79
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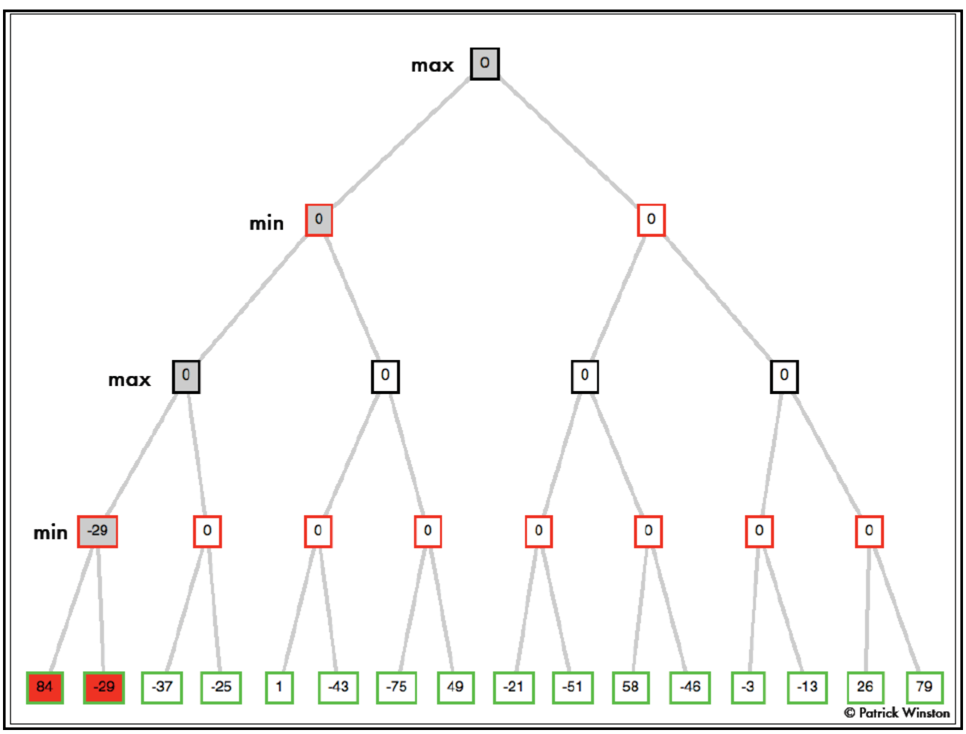
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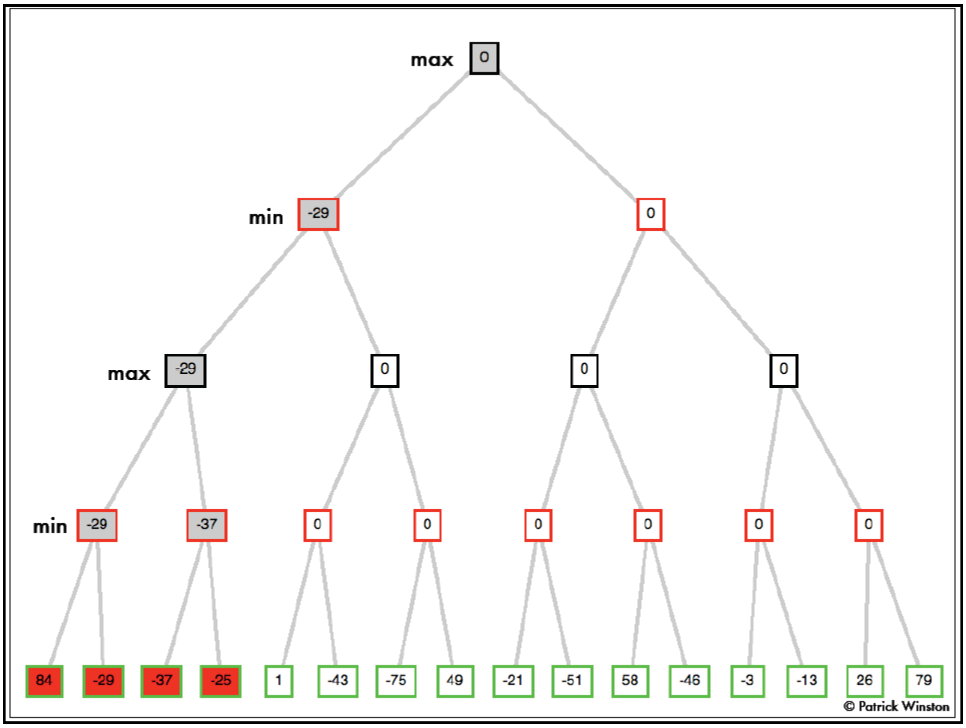
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84
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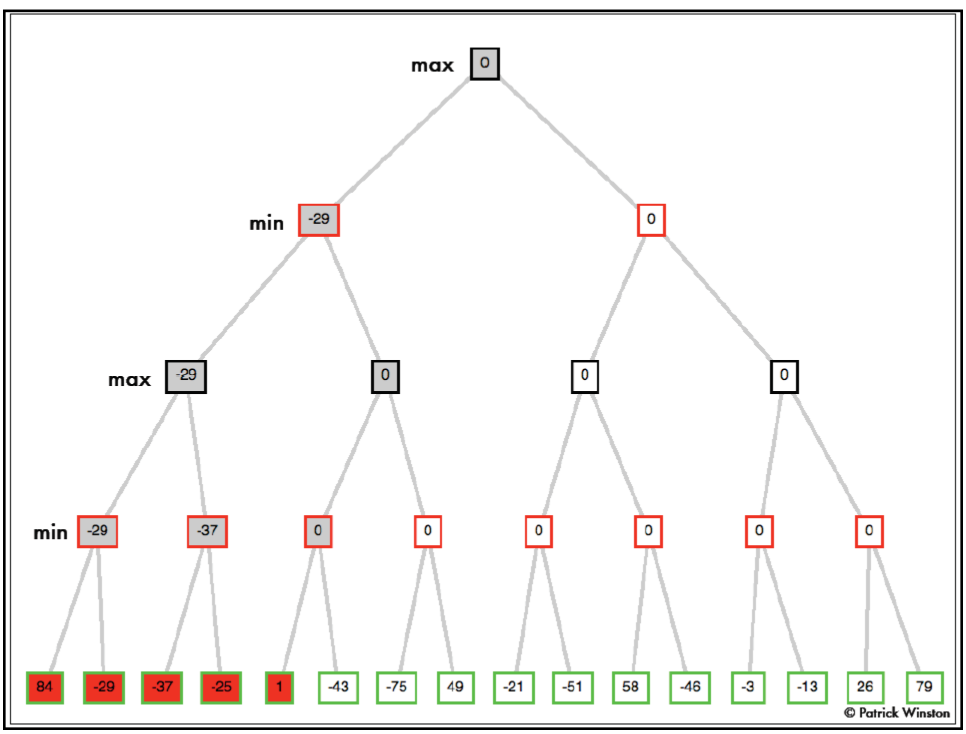
max
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min
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max
-29
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-37
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84
-29
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-46
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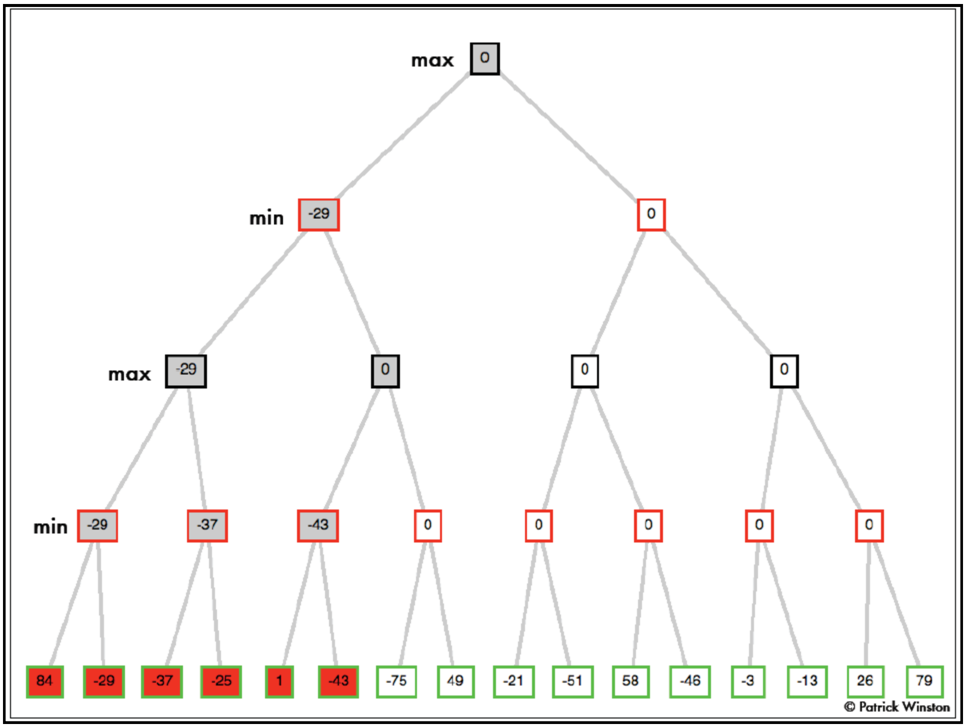
max
0
min
-29
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max
-29
0
0
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min
-29
-37
-43
0
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84
-29
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-21
-51
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-46
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26
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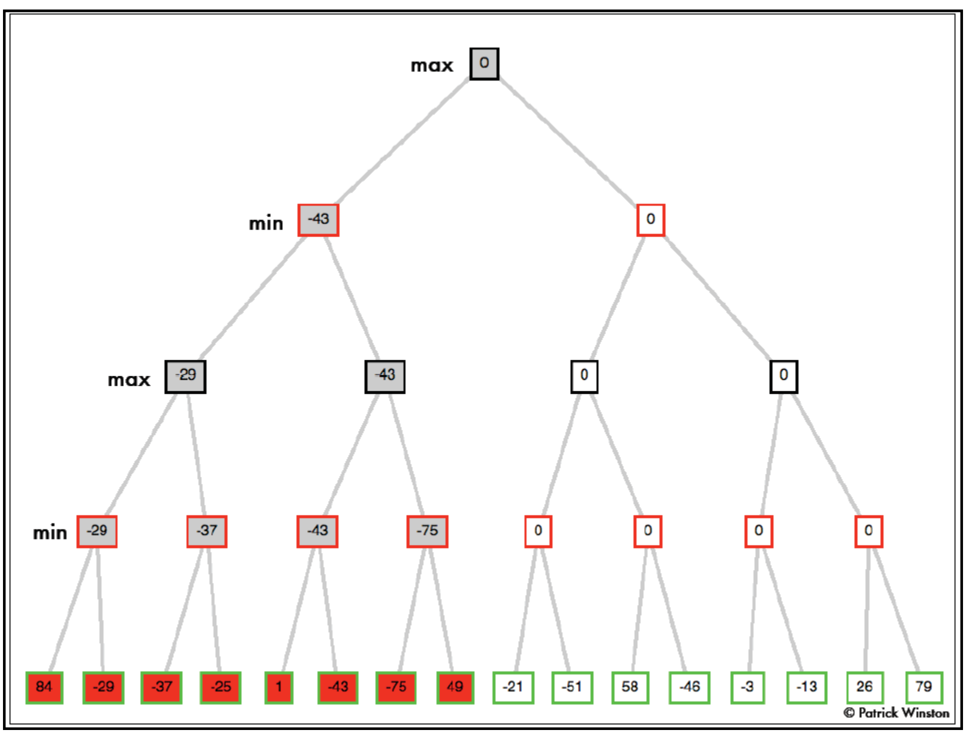
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84
-29
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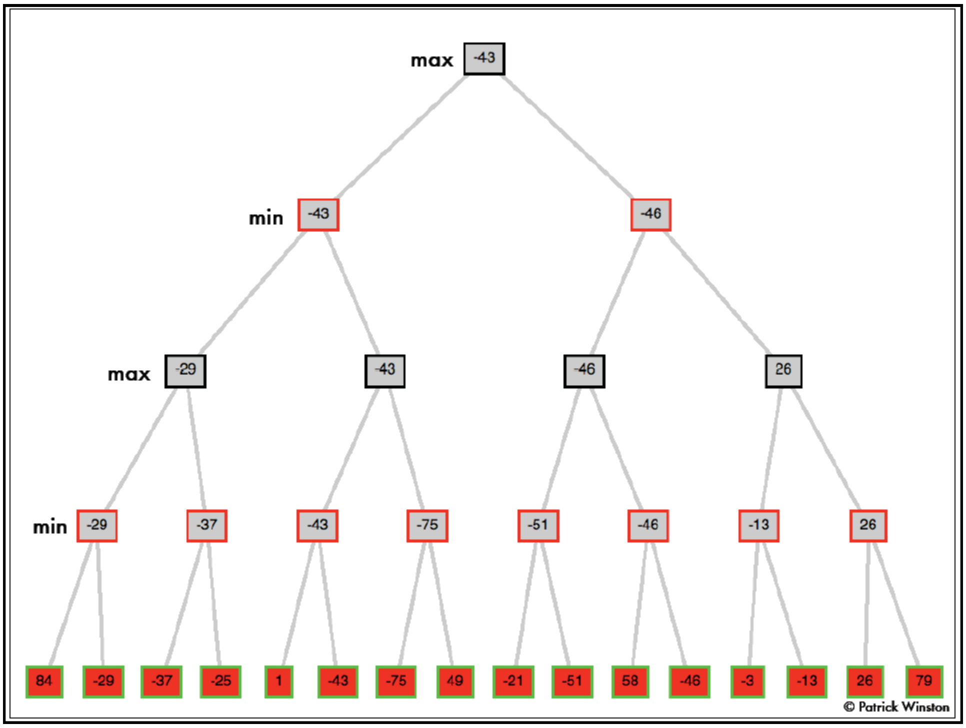
max
-43
min
-43
-46
max
-29
-43
-46
26
min
-29
-37
-43
-75
-51
-46
-13
26
84
-29
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-25
1
-43
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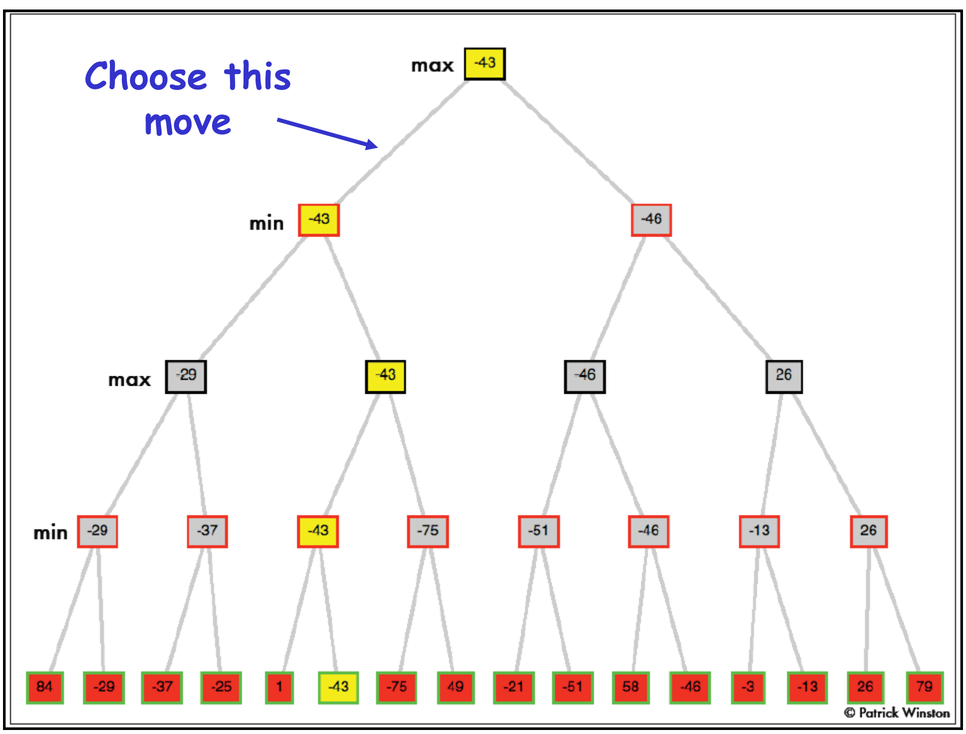
Choose this move
max
-43
min
-43
-46
max
-29
-43
-46
26
min
-29
-37
-43
-75
-51
-46
-13
26
84
-29
-37
-25
1
-43
-75
49
-21
-51
58
-46
-3
-13
26
79
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Minimax Algorithm

```
function MINIMAX-DECISION(state) returns an action
   v ← MAX-VALUE(state)
   return the action in SUCCESSORS(state) with value v

function MAX-VALUE(state) returns a utility value
   if TERMINAL-TEST(state) then return UTILITY(state)
   v ← −∞
   for a, s in SUCCESSORS(state) do
      v ← MAX(v, MIN-VALUE(s))
   return v

function MIN-VALUE(state) returns a utility value
   if TERMINAL-TEST(state) then return UTILITY(state)
   v ← ∞
   for a, s in SUCCESSORS(state) do
      v ← MIN(v, MAX-VALUE(s))
   return v
```

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Properties of minimax

- Complete? Yes (if tree is finite)
- Optimal? Yes (against an optimal opponent)
- Time complexity? $O(b^m)$
- Space complexity? $O(bm)$ (depth-first exploration)

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Good enough?

- Chess:
  - branching factor b ≈ 35
  - game length m ≈ 100
  - search space $b^m \approx 35^{100} \approx 10^{154}$

- The Universe:
  - number of atoms ≈ 10^{78}
  - age ≈ 10^{21} milliseconds

Can we search more efficiently?

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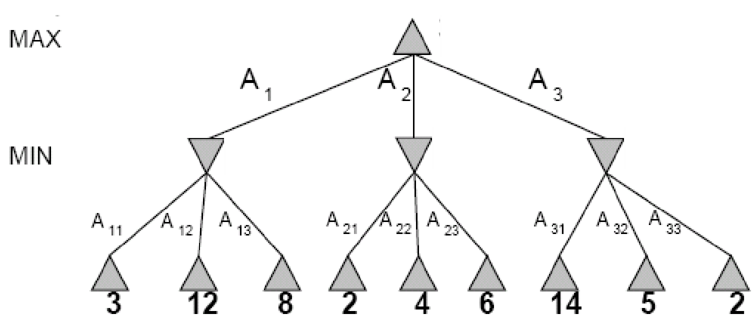
Two-Ply Game Tree



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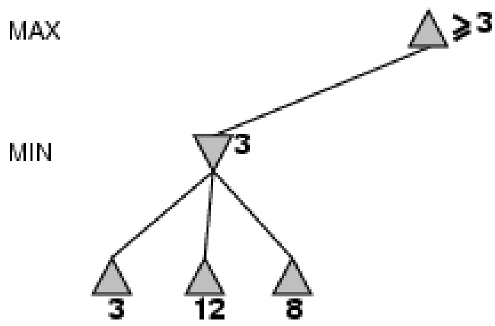
Pruning trees



Minimax algorithm explores depth-first

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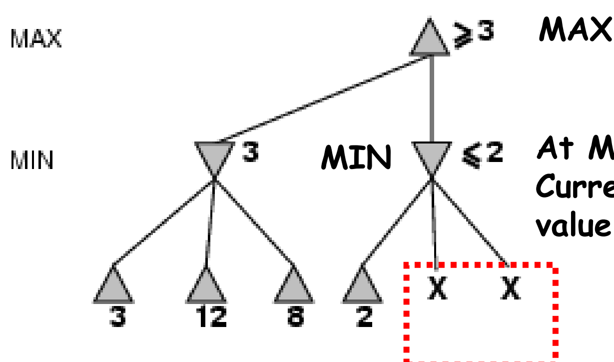
Pruning trees



At MIN node: Current best max value α = 3 > 2

No need to look at these nodes!! (these nodes can only decrease MIN value from 2)

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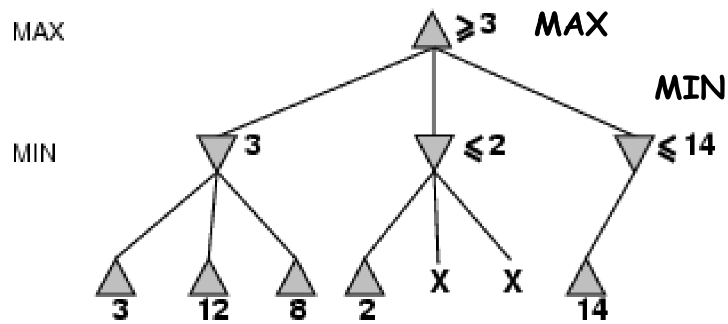
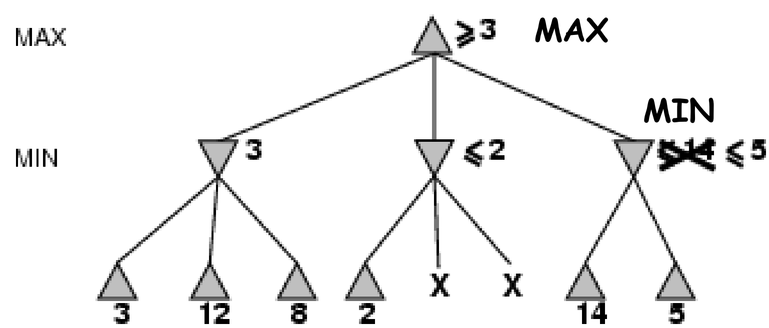
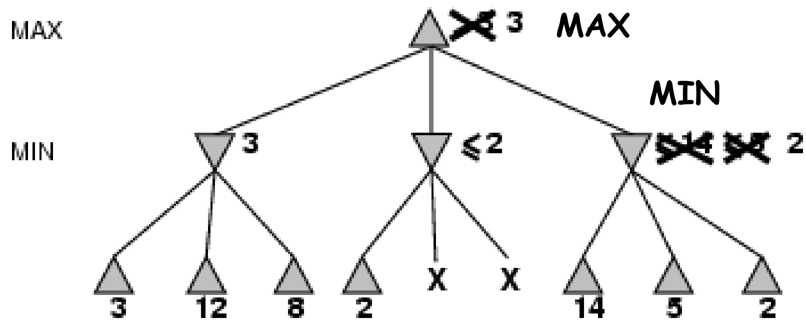
Pruning trees



Pruning trees



Pruning trees



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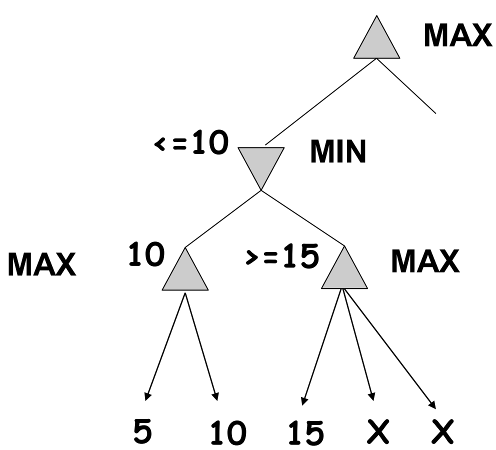
One more example



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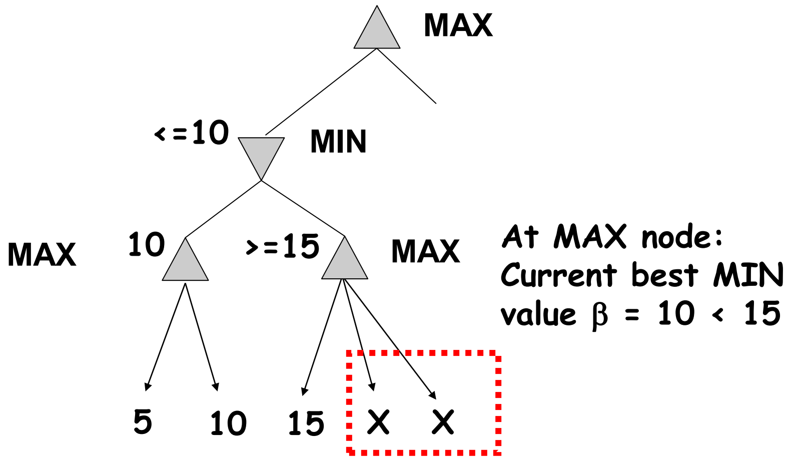
One more example



No need to look at these nodes!! (these nodes can only increase MAX value from 15)

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This form of tree pruning is known as alpha-beta pruning

alpha = highest (best) value for MAX along current path from root

beta = lowest (best) value for MIN along current path from root

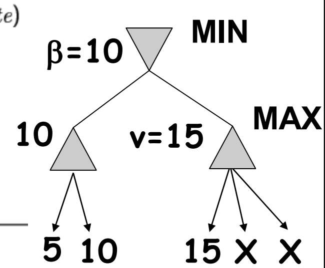
The α-β algorithm

(minimax with four lines of added code)

function ALPHA-BETA-SEARCH(*state*) **returns** *an action*
  inputs: *state*, current state in game
  $v \leftarrow$ MAX-VALUE(*state*, $-\infty, +\infty$)
  return the *action* in SUCCESSORS(*state*) with value v

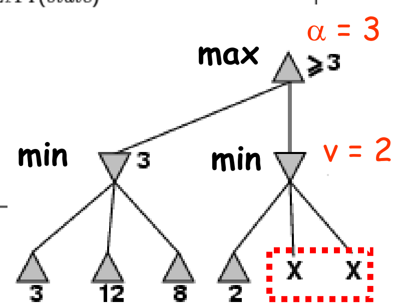
---

function MAX-VALUE(*state*, α, β) **returns** *a utility value*
  inputs: *state*, current state in game
    α, the value of the best alternative for MAX along the path to *state*
    β, the value of the best alternative for MIN along the path to *state*
  if TERMINAL-TEST(*state*) **then return** UTILITY(*state*)
  $v \leftarrow -\infty$
  for a, s in SUCCESSORS(*state*) **do**
    $v \leftarrow$ MAX(v, MIN-VALUE(s, α, β))
New { **if** $v \geq \beta$ **then return** v → Pruning
    $\alpha \leftarrow$ MAX(α, v)
  return v



The α-β algorithm (cont.)

function MIN-VALUE(*state*, α, β) **returns** *a utility value*
  inputs: *state*, current state in game
    α, the value of the best alternative for MAX along the path to *state*
    β, the value of the best alternative for MIN along the path to *state*
  if TERMINAL-TEST(*state*) **then return** UTILITY(*state*)
  $v \leftarrow +\infty$
  for a, s in SUCCESSORS(*state*) **do**
    $v \leftarrow$ MIN(v, MAX-VALUE(s, α, β))
  { **if** $v \leq \alpha$ **then return** v → Pruning
    $\beta \leftarrow$ MIN(β, v)
  return v



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Properties of α-β

- Pruning does not affect final result
- Good *move ordering* improves effectiveness of pruning
- With "perfect ordering," time complexity = $O(b^{m/2})$
  → allows us to search deeper – doubles depth of search
- α-β search is a simple example of the value of reasoning about which computations are relevant (a form of metareasoning)

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Good enough?

- Chess:
  - branching factor $b \approx 35$
  - game length $m \approx 100$
  - α-β search space $b^{m/2} \approx 35^{50} \approx 10^{77}$
- The Universe:
  - number of atoms $\approx 10^{78}$
  - age $\approx 10^{21}$ milliseconds

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Transposition Tables

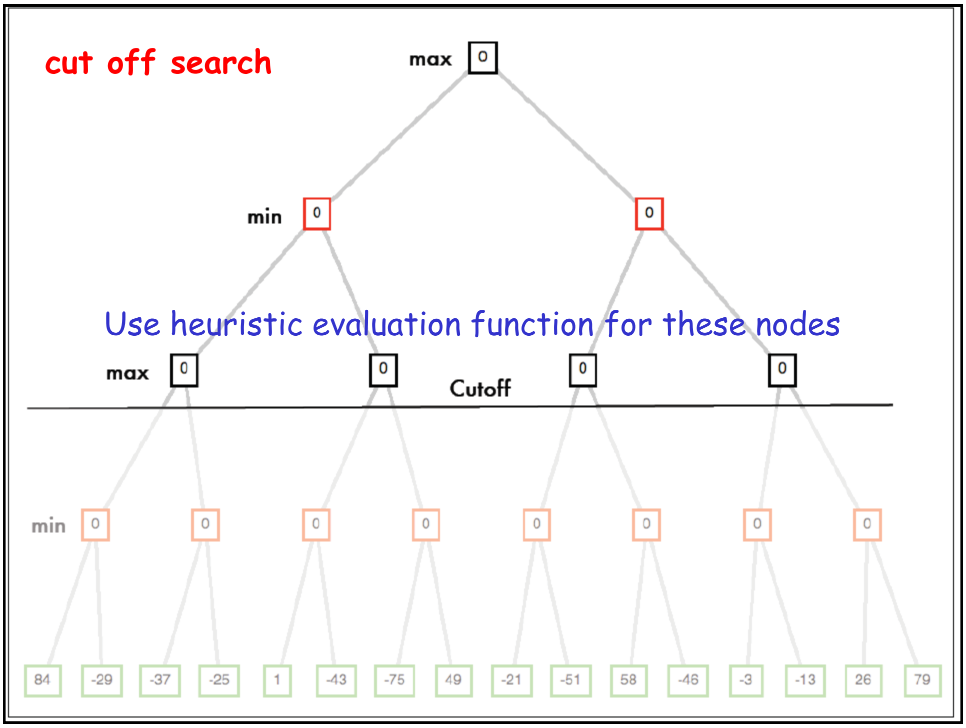
- Game trees contain repeated states
- In chess, e.g., the game tree may have 35^{100} nodes, but there are only 10^{40} different board positions
- Similar to *explored set* in graph-search, maintain a transposition table
  - Got its name from the fact that the same state is reached by a transposition of moves.
- 10^{40} is still huge!

Can we do better?

- Strategies:

  search to a fixed depth (cut off search)

  iterative deepening (most common)



Evaluation Function

- When search space is too large, create game tree up to a certain depth only.
- Art is to estimate utilities of positions that are not terminal states.
- Example of simple evaluation criteria in chess:
  - Material worth: pawn=1, knight =3, rook=5, queen=9.
  - Other: king safety, good pawn structure

eval(s) =

w1 * material(s) +
w2 * mobility(s) +
w3 * king safety(s) +
w4 * center control(s) + ...

Cutting off search

- Does it work in practice?
  Suppose $b^m = 10^6$ and $b=35 \Rightarrow m=4$

- 4-ply lookahead is a hopeless chess player!
  - 4-ply ≈ human novice
  - 8-ply ≈ typical PC, human master
  - 12-ply ≈ Deep Blue, Kasparov

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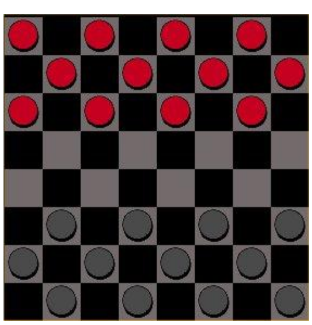
Game Playing State-of-the-Art

- **Checkers:** Chinook ended 40-year-reign of human world champion Marion Tinsley in **1994**. Used an endgame database defining perfect play for all positions involving 8 or fewer pieces on the board, a total of 443,748,401,247 positions. Checkers is now solved!



Game Playing State-of-the-Art

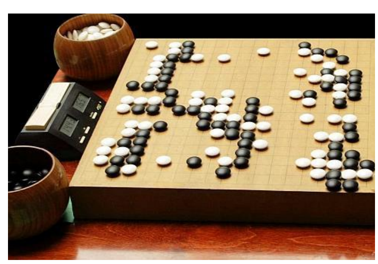
- **Chess:** Deep Blue defeated human world champion Gary Kasparov in a six-game match in **1997**. Deep Blue examined 200 million positions per second, used very sophisticated evaluation function and undisclosed methods for extending some lines of search up to 40 ply. Current programs are even better, if less historic.

(Deep Blue) (Garry Kasparov)

Game Playing State-of-the-Art

- **Othello**: Human champions refuse to play against computers because software is too good

- **Go**: Human champions refuse to play against computers because software is too bad.
  - In Go, b > 300, so need pattern databases and Monte Carlo search (UCT)
  - Human champions are now beginning to be challenged by machines.



- **Pacman:** The reigning champion is <your CSE 473 program here>

Next Time

- Rolling the dice
- Expectiminimax search

- To Do: Project #1 (due this Thursday!)

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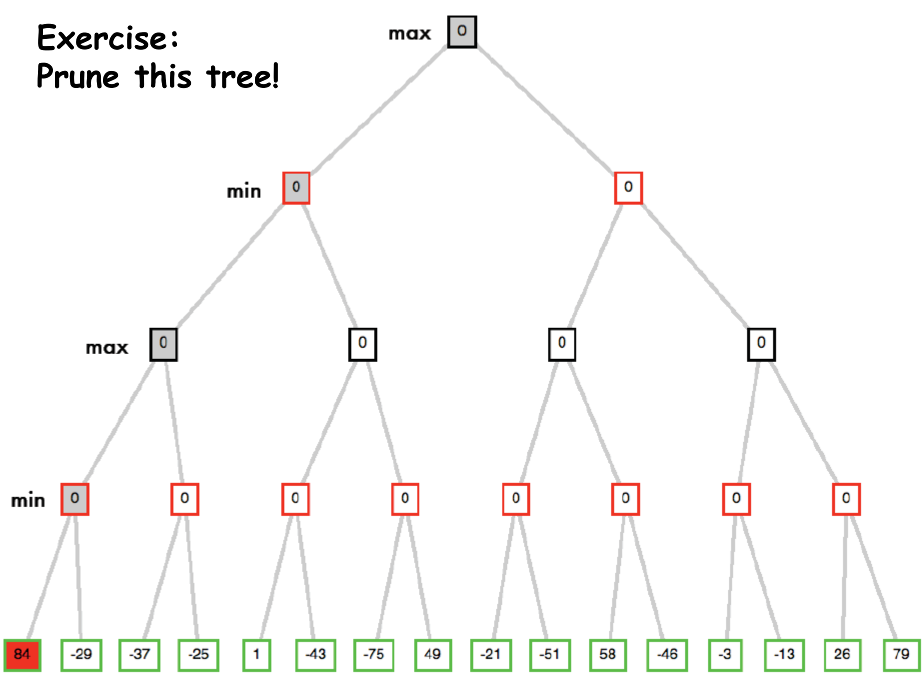
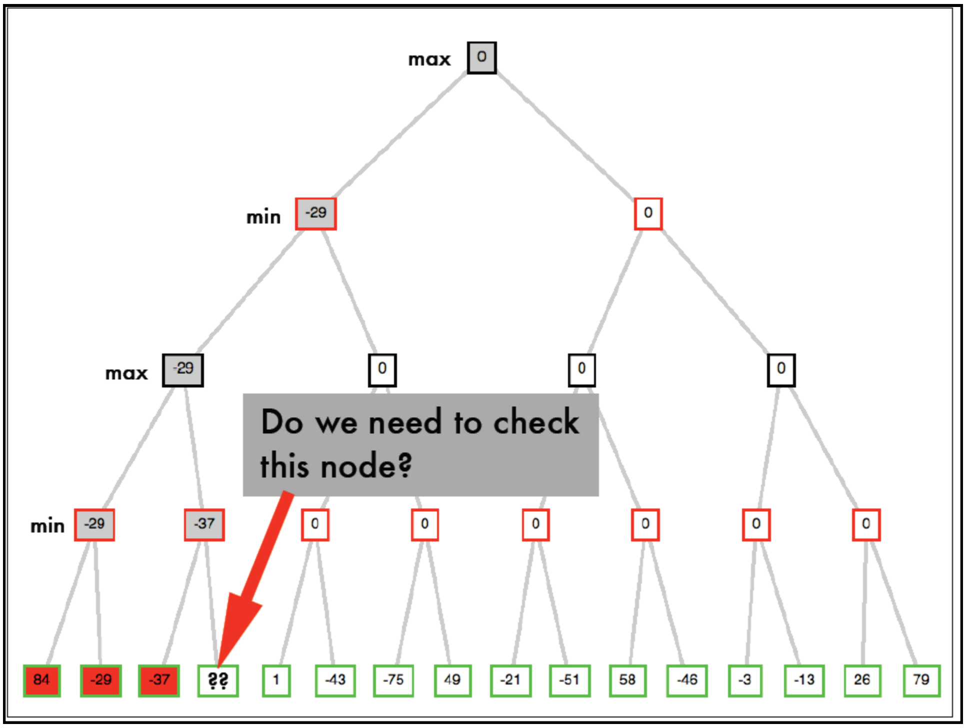
Exercise:
Prune this tree!




max
min
max
min
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-29
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-37
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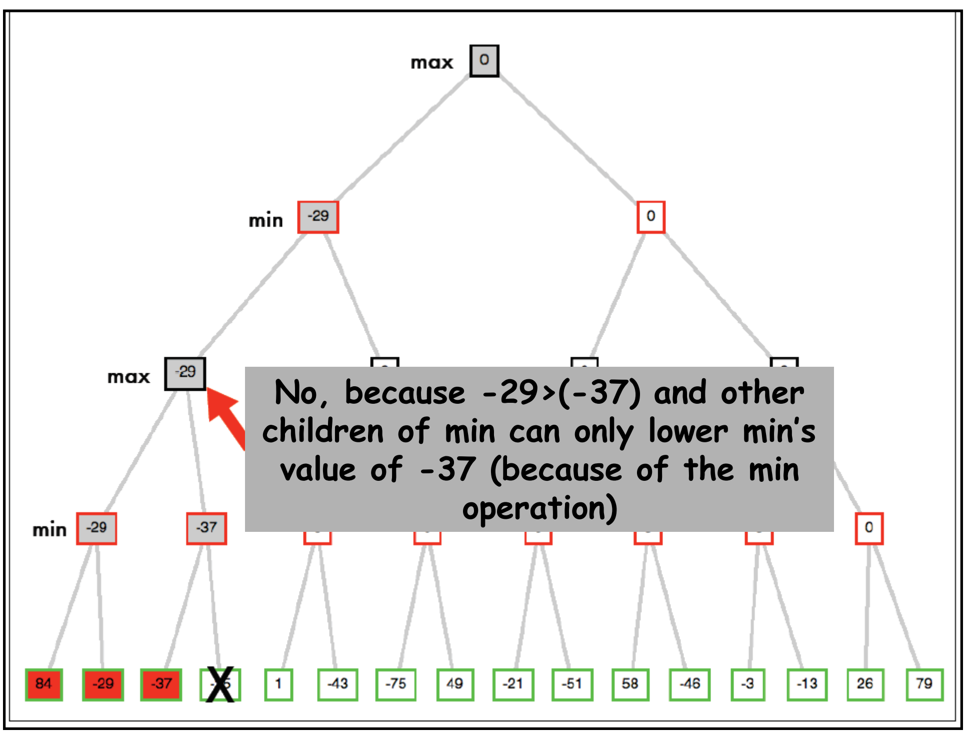
0
0
84
-29
-37
??
1
-43
-75
49
-21
-51
58
-46
-3
-13
26
79
Do we need to check this node?


max
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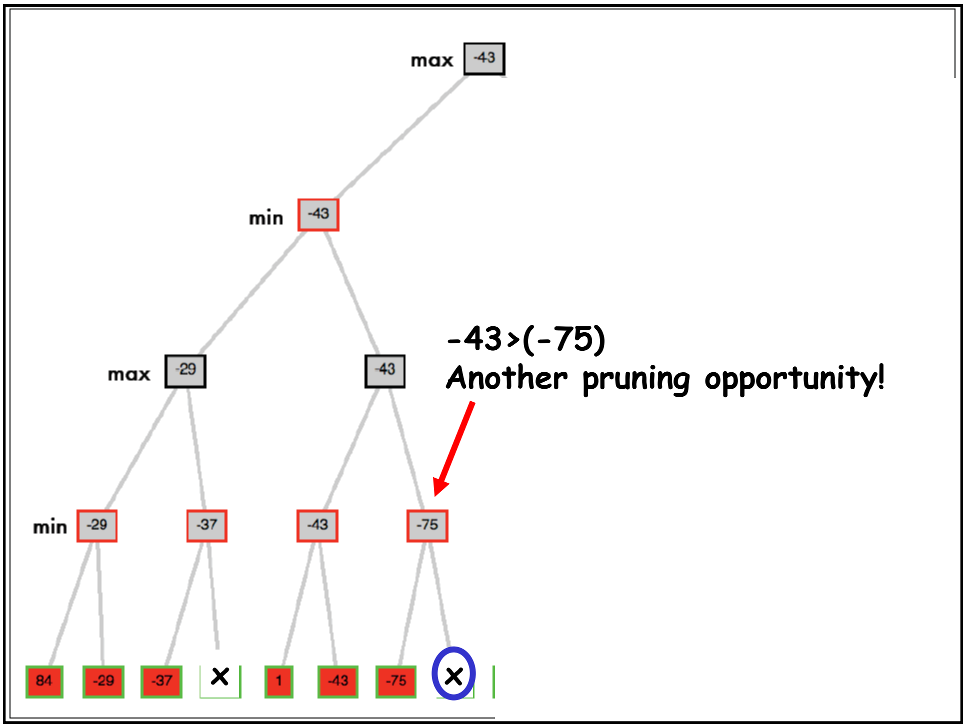
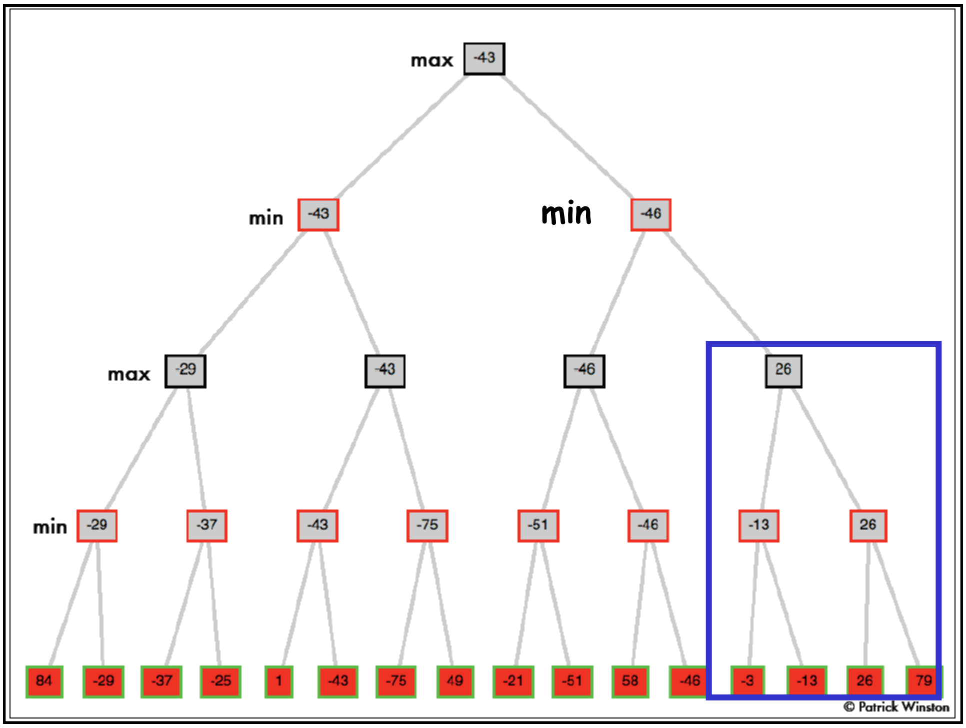
-37
0
84
-29
-37
X
1
-43
-75
49
-21
-51
58
-46
-3
-13
26
79
No, because -29>(-37) and other children of min can only lower min's value of -37 (because of the min operation)



Pruning can eliminate entire subtrees!


max
-43
min
-43
min
-46
max
-29
-43
-46
26
min
-29
-37
-43
-75
-51
-46
-13
26
84
-29
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-75
49
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58
-46
-3
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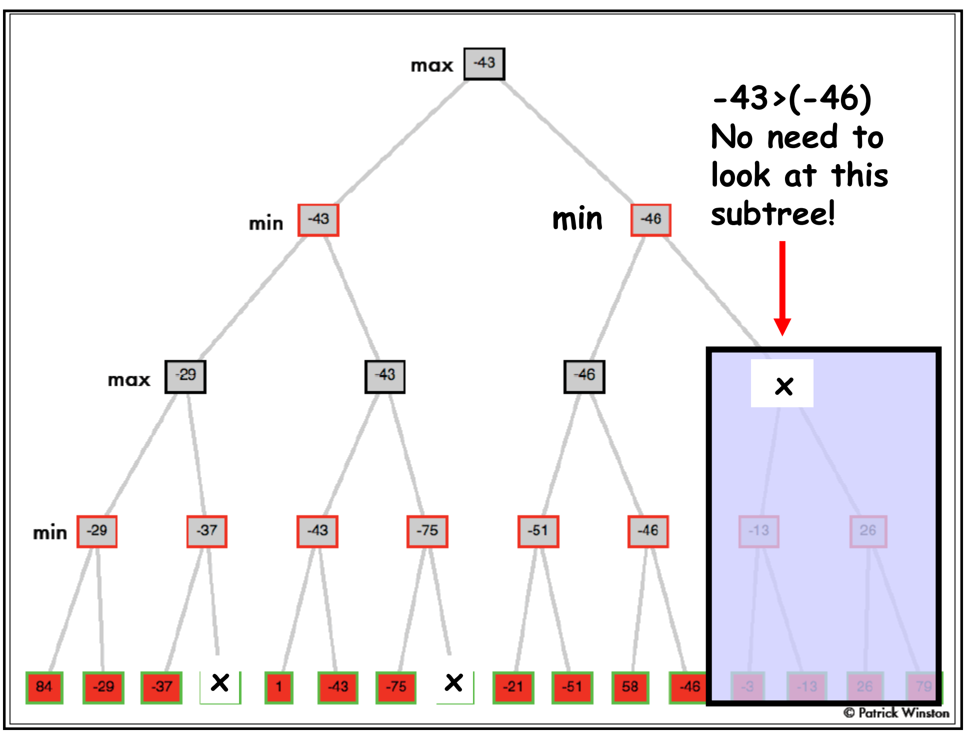
max
-43
-43>(-46)
No need to
look at this
subtree!
min
-43
min
-46
max
-29
-43
-46
X
min
-29
-37
-43
-75
-51
-46
-13
26
84
-29
-37
X
1
-43
-75
X
-21
-51
58
-46
-3
-13
26
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