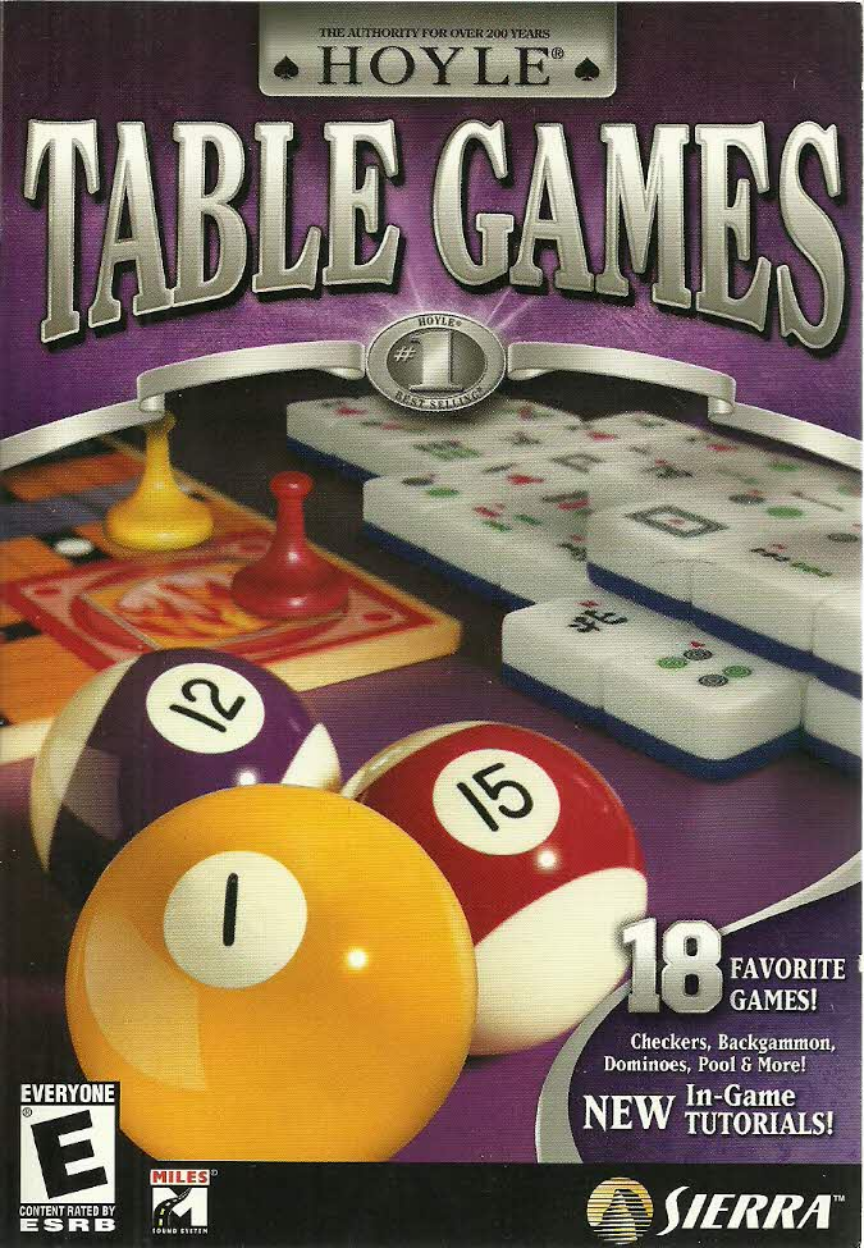
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Contents

Introduction

Welcome to Hoyle Table Games, where you will find games that provide hours of entertainment and challenge for you and your family. When you see the thundering explosions of our simulated missiles in Battling Ships, listen to the rattling of dice in our "felt-lined" Backgammon dice cups, or play against the many challenging and witty characters, we hope you will enjoy the attention to detail that went into creating this collection.

With Hoyle Table Games, you have your choice of playing against our colorful collection of computer players with adjustable skill levels, or against real people. In most games, you can compete with a friend or family member sitting beside you at the keyboard.

When you start Hoyle Table Games, sign in by typing your name and picking a character image to represent you. You can customize the game to match your preferences such as game speed, level of difficulty, background music, favorite characters, preferred game variations, and many others. The game keeps statistics for each player, so you can track your gaming progress over time. You can also save games and continue them during a later session.

After signing in, you can choose any of the games from the main screen by clicking on its icon. When you start a game, the "Getting Started" screen shows you basic information about how to play the game, and lets you change the players and game settings.

This guide focuses on game rules and strategy. For complete information on game controls, options, and all the fun features found in Hoyle Table Games, refer to the in-game help (click the Help button at the bottom of the game screen and select the desired topic). For installation instructions, please refer to the insert in the CD jewel case.

So get started playing some of the greatest table games of all time, according to Hoyle!

A Brief History of Table Games

Why bother with the history of table games? Because the story of our amusements mirrors the story of civilization. In the sharing of games, we can see the spread of cultures and kingdoms over the 6,000 years of recorded human history. We can trace the birth of table games to the first cities, in the river valleys of the Nile (modern-day Egypt) and the Tigris and Euphrates (Iraq). As humans moved through the Middle East, they brought their games with them. These games ended up in Persia, India, China, Korea, and Japan to the east, Greece and North Africa to the west.

The ancient Greeks handed off this legacy to Imperial Rome. Rome's legions marched, and tribal cultures (in what are now Germany, France, and England) learned new ways to play. The Norse learned these games and carried them to their colonies in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and Iceland.

When Rome fell, Islam arose, and the Arab states kept learning alive in the Dark Ages. They advanced old games to new levels of sophistication and brought them along when they invaded the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) and Sicily. The medieval era gave way to the Renaissance, and people found newer and faster ways to communicate, trade, and exchange ideas. The Spanish led the Old World's invasion of the New World, where the Native Americans had for centuries been playing games of their own.

How Did Table Games Begin?

When you think of the typical table game, you think of markers, tokens, pieces, or men maneuvering for advantage on a flat surface inscribed with lines or circles. This seems perfectly natural to us, but who introduced this concept? Where did the inspiration come from? Were table games originally an exercise in magic, an attempt to foretell the future or influence the course of events? A British scholar named H.J.R. Murray offered an enticing guess in *A History of Board Games Other Than Chess* (1952). Murray was a one-man research tidal wave—he taught himself Arabic, so he could

read the original sources, and in this way tracked down the origins of Chess and many other games.

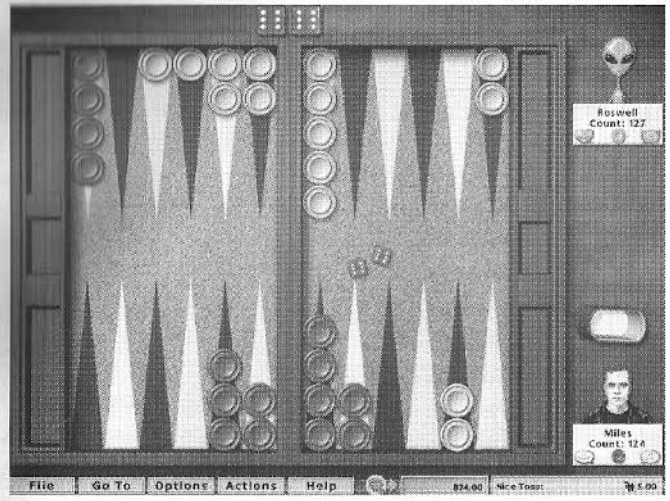
Murray believed that games, activities with no object other than play, could only be developed by people who lived in a relatively friendly environment with dependable shelter and enough to eat and who had developed some degree of social integration (marriage, religion, cooperation in hunting and farming). Murray then paints the following picture:

> "In the heat of the day when work in the open air is too arduous, or when the day's work is over and the daily needs of his family are met, man's innate urge to be doing something still impels him to action, if only to the handling of objects at hand, whether natural like pebbles, or some of his household goods of his own making—at first aimlessly, but as soon as his attention is held, to explore their capabilities for new uses. I suggest that it was in this way that the habit of using objects at hand as playthings, and so as materials for games, arose."

As an example, Murray points to—string! Primitive cultures depended on string, particularly those peoples who had to fish for food or use boats. String, of course, is used in games of cat's cradle, which is played all over the world. If you needed string to survive in the world, why would you waste precious survival time making knots to represent animals or tell stories? Because you had the time to waste—that is, you had the time to play. String games, Murray writes, are most likely "the result of handling and playing with string, and supports my view that other games originated in the same way."

We'll never know who put the first token on the first table and threw the dice for the first move. Nor will we know how the idea came to that person. But there's much we do know about games, thanks to the efforts of researchers like Murray, and you'll find an overview of that knowledge in the pages to come.

BACKGAMMON



How the Game Evolved

All table games that are older than today's fad pass through certain stages of development. These stages are well known to games scholars, and they reappear in game after game. Backgammon has been through more of these stages than any other game, even Chess. Here are the Eight Stages of Table Game Evolution, as told through the history of Backgammon:

1. ***Claim the Egyptians as Parents:*** Backgammon is not the oldest game in the world—dice probably holds that distinction, though some people might nominate politics—but, given the available evidence, it has a good claim on the second spot. "An authentic, documented history of the ancient game of Backgammon should probably begin either in the Garden of Eden or in the murky caves of the Neanderthal man," Alexis Obolensky and Ted James declare in *Backgammon: The Action Game*, and they're only

half-kidding. Though Obolensky and James grandly assume that every 6,000-year-old reference to "dice" really means "backgammon," the game has been traced to the beginnings of Egyptian and Sumerian civilization. You can't beat this kind of heritage.

Backgammon boards not so different from our own have been found in the royal tombs of the Nile Valley and in the buried suburbs of Ur. If Mesopotamia, the site of Ur, was also the site of the biblical Flood, then perhaps Noah and his family filled their spare hours aboard the Ark by playing Backgammon!

2. ***Work In the Romans, Too (or the Greeks, or Both):*** Even when their empire was at its height, the Romans always took the time for a round of *Ludus Duodecim Scriptorum* (literally, "a game with 12 lines"). The Romans usually shortened this name to *Alea* or *Tabula* (the latter meaning "table;" when Backgammon entered Europe, it was called Tables). This was Backgammon with three dice instead of two. Nero lost a fortune at the game. Caligula cheated at it. Antony played Tabula with Cleopatra; what stakes they played for is not known.

3. ***Inspire a Creation Myth:*** In the world of games, India has turned out the best creation myths. According to stories passed along by medieval Arab scholars, Backgammon was invented by an Indian philosopher who was trying to represent the concept of time physically, in a table game:

Backgammon Objects	*What They Mean*
30 pieces	Days in a month
24 points	Hours in a day
12 points of one half-board	Months in a year
12 points of the other half-board	Zodiac signs
7 spots on opposite sides of a die	Days of the week
2 dice	Day and night

4. ***Achieve Literary Immortality:*** The Old and New Testaments are not noted for their analyses of table games. You won't find Backgammon in the Bible, but it did come close. H.J.R. Murray, in *A History of Board Games Other Than Chess*, gives as the first reference to Backgammon in world literature—the Jewish Talmud! The Talmud, produced by 6th-century Jews living in Babylon, is a compilation of written commentaries on the Oral Laws of the Jewish people. Apparently, the rabbinical authorities of that time felt the need to at least mention Backgammon. (They didn't offer strategy hints.)

   The Babylonian Jews used the Persian words for the game: *nard* and *nardshir*. *Nard* was the wood marker used in the game. *Shir* means "lion," referring to the two types of pieces then in use: plain wood markers and markers with carved lions' heads.

   A century later, Backgammon (Nard, that is) is mentioned in a Persian fictional work about the invention of Chess. Backgammon was supposed to have been invented as a riddle to pose to a king. (The Persians spun the same story about Chess as well.) So chalk up an Indian and a Persian creation myth for Backgammon.

5. ***Ride Along with the Arabs:*** Typically in the history of games, the Arabs, after their conquest of Persia in the 7th century, learned all the games the Persians learned from the Indians, who may or may not have learned them from the Chinese. The Arabs raised the level of play in these games to unimagined heights and wrote the first books about them. They then invaded Spain and Sicily, fought off the Crusaders, and traded with the Venetians, all of which led to an exchange of ideas—and games.

   The Arabs adopted Backgammon immediately, but the Islamic religious authorities were troubled by the game and its gambling aspect (just as Chess had troubled them

with its "graven images," which are forbidden by the Koran). Chess survived in the Islamic world because the players switched from the fanciful pieces used by the Persians to abstract pieces with no resemblance to people, animals, or anything else. Backgammon couldn't do without its dice, and in the 8th century it was banned. This ban was not successful. Though the Islamic courts threatened players with various penalties, the game continued to flourish—a lesson the Catholic Church was fated to learn all over again a few centuries later.

The first book about Backgammon was written by an Arab of the 9th century.

6. ***Conquer Europe:*** The Persian/Muslim Nard and the Roman Tabula met in France in the 11th century. The third dice was eliminated, but the Roman name was retained, as can be seen from the forms Tabula took as it marched across the continent: in Italy, *Tavola*; in Spain, *Tablas*; in Middle English, *Tavel*, then *Tables*; and so on. Backgammon (or Tables) began appearing in the literature of the period almost at once, by which we can track its progress even to distant Iceland (which it reached late in the 13th century).

   The first European book to focus on Backgammon appeared in Spain in 1283. This book was primarily about Chess, and was compiled by scholars working under the direction of King Alfonso of Castile ("Alfonso the Wise").

   As with most of the games that entered Europe in this era, Backgammon was taken up by the nobility and was soon competing with Chess for the position of most-popular game (both games were eventually dethroned by playing cards). As Backgammon filtered down to the masses, the Church tried to ban or at least contain it. These efforts failed. By the 1700s, Backgammon was the favorite pastime among vicars in the English countryside!

Innkeepers throughout Europe were soon providing Backgammon boards and sets to their customers, a tradition that goes back to the Roman empire. Obolensky and James report on a wall painting found in the excavation of Pompeii: "In one panel, a game is in process, and an argument has ensued over points. In the second, an innkeeper is throwing the two battling players out of his tavern."

7. ***Catch Edmond Hoyle's Attention:*** Hoyle died in 1769, long before most of the games played today were invented. He wrote books on just five games in his lifetime, so the odds are against most games making this connection. Happily for Backgammon, Hoyle was not only a devotee of the game, he also had many ideas about how it should be played. Edmond Hoyle, in fact, turned out to be the Alexander Cartwright of Backgammon. Just as Cartwright in the 1840s codified the laws of baseball, Hoyle in 1746 did the same for Backgammon in his first book of games. Most of Hoyle's rules of play are still in force (as are most of Cartwright's).

   The modern game began with Hoyle, who had developed considerable clout in the game world by 1746. When he put together the hodge-podge of rules governing the game and decreed, among other things, that doublets should be played twice and that the scoring should include such subdivisions as *backgammon*, *gammon*, and *hits*, people listened. And played.

8. ***Pump Up the Volume with the Americans:*** Americans couldn't figure out a way to improve on Chess, but in 1925 an American innovator whose name is apparently lost to us developed the concept of doubling. Doubling revived Backgammon and led to a worldwide Backgammon renaissance that continues today.

   The word *Backgammon*, incidentally, comes from the Middle English *gamen*, meaning "game." It's thought that

the name derives from the pieces occasionally having to go and reenter the board. In Scotland, the game is called *Gammon*; in Spain, *Tablas Reales* (*The Royal Tables*); and in Italy, *Tavole Reale* (*ditto*). In France, the name is *Trictrac* and in Germany, *Puff*, though how these names strayed so far from the Roman Tabula is not clear.

How the Game is Played

Backgammon is played by two players on a special board with 15 pieces to a side. The pieces making up each side are called *stones*. Though they may be of any color, the darker-colored pieces are called *Black* while the lighter ones are called *White*.

The board is divided into two halves, or *tables*, by a partition running down the center. This is called the *bar*. The outer table is on your left, the inner table is on your right. In each table there are six *points* (long, thin triangles) belonging to each player.

The pieces move according to your throw of the two dice. The players roll the dice to see who goes first, with the higher roll winning. (If the numbers are the same, you just roll again.) The player with the higher number uses that for his first turn. From then on turns alternate, and you always throw the dice to begin your turn.

The object of the game seems odd at first: You win by being the first player to transport all of your stones off the board! To do that you must first get all of your stones into your inner, or *home*, table. Once they're all safely home, you can proceed to move them off the board. Pieces move from point to point.

Like a Rolling Stone

After you've thrown the dice to begin your turn, you can apply both numbers to one stone or each number separately to two stones. If, for example, you throw a 5 and a 4, you can move one piece a distance of nine points, or you can move one piece five and a second piece four. If you throw doubles, say a 3 and a 3, you play that number four times rather than twice: you can move one piece

12 points, or one piece nine points and one piece three, or two pieces six points each, or four pieces three points each.

A stone cannot land on a point occupied by two or more of your opponent's stones. You are not allowed to make that move, even if you have only one piece left and there is no other move you can make. A point occupied by two more stones is an indestructible fortress; that point is said to be *closed* or *made*. However, though you can't share a point with enemy pieces, you can jump over them.

Any number of pieces of the same color can rest on one point. If necessary they are piled on top of each other. This keeps one side's pieces from encroaching on the other side's.

Moves are always compulsory, even when it's in your best interest to stand still. If you can only use one of the two numbers you rolled, then you must do so. You must always try to use the higher number.

A single stone resting on a point is a target. It's called a *blot*, and when you land directly on an enemy blot it's called a *hit*. The stone is then retired to the bar. The stone must be *entered* and become a stone again before you can move any of your other pieces. Plus, the lonely stone must enter the enemy's home table on an open point. For example, if you roll a 5-2, and if points 5 and 2 in your opponent's home table are open, you can choose either one and place your blot there. If you placed it on point 5, you can now move it two points.

If one of those points is occupied by a single stone of your opponent's, you can hit it and send it to the bar. If none of the points are open, if your enemy's stones have crowded all available space, you are *shut out*, and you don't even get to throw the dice. Your blot remains on the bar, and you can't move any other. Your turn is over.

When you've collected all of your stones in your home table, you can *bear off*: that is, remove all your stones from the game, in the order determined by the dice. If the number you rolled is high-

er than the number of points you have yet to travel, you simply bear off the piece that's farthest away.

If you're hit after you've started to bear off, your stone goes to the bar. You must enter it and bring it around to your home table before you can go back to bearing off.

The game ends when either player bears off his or her last stone. If the loser has borne off at least one stone, and if he or she has nothing left in the winner's inner table, then the loser has lost just one game. But if he or she has not borne off at least one stone, the loss counts double. This is called a *gammon*. If the loser has a stone on the bar or a stone left in the winner's inner table, and has not borne off a stone, the loss counts triple. This is called a *backgammon*.

Doubling

You can really ratchet up the stakes by using a tactic called *doubling*. Either player may make the first double of the game. You simply declare your intention to double before rolling the dice. Thereafter, the right to double alternates. When one player chooses to double, the other must decide whether to play on for a double game, or resign right there and lose the current value of the game. You'll need a doubling cube for this; basically, it's a single die with some very high numbers on it. The double for gammon and triple for backgammon both apply to the final score; this is in addition to whatever voluntary doubles have been made.

Strategies for Backgammon

If you're new to Backgammon, endeavor to play a safe game. Here are a few rules of thumb:

1. Do your best to *make points* (block off points with two stones) and avoid blots.
2. Try not to put more than four stones on a single point.
3. Move your backmen (your last two stones) early in the game.

By making points, you will hamper your opponent's progress. For example, take a look at **Fig. 1**. If white rolls a 1, 3, 4, 6 (or any combination) black's closed points will have white's backmen blocked out of several possible moves. White may be forced into a poor move, leaving pieces vulnerable to attack.

Also, by making points you will avoid blots, thus reducing your opponent's opportunities to land on your stones and retire them to the bar.

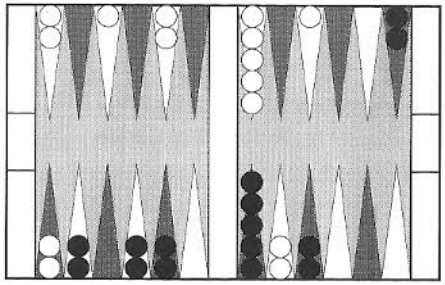


Fig. 1: Making Points

Adding a third stone to a point is very useful, and can be used to make additional points on subsequent turns. However, you should avoid placing more than four stones on a single point because it reduces your options when moving.

Moving your backmen as soon as possible helps prevent them from being trapped by your opponent, who may attempt to bottle them up in their starting position by forming a *prime* (as discussed below).

Advanced Strategies for Backgammon

Fig. 2 shows how the points in backgammon are numbered.

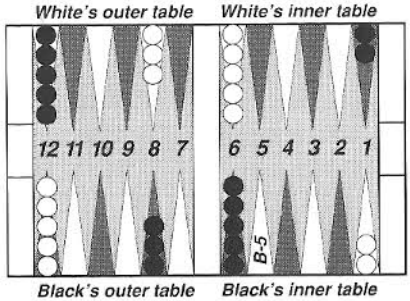


Fig. 2: Board Notation

As an example, a white or black stone located on black's inner table, 5th position from the right, would be said to occupy position B-5, also called *black's 5-point*. This numbering will help us to describe some of the strategic positions.

A key backgammon concept is the *direct hit*, which refers to any blot that can be reached by your opponent in six points or less. Statistically, a stone is more likely to be hit at six points distance than at any other specific distance. (All blots from one to five points distance also have a high probability of being hit. The odds decrease sharply at distances over six.) The obvious point here is that you want to avoid making your stones into direct hits and, thus, easy prey for your opponent!

The high probability of stones moving six points or fewer also helps define good board position. In the beginning of the game, the *golden point* (B-5 is black's golden point, W-5 is white's) is a key position (**Fig. 3**); so is the *bar point* (B-7 for black, W-7 for white). Why are the these points of strategic interest? Again, this has to do with dice probabilities: Holding the golden point and/or bar points makes it difficult for the backmen (and retired pieces) to leave the inner table.

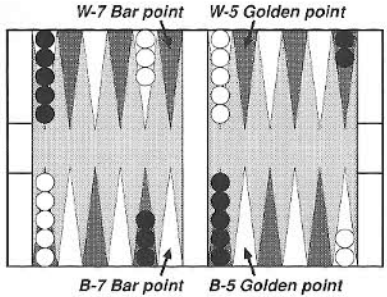


Fig. 3: The Golden Point and Bar Point

You can contain your opponent's backmen (and stones that are retired to the bar) by forming a prime. A prime consists of a row of six consecutive blocked points as shown in **Fig. 4**. A prime is impassable. If you can block enemy stones behind it, you can advance your stones while your opponent (who is likely to be very frustrated!) gets bogged down, perhaps even immobilized.

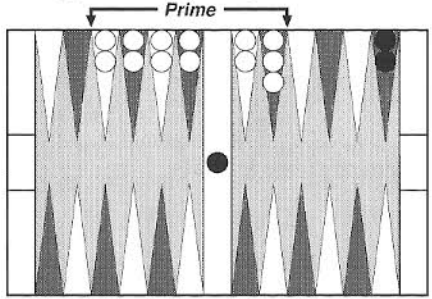


Fig. 4: A Prime

If you're unable get six in a row, don't despair. Getting four or five blocked points in a row (informally known as a *four-prime* and a *five-prime*) may slow down your opponent's progress significantly, even though it's not impassable.

A stone you bring up behind your other points is termed a *builder*. This piece is often instrumental in making a new point. **Fig.**

5 shows a builder in position B11. This builder can probably be used to make a point for black. Although you need builders, consider the enemy threat before making one. Check to see if your builder is also a direct hit.

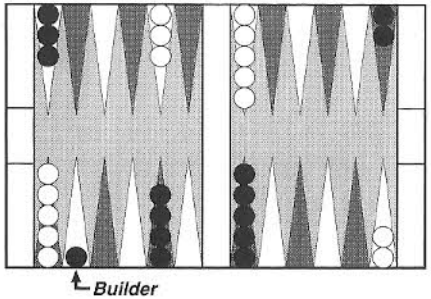


Fig. 5: A Builder

Another common ploy used by experienced backgammon players is to establish an *anchor*. An anchor is a point made in your opponent's inner table (**Fig. 6**). Although this flies in the face of the usual strategy of moving your backmen, creating an anchor makes it harder for your opponent to expand a four-prime and five-prime. If you're able to make multiple points, it will be difficult for your opponent to bear off. If you've had a few pieces retired to the bar, consider using them to create anchors.

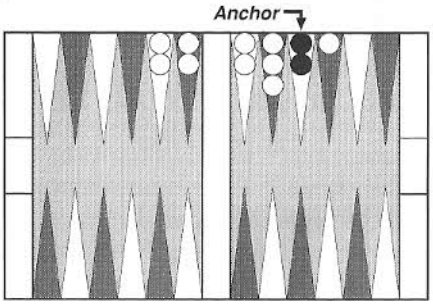
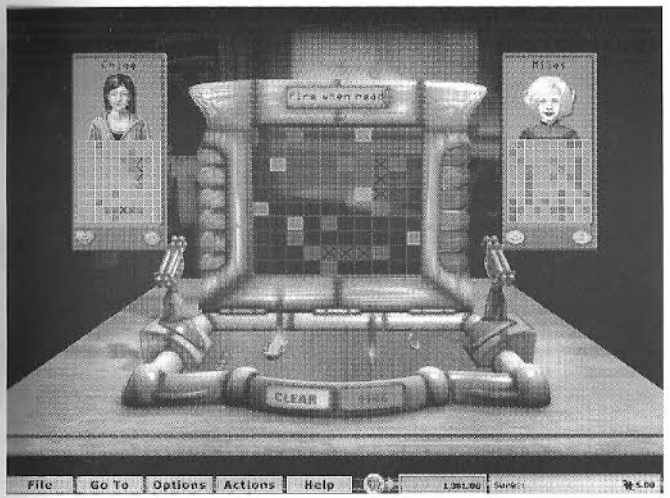


Fig. 6: An Anchor

Battling Ships



How the Game Evolved

Battling Ships is also known under its trademarked name, Battleship™. (In the British Isles, it's called Battleships or Salvo.) How Battling Ships came to be is yet another mystery for games scholars. But the way the game is played, and the names involved, allow us to make a good guess as to *when* it came to be.

First, consider the British name of Battleships. One would expect that a naval-warfare simulation would include aircraft carriers. The British launched the first one, in 1918, though the true potential of these ships wasn't realized until the Second World War. Given the emphasis in the name, we can conclude that this game was developed while battleships still ruled the waves—before 1939.

Second, consider the other British name, Salvo. In Battling Ships, you fire up to six shots from your fleet's guns at targets you can't see (perhaps because they're supposed to be at extreme long range). In the days of sail, warships had to get quite close to their opponents for

their short-range volleys of cannonballs to have any effect. These volleys were called *broadsides*, not salvos. Given the emphasis in this name, we can conclude that Battling Ships was developed after sail and wood had been replaced by steam and iron. The American Civil War saw the first use of steam-powered iron vessels, called ironclads, so the decade of the 1860s must be the earliest date this game could've been developed.

The word *battleship*, though it was first recorded in 1794, was not applied to the big hulking monsters of the world's navies until well after the ironclad era. In fact, nobody used "battleship" much at all in the 1800s. Even when, in 1869, the British launched the first oceangoing, iron-hulled warship—the first true battleship—it was referred to as an *armored frigate*.

But, in 1906, the British sent the HMS *Dreadnought* to sea. They weren't fooling around this time. The *Dreadnought* carried the biggest guns of its era and didn't bother with any of the small stuff. The launch of the *Dreadnought* touched off a race among the world powers for naval supremacy and brought the battleship into the public's imagination and everyday speech. Therefore, since no one has been able to determine an exact birthdate for Battling Ships, **Hoyle Table Games** takes the bold step of declaring that date to be 1906 (or, at the earliest, the decade of the 1890s).

How the Game is Played

Battling Ships is a game for two people played on two 10x10 grids. They are the oceans on which your fleets will fight their battles.

Each side has a fleet consisting of an aircraft carrier (five squares long), a battleship (four squares), a destroyer and a submarine (three squares each), and a PT boat (two squares). You place these on your grid, out of sight of your opponent.

Each player can fire a salvo of up to six shots per turn. You choose the squares your missiles will strike. Hits and misses will be reported to you so you can plan your firing patterns.

A ship is sunk when every one of its squares has been hit. Play continues then in one of two ways: You can choose to have your barrage reduced by one shot for every ship you lose, or choose to play with the same number of shots you started with. The first player to sink all of the enemy's ships is the winner.

Strategies for Battling Ships

The winner in Battling Ships is usually determined by well-aimed missile fire and a bit of luck. Playing good defense (which you can only do before the game starts, during the placement phase) is also a factor, although it's not as important. The main point in defense is that you should avoid placing ships on adjacent grid squares, as is shown in **Fig. 1**. Why? When a ship is hit, your opponent will try to sink it. Under this barrage of enemy fire, any other adjacent ships are likely to be hit as well.

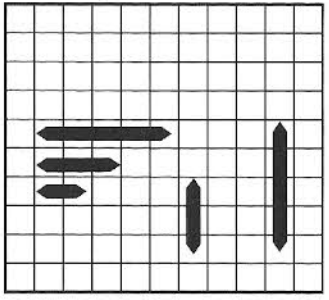


Fig. 1: Poor Placement of Ships

When searching for ships, it is better to spread out your attack. Closely-packed missile fire will not cover the board as quickly as a wider spread.

Once you have found a ship, your next best strategy depends upon what you have chosen in the game setup options. If you're playing the default setup, where the number of shots a player has in each round is based on the number of his or her remaining ships, you should try to sink the opponent's ship immediately, since

it will reduce enemy salvos by one shot each turn (two for the aircraft carrier!).

If you're playing with a live opponent, in either head-to-head or Internet play, don't dismiss the psychological factor. Your opponent may have consciously or unconsciously formed some pattern while placing ships. If such a pattern exists, finding a few ships may help you to guess the whereabouts of others.

Advanced Strategies for Battling Ships

Efficient search patterns can be devised based on the size of the ship you're aiming for. The PT boat is the hardest to find. **Fig. 2** shows a traditional zig-zag pattern of missile fire that is designed to efficiently locate every ship in a given area (including the PT boat).

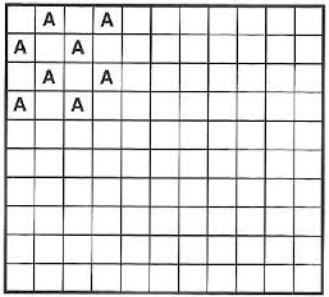


Fig. 2: Traditional Zig-Zag Attack

The idea here is to eliminate as many "hiding places" for ships as possible, without having to fire a missile into every square. (Each "A" in **Fig. 2** represents aimed fire.)

However, this pattern is not necessarily the best. It doesn't cover the board very quickly. If you're playing the variation where you lose shots when you lose ships, you'll want to find ships as quickly as possible. In this situation, consider alternative methods of finding ships, and consider which ship(s) you want to find first.

After an initial hit, how should you go about dispatching the metal hulk to Davey Jones' Locker? One way is the "fast and ugly" method. Suppose you've just scored a single hit on your opponent

and you have four shots in your salvo. The quickest means of determining the exact location of the ship is to direct all four shots around the initial hit (**Fig. 3**). This will produce a hit/miss ratio of 1:1 (two hits, two misses) or 1:3 (one hit, three misses). Considering that you've already found the ship, the prospect of wasting three shots is unappealing, if not downright ugly. (The H in **Fig. 3** represents a hit.)

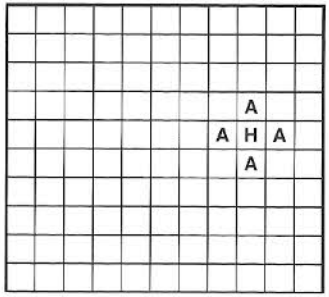


Fig. 3: Sinking a Ship

To improve your accuracy, you may want to divide up your attack over several turns; for example, instead of directing four shots around the initial hit, direct one, two, or three shots (**Fig. 4**). On average, this will result in fewer wasted missiles. (But, pause to weigh your options; balance the need to use your shots wisely against the need to sink the ship as quickly as possible.)

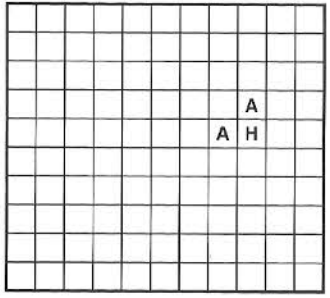
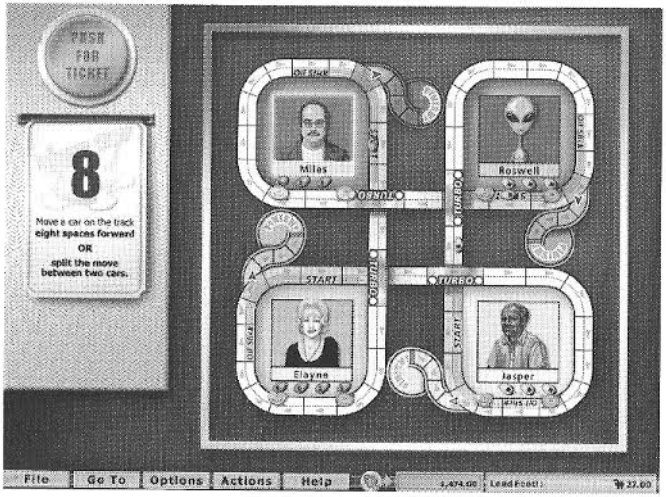


Fig. 4: Sinking a Ship Efficiently

BUMP 'EM



What Is Bump 'em?

Bump 'em is a competitive racing table game created by the Hoyle team at Sierra Entertainment. Two to four players can play. Bump 'em is played by drawing tickets and moving your cars on the track according to the instructions on the tickets.

Some move tickets let you move cars onto the track; some let you move your cars forward or backward on the track a certain number of spaces. Others let you switch positions with other players' cars or bump their cars back to their pit row.

How the Game is Played

On your turn, click the Push For Ticket button to get a move ticket. To move a car onto the track, you must draw one of three tickets:

1 ticket or **12 ticket**: Either of these tickets lets you move a car from your pit row to your start space. If your start space is already occupied by one of your cars, you will not be able to move a car out of pit row.

Bump 'em! ticket: This ticket lets you move a car from your pit row onto a space on the track occupied by another player's car, and send that car back to pit row. (You can only use this ticket if another player has a car on the track.)

Once you have a car on the track, you can move it as indicated on the tickets you draw. To move a car, click on the car you want to move, and then click on the space you want to move it to.

To win the game, try to be the first player to move all of your cars into your finish area (the last space in your home stretch). Cars must land exactly in the finish area to finish.

See "Bump 'em Tickets" for information on move tickets.

Rules for Moving

You cannot land on a space occupied by one of your own cars unless that car is on a turbo space.

If you land on a space occupied by another player's car, that car is bumped back to the owner's pit row. (Cars of different players can pass each other without incident; only landing your car on a space occupied by another car will bump that car.)

When one of your cars reaches the home stretch of your color, it moves into the home stretch instead of moving forward. Cars in the home stretch are safe from being bumped or swapped by other cars.

If none of your cars can legally move as instructed on your ticket (for instance, if you get a **Bump 'em** ticket but have no cars in your pit row), you cannot use that ticket.

If you only have one move available, you must take it, even if it means a negative result for you (like moving backward out of your home stretch).

If you move a car backward past your home stretch, you can then move it into your finish area without going all the way around the board. This is a quick way to get a car home!

Special Spaces on the Board

There are two types of special spaces on the board: oil slicks and turbo spaces. Turbo spaces can be turned off in the game options.

Oil Slick

If you land on an oil slick of another player's color, you slide forward six spaces and bump any cars in your way (other players' cars, or your own!) back to their pit row. (Landing on an oil slick of your own color does nothing.)

Turbo Space

If your car is on a turbo space, and a car lands on that space (your own car, or another player's), your car is sent zooming ahead to the next turbo space, or into the finish area if the car reaches its home stretch.

Bump 'em Tickets

The tickets in Bump 'em are described below. You can only move your own cars, unless specifically indicated below.

Ticket	Description
1	Move a car from your pit row to your start space, or move a car on the track one space forward.
2	Move a car on the track two spaces forward.
3	Move a car on the track three spaces forward and then take another move ticket.*
4	Move a car on the track four spaces forward.
5	Move a car on the track five spaces forward.
6	Move a car on the track six spaces forward or nine spaces backward.
7	Move a car on the track seven spaces forward, or switch one of your cars with another player's car (if possible**).
8	Move a car on the track eight spaces forward or split the move between two cars.
9	Move a car on the track nine spaces forward or six spaces backward.
10	Move a car on the track ten spaces forward.
11	Move a car on the track eleven spaces forward, or one space backward.
12	Move a car from your pit row to your start space, or move a car on the track twelve spaces forward.
Bump 'em!	Move a car from your pit row onto a space with another player's car, and send that car back to pit row!

* You get an extra ticket even if you can't move.

** Both cars must be on the main track (not pit row or the home stretch).

Strategies for Bump 'em

Move cars backward past your home stretch whenever possible; this is the quickest way to get your cars home and the safest, as your cars are only on the track a short time.

When using the **Bump 'em** ticket, if you have a choice of players to bump, try not to simply take revenge on the player who last bumped you—bump the car that's closest to its finish area, or the car of the player with the most cars in his or her finish area. Winning is always the best revenge.

If you have a car within twelve spaces of your finish area and draw a **12** ticket, you may want to use the **12** to move your car into your home stretch instead of moving another car off pit row; once cars are in the home stretch, they are safe from bumping and swapping (although you may still be required to move them backward, if you draw an appropriate ticket and have no other move).

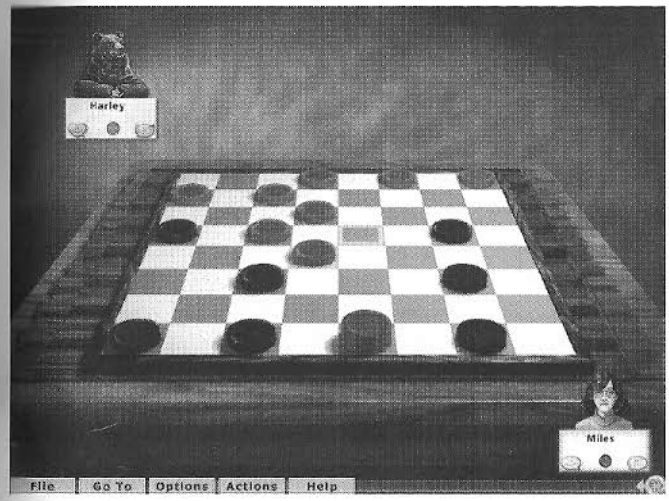
Try to keep your cars on turbo spaces as much as possible, as they are less vulnerable there. You can't be bumped back to your pit row when another player's car lands on that space (in fact, you're moved ahead in the game!). (Note however that you can still be swapped or bumped with a **Bump 'em** ticket.) Also, the longer your car remains on a turbo space, the more chance there is that someone will turbo your car.

Whenever you can, move a car to your finish area; this takes it out of the game. Make this move before any other. If you don't have a move that puts a car into the finish area, the next best move is to get a car into your home stretch.

Try not to leave a car in another player's oil slick area (the six spaces beyond an oil slick); you are likely to get bumped!

If you have a choice of cars to back out of the home stretch, and this is your only move, move the one closest to the finish area. It will remain closer to the home stretch, and it probably had fewer moves available to it anyway.

CHECKERS



How the Game Evolved

Checkers has always suffered from a bit of an image problem. It's a medieval offspring of Chess, and it had to grow up in the shadow of its parent, which was at the time wildly popular. And it took several centuries to find the right balance in the rules. Many people look upon Checkers as that game you play until you're ready to learn Chess, but this attitude is mistaken. Checkers is a game with its own depths and complexities. A supercomputer brought down the human champion in Chess (IBM's Deep Blue, 1997); it took a supercomputer just to earn a tie with the human champion in Checkers (the University of Alberta's Chinook, 1994).

The French Mix and Match

Checkers is almost certainly a French invention of about the 12th century. It's a mixture of an old Moorish game, Alquerque (pronounced like the city of Albuquerque, minus the third and fourth letters), and Chess. Alquerque is the Spanish corruption of

the Arabic *el-quirkat*. The game was first mentioned in print in a Moorish book published in the 10th century, but its history goes much farther back. One of the ancient temples of Egypt has an Alquerque board engraved in its roof. (Since we know the ancient Egyptians didn't float in midair, we can assume that this board was meant as a decoration. The Egyptians must have loved their games to have used them in this fashion.)

Alquerque gave Checkers the 12-man army and the capture-by-jumping concept. Alquerque is played on a latticed board, but the pieces occupy the intersections of the lines rather than the insides of the squares formed by the lines.

Chess provided the concept of the checkered board (a European innovation). When the French combined Chess and Alquerque, the Alquerque men moved off the intersections and occupied the Chess squares. Now all the new game needed was a name. Surprisingly, that too came from Chess.

When Chess came to Europe, it had no queen; instead, a piece called the *fers* (a Persian word meaning "counselor") stood beside the King. Because the pieces in Checkers moved like the Fers in Chess, the game was called Ferses, and the pieces, rather than the 12 flat disks we're familiar with, were 12 Ferses pilfered from Chess sets.

By the year 1500, the Europeans had replaced the Fers in Chess with the queen—in French, the *dame*. The queen also knocked the Fers off the checkerboard. (So now the French were using 12 queens per army—and when a queen reached the last rank, it underwent a sex change and became a King. Interesting.) For the next 200 years the French referred to Checkers as Dames, a name that followed the game as it spread across the continent, from Turkey (*Dama*) to Scotland (where it is still referred to as *Dams*). In England, however, the game was called Draughts (pronounced *Drafts*), a Middle English word referring to a move made by the queen in Chess. Draughts is the name the English have continued to use; the pieces are the draughtsmen and the board is the draughtsboard.

The Word Checkers Enters the Language

The name *Draughts* never caught on in several rural, out-of-the-way pockets of England. People there referred to the game as Checkers, after the checkered board on which the game was played. Many of the Pilgrims who set up shop in Massachusetts in the 1600s came from those areas where Draughts was known as Checkers. They not only brought the game with them when they came over on the Mayflower, they brought the name, too. Checkers spread outward from Massachusetts (many New England Indian tribes adopted the game), and wherever English was spoken, Checkers was the name.

Checkers Catches On (Slowly)

The indefatigable H.J.R. Murray dug deep into medieval European literature to document the spread of Checkers. In his *History of Board Games Other Than Chess*, he reports finding only five mentions of the game in the years 1200 to 1500. Four are French; one is English. (The English reference is from a poem by Chaucer, who cleverly plays up the confusion that might result in conversation if one person is talking about Chess and the other Checkers and neither knows it.)

In this period too the Church was busy banning every new game that popped up in Christendom, including Chess and almost all card and dice games. But Murray could find no such injunction leveled against Checkers. "It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the game cannot have been very widely known before 1500," he writes—certainly not outside of France, England, and perhaps Spain.

Something happened to Checkers in those years leading up to the 16th century, something that made the game much more attractive. Up until then, there were two ways to play Checkers: a) you could choose not to capture an enemy piece when the opportunity came, or b) you were compelled to capture. Compulsory captures is what makes Checkers so interesting, and by the opening of the 16th century this form of play was dominant. (Odd rules from various cor-

ners of Europe, such as checkermen not being allowed to capture Kings, had also been ditched.) Checkers then spread eastward, first into Italy (where we have a report dated 1527) and elsewhere in Europe after 1550.

The Scots Take Center-Stage

The first work in English to focus on Checkers in a serious manner appeared in 1756 (William Payne's *Introduction to the Game of Draughts*). From here the Scots took over the game, and, in the following hundred years, greatly expanded our knowledge of its possibilities. The Scottish influence is still seen in the names of some of the more popular opening systems, which bear the names of Scottish towns (*Dundee*, *Edinburgh*, *Glasgow*) and more fanciful notions (the *Will-o-the-Wisp*, the *Laird & Lady*, and the *Ayrshire Lassie*).

Given the stormy relations between England and Scotland in the years leading up to their unification, it's believed that the Scots learned the game of Checkers not from the hated English but from the Dutch (in whose armies many Scots fought in the 17th century). The Scottish *Dam* is certainly closer to the Dutch *Damen* and the French *Dames* than the English *Draughts*.

Checkers in the Modern Era

Those of us who don't play in Checkers tournaments usually begin a game by just beginning. Whatever we like to play, we play. This style is called *Go-As-You-Please*, and on the professional level it results in numerous draws, due to the great knowledge these players bring to the game. The first world championship, held in 1847 (between two Scotsmen, of course), was a Go-As-You-Please affair. In the 1890s, the Two-Move Restriction was introduced, in which the first two moves of a game were chosen by lot from certain preapproved combinations.

The Two-Move Restriction eliminated many draws, though not enough. The Three-Move Restriction was introduced at the 1934 world championship (between two Americans). The participants chose moves by lot from a list of officially sanctioned "three-move openings." This system is still used today (though there's also a separate tournament track for Go-As-You-Please games). A third system, in which one man from each army is removed by lot before the first move, is less popular. (**Hoyle**'s Checkers is solely Go-As-You-Please.)

An Odd Sociological Footnote

We all know the stereotype of Chess masters: they eventually go insane. Checkers masters keep their marbles, so to speak, but they seem to die tragically. Some examples:

The first American world champion, Robert Yates, took the crown from the Scots in 1874. He died not long after in an accident at sea. He was 24.

The 1902 world champion, Scotland's Richard Jordan, was killed in a train accident.

In 1927, the United States walloped Great Britain in the Second International Checkers Match (Great Britain had done the same to the US in the first match, played in 1905). Sam Gonotsky, top scorer for the US team, died a few years later. He was in his twenties.

In 1949, Willie Ryan tied defending champ Walter Hellman (both Americans). Ryan wasn't particularly young at the time, but he died not long after, just weeks before he was scheduled to play Hellman in a rematch.

In 1951, Hellman defeated Maurice Chamblee (American) in a title match. Chamblee soon died, of course. He was in his twenties.

How the Game is Played

Checkers is played by two people on the same checkered board that is used for Chess, but there all similarities end. The pieces that make up your army are also called *checkers* (or simply *men*), and each army has 12 of them. The checkers of each army are the same color. Whichever colors are used, the side with the darker pieces is

called *Black*, and the side with the lighter pieces is called *White* (they're usually red).

The board is placed so that each player has a light-colored square in the corner on the right. The pieces move only on the dark-colored squares.

To begin a game, set your pieces up on the 12 dark squares of the first 3 rows of the board. Your opponent does the same.

By tradition, Black moves first. Moves alternate after that. You lose the game if your turn comes and you can't make any moves. This usually occurs because all of your pieces have been captured, but sometimes it's because the ones you have left have been immobilized by your opponent. If neither you nor your opponent has enough of an advantage to win, you can agree to a draw.

The pieces move one square at a time, always forward and always diagonally to an adjacent dark square. The exception to the one-square-at-a-time rule is when you are capturing, or *jumping*, an enemy piece. You can jump if your piece occupies a square adjacent to the enemy, and if there is an empty square on the other side of the enemy. That empty square is the one your piece will jump to. The enemy piece is then removed from the board.

Capturing is compulsory. (It is possible to change this setting so that capturing is optional.) If the opportunity to capture comes up, you must take it. If you have the option of capturing a piece in either of two directions, you can choose which one to grab.

If, after capturing an opponent's piece, you find yourself next to another and the square beyond that one is empty, you can capture that second piece, too. And so on. You can change direction in these multiple captures, so long as you keep moving forward.

King Me

The row of squares farthest from each player is that player's *king row*. On reaching the king row, your piece is crowned and becomes a king. Now it can move backward as well as forward. (If by jumping over one or more of your opponent's pieces you land on the king row, your new king can't continue jumping in the same turn even if the opportunity is right there. The act of being crowned requires that the new king end its turn on the king row.)

Strategies for Checkers

In Checkers, the overall goal is to keep the balance of power in your favor, which means having more pieces than your opponent. Of course, having six badly positioned men while your opponent has four well-placed kings is not an advantageous situation. But on the whole if you can keep your piece count up, you will tend to win.

To get ahead in piece count, you will need to balance offense with defense. If you have a chance to get a king early in the game while keeping your opponent from doing the same, you will be in a good position to mop up several of his or her pieces. But charging out to try to obtain a king early is likely to result in failure, since a piece out front all by itself is likely to be captured.

A more reliable strategy for the beginner is to concentrate on defense, trying to avoid positions where you are forced to lose pieces. For the most part, this means keeping your pieces *backed up*.

Backing up your pieces means guarding their rear flanks. Look at **Fig. 1** to see how the front line of white pieces is protected by the pieces behind them. At the moment, the front pieces are invulnerable to the enemy.

To keep your pieces backed up you often have to move the *back-up* piece into place first, and then move the front line piece into position in front of it (since if you did it the other way around the front-line piece would be vulnerable for one turn).

Fig. 1 also shows that white has moved only one piece from the back wall (the very back row of checkers). Keeping pieces on the back wall until you have a good reason to move them is a good defensive strategy since those pieces cannot be jumped where they stand.

By keeping your pieces safe, you can try to force your opponent into making a bad move; a move that results in you making a capture with your opponent unable to reciprocate.

If you can wear your opponent down in this way, you will be the first to get a king, and then you can go on an offensive attack.

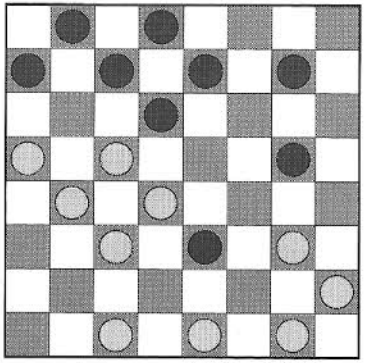


Fig. 1: Backing Up Your Pieces

Advanced Strategies for Checkers

Compulsory capture is of the utmost importance in Checkers. It can be used to improve position, obtain double jumps, and sack kings. The computer will use it to your detriment whenever possible (especially to capture a king by sacrificing a regular piece). It can be very difficult to predict when you're being set up for a disastrous forced jump, because it requires you to look ahead a couple of moves.

Fig. 2 depicts a situation in which black may be feeling pretty comfortable. However, if black isn't careful, red will advance his piece on the right (shown by the arrow) and force a jump (**Fig. 3**). Red will then execute a double-jump.

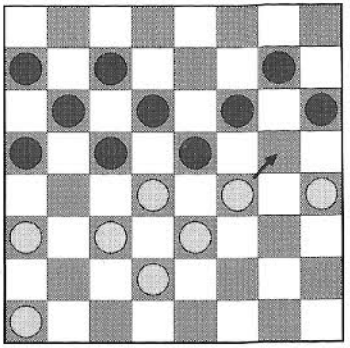


Fig. 2: A Forced Jump

Experiment with compulsory capture to see how you can make it work to your advantage.

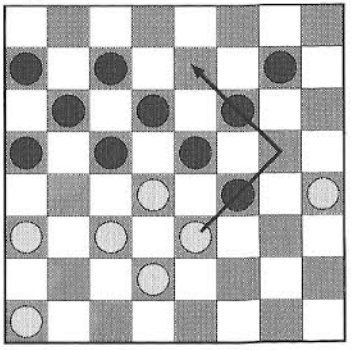


Fig. 3: Result of the Forced Jump

Another important tactic in Checkers is trading pieces. This is when one compulsory capture leads to another compulsory capture in return. Some reasons to consider trading pieces are:

1. To prevent a piece from being kinged.
2. To simplify the game. This is especially effective if your opponent is more experienced at Checkers. A simpler board setup will be easier for you to read.

3. To strengthen your advantage (if you're ahead). A one piece advantage is more significant if there are only a few pieces left on the board.

A fourth reason to trade pieces may come up after a stall. Sometimes in Checkers both players end up stalling (taking inconsequential moves to avoid losing a piece). If this happens, count the turns that are left before one of you is forced into making a bad move. If you find that the count favors your opponent, try to change up the board position by trading pieces instead.

Take a look at the board in **Fig. 4**. Often near the end of the game, one or several chases will occur. Here, white is chasing black. Because play occurs only on the dark squares of the board, two of the four corner squares cannot be entered. These corners make better refuge than the others, because it's harder for a piece to get pinned down. Black is heading in the safest direction.

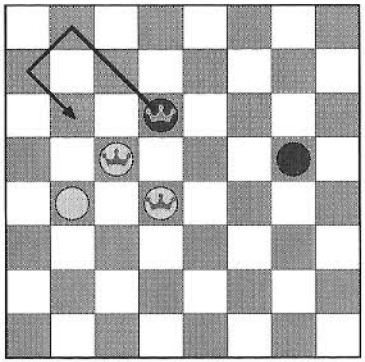
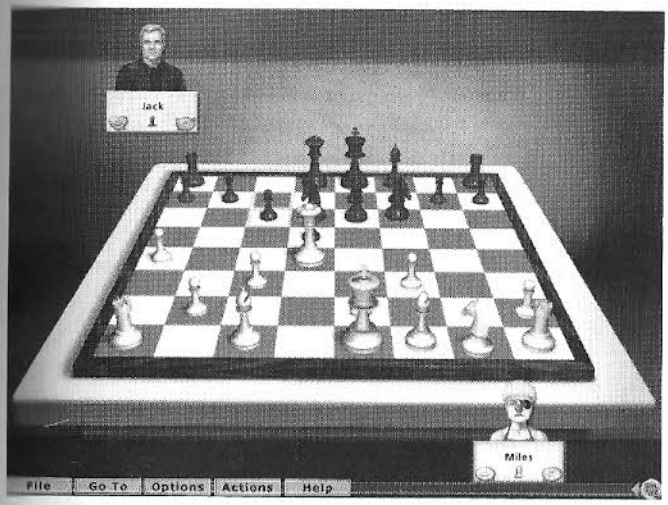


Fig. 4: Flight to Corners

Chess



How the Game Evolved

The game of Chess is a lake, in which a mosquito can bathe and an elephant can drown. —Indian proverb

Archaeologists have more than once dug up game pieces that could be chessmen. Some of these items have been judged to be thousands of years old. Did Roman senators, Greek philosophers, or even Egyptian pharaohs play some primitive form of Chess? Was Chess played by the waters of Babylon and in the courtyards of Ur? Given the available evidence (or rather, the lack of almost any evidence), it seems doubtful. Nathan Divinsky, writing in his admirable *The Batsford Chess Encyclopedia*, sums up the prevailing view: "It seems unlikely that Chess existed long before the year 600 without any references in articulate Greece or in businesslike Rome."

The oldest Chess pieces that everyone agrees are Chess pieces date from about the year 600. That's also the approximate date of

the earliest reference to Chess in world literature. The writer is Persian, and in his text he mentions a game similar to ours that has been obtained through trade with India: *Chaturanga*. If you allow a few decades for a new pastime to soak so far into a culture that people begin to write about it, and for that pastime to travel to Persia, we can guess that Chess was invented in India in the 6th century AD.

War By Other Means

Chaturanga is a Sanskrit word meaning *quadripartite*, or divided into four parts. The Indian army of that time was also called Chaturanga, and had four divisions: elephants, cavalry, chariots, and infantry. This suggests two theories to explain how Chess came to be:

1. Chess was a substitute for war, or a bloodless training ground for war.
2. Chess was a way to recreate real life in miniature, as we do today when we play table games that let us buy and sell fake property with fake money, for example.

The moves in Chaturanga were determined by rolling dice. This suggests one more creation theory: that this ancient form of Chess was a way of foretelling the future, or of obtaining messages from gods. David Hooper and Kenneth Whyld, in their *Oxford Companion to Chess*, offer this scenario:

> "By controlling the fall of objects on to a divination board the gods could communicate with men. At a later stage dice were added to determine the moves of the pieces and further reveal the celestial mind. Then someone was sacrilegious enough to convert this process to a game, perhaps eliminating the dice. The person who secularized the religious process has, perhaps, the best claim to be the 'inventor' of Chess."

Chess, the Slow-Motion Game

Chaturanga was a four-player game. Each player had eight pieces: four pawns, a boat or chariot (our rook), a horse (our knight), an elephant (our bishop), and a king. The moves were determined by rolling red, green, yellow, and black dice. (We don't really know how a set of dice determined moves on a chessboard, as no how-to guides survive from that era.) The elephant could move only two squares on a diagonal, though it could jump over any piece in its path. The pawn didn't have the option of moving two squares on its initial move and, on reaching the eighth rank, couldn't be promoted to anything of importance. Castling didn't exist. There were no queens, with their explosive power to change the course of a game in a single move. The rook, knight, and king moved as they do today. Try conducting a game with these rules. Be sure to set aside lots of time!

You'll have to make your own chessboard, too. The ancients used a 64-square board, but none of the squares were colored. (That was a European invention.)

Chess Hits the Road

The four-player version disappeared almost as soon as Chess left India. The Persians played only the two-person variety. Each player now had a 16-man army, as we do today, but the pieces were just as limited as described above, even the new "counselor" piece, which stood beside the king. (It's possible that the kings from the two discarded armies of the Indian game became counselors in the Persian.) The counselor could only move one square diagonally, making it hardly more powerful than a pawn. Two-player Chess was every bit as slow as four-player.

The Persian game could be played with or without dice. The use of dice didn't stop for at least another half a dozen centuries. The last mention of dice appears in a European literary work of the 13th century, in which a gentleman asks the object of his affections, "Lady, which game will you play? Will you have it with moves or with dice?"

The westward dispersal of Chess accelerated in the 7th century when the rapidly expanding Arab empire overran Persia. In the next four centuries, the Arabs produced the best players in the world. The names of some of these champions, and even much of their writings and many of the endgame problems they composed, are still known to us today.

Chess also ventured eastward, and as it traveled through Asia it evolved in far different directions from the game Westerners know. In Chinese Chess, for example, pieces are placed not within squares but on the intersections of the lines. A river divides the 9-square by 10-square board; each player has a fortress to shelter in; some pieces can't leave the fortress, some can't cross the river; some of the pieces resemble ours, but there are no queens. Checkmate is still the aim.

Japanese Chess, commonly called *Shogi* in English-speaking countries, came to Japan from China by way of Korea. Shogi is played on a 9x9 board. The pieces are set up on three rows instead of our two. As in Chinese Chess, there are no queens. The more recognizable units (to Westerners) are the kings—but each player has three of them. Even with three kings, the object of the game is still checkmate. Most notable divergence from the Western game: captured pieces change sides!

'The Royal Game' Earns Its Nickname

Chess took several paths into Europe. The Arabs invaded the Iberian Peninsula (where the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal would one day rise) and the island of Sicily in the 8th century and naturally brought Chess along with them. The rising Italian city-states, the nucleus for what would one day become Italy, were building economic empires in the Mediterranean; traders from Venice and Genoa soon discovered Chess. No doubt at least a few Crusaders learned Chess while hacking their way through the Holy Land. Chess entered Central Europe through the Balkans and invaded Russia through Central Asian trade routes. Even the Vikings learned Chess and helped to spread it through the more northern lands. By the year 1000, Chess was well-known throughout Europe (though there was no common set of rules).

In the Islamic countries, people of all social classes played Chess. In the European countries, at least in the Middle Ages, Chess was a game of the nobility (hence "The Royal Game"). Aspiring knights were instructed in Chess as well as in how to joust, slay dragons, and court ladies. In Europe as in Arabia, women were encouraged to play, and in fact Chess was often referred to as a "game for lovers." In the Camelot stories, Lancelot and Guinevere played Chess.

Though the Church occasionally tried to ban Chess (the dice aspect was particularly troubling), the game attracted many followers within religious orders, where it was often seen as a parable of good and evil. "The man who surrenders to sinful thoughts will always be held in check by the Devil and will lose his soul to mate if he does not know how to protect himself," wrote one theologian in 1300.

The European Makeover

The period 1400-1600, the ebbing of the medieval era and the flowering of the Renaissance, was the incubator of modern Chess.

The Europeans gave the king a queen, complete with all the powers she enjoys today. They also gave the bishop its diagonal strength and the pawn the choice of opening with a one- or two-move step. The Europeans invented castling and the concept of "promoting" a pawn to a queen to "reward" it for successfully completing its journey across the battlefield. Suddenly Chess was considerably faster, and the pieces packed more of a punch!

We would be right at home on a chessboard in this time period. For one thing, we could play on a checkered board. Dice and Chess had at last parted company, so we could be sure that any game we played would be a true contest of skill. We could expect everyone to be playing by the same rules.

We could even consult a Chess book for advice. The earliest known typeset Chess book appeared within 50 years of the inven-

tion of the printing press (late 1500s). The author devoted a number of pages to the old style of play, with its less-powerful and decidedly slower pieces, but this was the last work to do so. The history of the game we call Chess now centers around developments in Europe and the Americas.

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Chess

In the Western world, the 1700s were the years of the common people, in Chess as well as in politics. Among the upper classes, gambling replaced Chess as the amusement of choice, but Chess had already filtered down to the everyday man (though women still played, Chess was beginning to be considered a "man's" game).

The 18th century gave us revolutions, the first stirrings of the Industrial Revolution, and the concept of the Chess club: a gathering, whether in a coffeehouse, a tavern, or a room, with no other purpose but Chess. In the great cities of Europe, entrepreneurs established Chess places (often called *resorts* or *divans*) whose reputations still endure. The first Chess professionals appeared. Rather than relying on one wealthy patron for their daily bread, these hardy souls played Chess for money at the new coffeehouses, gave lessons, and wrote books. (It was in this century that the flood of Chess books began, which today form the largest body of writings on any game ever invented.)

Benjamin Franklin, who seems to be responsible for so many firsts in American history, can also be credited with the first American writing on Chess: the essay "The Morals of Chess" (1786). Chess, Franklin wrote, teaches "foresight, by having to plan ahead; vigilance, by having to keep watch over the whole chessboard; caution, by having to restrain ourselves from making hasty moves; and finally, we learn from Chess the greatest maxim in life, that even when everything seems to be going badly for us we should not lose heart but, always hoping for a change for the better, steadfastly continue searching for the solutions to our problems."

Going Global

In the 1800s, the clubs of the previous century reached out to each other through the new postal services. One of the earliest and most famous correspondence matches was the four-year battle between the Edinburgh and London clubs (1824-28). The distance the letters traveled was about 400 miles, and each letter took three days to arrive. Edinburgh won the match but Chess won a much larger victory, as the newspapers covered the games and exposed a wide readership to some very exciting play. In the 1830s, clubs in different countries began to correspond.

The greatest players of each era had traveled to other countries and tested themselves against the competition there, and fledgling organizations had put together an occasional tournament of champions. But in the 19th century these activities became systematized and commonplace. In 1834, the Frenchman Louis Bourdonnais burnished the honor of France by defeating the British champion, Alexander McDonnell; the British exacted revenge in 1843 when Howard Staunton trounced the French champion, Pierre Saint-Amant. The first international tournament soon followed (London, 1851). In 1872, the German master Wilhelm Steinitz, having defeated everyone in sight, declared himself the world champion; the process of selecting a world champion has continued to this day.

By the end of the 1800s, the laws of Chess had been standardized, as had the shapes of the pieces used in tournament and match play (the Staunton design, named for the design's principal booster). There were Chess organizations on the city, state, and national levels, and a system for awarding the coveted title of *master* to the best players. Chess clocks were being used for all serious games, which prevented players from trying to win by "outsitting" their opponents!

The Information Revolution

The 20th century has seen four far-reaching developments in Chess. These are going to make the 21st century an interesting one for Chess players! In no particular order, these are:

1. ***The Computer:*** The first "Chess-playing machine" appeared in 1769 (there was a little man hidden inside). Two centuries later, computers can play as well as the human champion of the world (as we saw in February 1996, when Garry Kasparov had to overcome a first-round defeat to take his match with Deep Blue, and in the April 1997 return match, when Deeper Blue psyched out the exasperated Russian). Computers now act as study aids, research tools, and sparring partners for professional players, as instant and always available opponents for the rest of us, and have contributed enormously to our knowledge of the endgame.
2. ***Female Players Entering the Top Levels of Play:*** Until fairly recently, Chess was an all-boys club, and it was felt that women just couldn't cut it at the top level of competition. The Polgar sisters of Hungary (among others) have smashed that perception—all three compete at the highest levels of competition, and one (Judit) ranks among the top 20 players, period.
3. ***Chess in Schools:*** The former Soviet Union began the practice of teaching Chess as part of its standard curriculum—a practice that has contributed enormously to the iron grip the Russians have held on world Chess since the end of World War II. Now many Western nations are at last following suit.
4. ***A Global Chess Organization:*** The Federation Internationale Des Echecs, or FIDE (pronounced FEE-day), has had its troubles, but since 1924 has been a force for unification and world standards. FIDE maintains a numerical rating system for master players, awards titles, organizes the world championship, and runs a biennial "olympiad" that brings together teams from dozens of countries.

How the Game is Played

When you set up the board to play Chess, there should always be a dark square in the left corner nearest you and a light square in the right corner. Remember: "Light on the right."

The armies are always referred to as *White* and *Black*, though Chess pieces are available in many colors. The person commanding the White, or lighter, pieces always moves first. (A player can never refuse to move, no matter how disastrous his options may be!)

Each army has 16 pieces: one king, one queen, two bishops, two knights, two rooks, and eight pawns.

The King

If the king is trapped with no escape possible, the game is lost. Therefore the king is by far the most valuable piece on the board. However, as a fighting unit, His Highness is simple and slow. The monarch can move in any direction (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally), but only one square at a time.

(There is one exception to the king's one-square-per-move plodding. See below for an explanation of *castling*.)

The king can capture an enemy soldier only if that soldier is occupying a square adjacent to the king. (*Capture* describes the removal of a piece during a game. Captures are always optional in Chess, except where the survival of the king is concerned—see the sections on *check* and *checkmate*.) The soldier is removed from the board, and the king steps onto the square the soldier had guarded.

All of the pieces (except, in one special case, the pawn) capture by removing the enemy piece from the board and then occupying the enemy's square. Once a piece is gone, by the way, it's gone: if you lose your queen, you won't have the use of a queen for the remainder of the game. (Unless you are able to promote a pawn! See the section on pawns below.)

Unlike Checkers, it's illegal in Chess to capture more than one piece at a time.

The Queen

The White queen, at the beginning of the game, stands on a light square in the center of the back rank; the Black queen stands on a dark one. Two handy mnemonics for remembering where to start the queen are "queen on her own color" and "The queen's dress matches her shoes." The king takes his station on the center square closest to the queen.

The queen, as a soldier in your army, is as swift as the king is slow. The queen can move in any direction and can charge from one end of the board to the other in the same turn.

There are two things the queen cannot do. First, the queen can't jump over another piece, whether friend or foe. (This is true of all the pieces, except the knight.) The sovereign must either stop before running into the obstruction or, in the case of an enemy soldier, capture it.

Second, the queen cannot change directions while moving. If the queen sets out on a diagonal course, for example, that diagonal must be kept to. (Again, this is true of all the pieces, except the knight.)

The Rook

Each army has a pair of rooks. Each rook occupies a corner of the board when beginning a game. The rook has half the firepower of a queen, as it moves vertically and horizontally but not diagonally.

The Bishop

You have two bishops in your arsenal. Centuries ago, the bishop was called the *counselor*, and you can understand why when you look at the bishops' initial positions: one on the queen's left and one on the king's right, as if one of the royals might ask them for advice. The bishops move diagonally only. A bishop can never leave its assigned color.

The Knight

Two knights make up your cavalry. They are stabled one on each flank, between the rook and the bishop.

The knight is the oddest soldier in your army, and the one that gives new field marshals the most trouble. That's because the knight can do two things that no other Chess piece can:

1. The knight leaps over any piece that lies in its path, friend or foe.
2. The knight changes direction as it leaps. When the knight is positioned in or near the center of the board, it can leap to any of eight possible squares (shown by black squares in **Fig. 1**).

Though the knight jumps as if it were a piece in Checkers, it can't capture that way. The knight can only capture an enemy piece if that piece occupies one of the knight's landing zones.

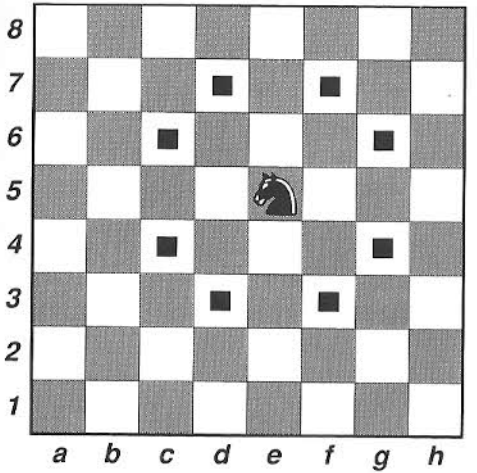


Fig. 1: The Knight

The Pawn

The stubborn, one-step-at-a-time pawn has a poor reputation. We call people pawns when they appear to be powerless. And yet the pawn is the heart of Chess. Never take your infantry for granted!

The pawn has three distinguishing characteristics:

1. It's the only piece that moves in only one direction: forward.
2. It's the only piece that captures in a different manner than the way in which it moves. The king, queen, rook, and bishop capture whatever lies in their path; the knight captures whatever occupies the square it lands on; the pawn moves in a straight line, but captures diagonally. (The enemy must be on an adjacent square. The pawn occupies the square that held the target piece.)
3. It's the only piece that can transform itself into a unit of vastly greater power.

On its first move the pawn has the option of moving one square or two. After that, the pawn may only move one square at a time.

When a pawn fights its way through to the last rank on the opposite side of the board, it may be exchanged for any other piece (except a king or another pawn). The new piece begins its career on the square the pawn had occupied. Every time one of your pawns reaches that last rank, you may trade it in for something else.

The pawn has one other trick to play, and this may be the most confusing move of all. Say that a White pawn has penetrated Black's camp (**Fig. 2**). Black could advance his pawn one square, stopping to attack the invader (**Fig. 3**). If, instead, Black sends his pawn ahead two squares, he bypasses the White pawn, and seems to give White no say in the matter (**Fig. 4**). In fact, the bypassed pawn has the right to capture the pawn that had rushed by as if it had stopped after just one square (**Fig. 5**). This is called capturing *en passant*, a French term for *in passing*.

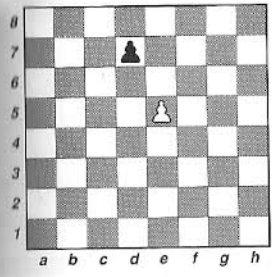


Fig. 2: The Pawn

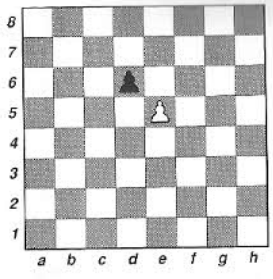


Fig. 3: The Pawn (2)

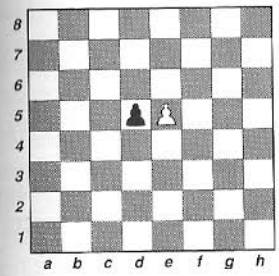


Fig. 4: The Pawn (3)

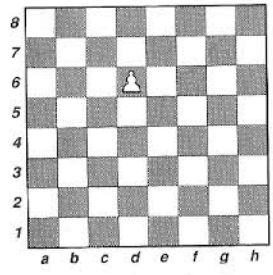


Fig. 5: Capturing "En Passant"

The en passant capture works for Black as well as for White, of course. It's also entirely optional.

Relative Values of the Chessmen

It is vital that you have a clear and reliable notion of the value of each unit under your command. Just as the Pentagon must know what it costs to field an army, you must know, too. If not, you may never get your money's worth when you and your opponent begin capturing each other's pieces. The following table (**Fig. 6**) is based on five centuries of practical play. It takes the pawn as the basic unit and calculates each piece's value in those units.

Fig. 6: Value of Pieces

What does this table tell us? Suppose you can capture a bishop while letting your opponent capture your knight. No harm done: bishops and knights are the same value. (An even capture is called an *exchange*.)

However, if you capture a bishop and your opponent captures one of your rooks, you've made a poor bargain. Chess players say you have "lost the exchange" (your opponent has "won the exchange").

By knowing the relative values of the pieces, we can tell which captures would be profitable, which would be costly, and which would be even. Weigh captures and exchanges carefully. When a player obtains an edge in material, he is much more likely to win the game. *Superior force usually wins!*

Check and Checkmate

Your objective on this battlefield is to attack the enemy king in such a way that it cannot escape. An attack on the king is called a *check*. If the king cannot escape the check, then the check is actually *checkmate*, and the attacking force has won the game.

When your king is checked you must drop everything and rush to his defense. There are three ways to fend off a check:

1. Move out of the path of the attacking piece.
2. Block the path of the attacking piece with one of your own pieces.
3. Capture the attacker.

If your king is in check and you can't move, block, or capture, then you've been checkmated. (Note that in Chess the king is never actually captured. If the monarch is in check and unable to do anything about it, the game is over.)

Minimum Requirements for Checkmate

In certain situations, with certain combinations of pieces, it's impossible to checkmate even a lone king. Bishop, knight, and king are the minimum requirements (and even the professionals have trouble with this one!).

A king and one bishop can't enforce checkmate against a lone king. (Since the bishop travels on only one color, the hostile king is safe whenever he occupies a square of the other color.)

Nor can a king and a single knight enforce checkmate. In any given position there are just too many squares not controlled by the knight. In fact, a king and two knights can't force a checkmate either.

Drawn Games

So far it may seem as if all Chess games end in victory for White or Black, just as all baseball games end in a win or a loss. Actually, a game of Chess may end in a *draw* (a tie). There are several ways in which a game may be *drawn*:

1. ***Draw by Agreement:*** The players can agree to a draw. This may happen for various reasons: because neither player thinks the game can be won, because there isn't enough time to finish the game, or even because the position in the game is a crashing bore!
2. ***Draw by Perpetual Check:*** This refers to a position in which one player can keep checking the other player's king, move after move after move, with no possibility of the defending player being able to stop the checks. The

assumption here is that the player doing the checking is a disadvantage in some way and is deliberately forcing a draw rather than suffering a loss.

3. ***Draw by Insufficient Material:*** See **Minimum Requirements for Checkmate** above.
4. ***Draw by Stalemate:*** This is a situation in which the player whose turn it is to move is not in check but has no legal moves.
5. ***Draw by Repetition of Moves:*** For this one you'll need to keep a record of the moves in the game using Chess notation (see "Chess Notation" later in this chapter) if playing another human; against a computer opponent, the computer will do it for you. If the same position occurs three consecutive times, the game is drawn.
6. ***Draw by 50-Move Rule:*** You'll need to record the moves for this one, too (unless you're playing a computer). If a player can demonstrate that the last 50 moves have been made without the capture of a piece or a move by a pawn, that player may claim a draw. (This rule is most often used when one side has only a king.)

Defending the King: Castling

If you want to ensure a long life for your king, you'd better castle. Castling is the only maneuver in Chess that involves the simultaneous movement of two pieces: the king and one of the rooks. Castling is carried out with the goal of transferring the king to a safer refuge at the side of the board.

There are two types of castling: kingside, which involves the king and the king rook (the one in the corner closest to the king), and queenside, which involves the king and the queen rook (the one in the corner farthest from the king).

Fig. 7 shows the board with the kings and rooks prior to castling.

In kingside castling (**Fig. 8**), White moves his king two squares to the right. The king rook hops over the king to the square on the king's immediate left. For Black, kingside castling means just the reverse: the king moves two squares to the left, and the king rook hops over to the square on the king's immediate right.

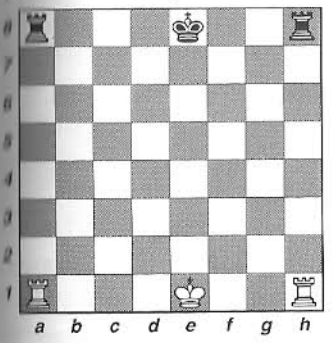


Fig. 7: Castling

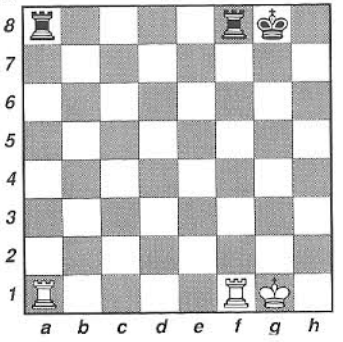


Fig. 8: Castling (2)

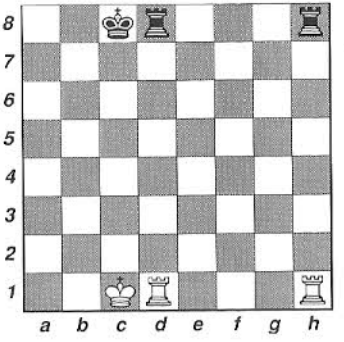


Fig. 9: Castling (3)

In queenside castling (**Fig. 9**), White moves his king two squares to the left. The queen rook hops over the king to the square on the king's immediate right. For Black, the king moves two squares to the right, and the queen rook hops over to the square on the king's immediate left. Note that in queenside castling, there are

three squares between the king and the rook at the start of the maneuver. The king doesn't end up as deep in a corner as in king-side castling, but the rook is brought a step closer to the action in the center.

Which kind of castling is better depends on the particular circumstances of a given game. With time and experience will come an understanding of when to castle and on which side of the board.

When Castling Isn't Possible

There are seven restrictions on castling. Four are temporary (castling might be possible later in the game), and three are permanent (castling will not be possible, period).

Here's the list of temporary restrictions:

1. If your king is in check, you can't escape by castling out of it.
2. If a king must travel across a square controlled by an enemy piece, you can't castle. (You can't castle out of check, and you can't castle through it, either.) There's no problem if the rook rather than the king must pass across a contested square.
3. If the king would end up on a square controlled by an enemy piece, you can't castle. (You can't castle out of check, you can't castle through it, and you can't castle into it.)
4. If a square between your king and the rook you want to castle with is occupied, whether by one of your own pieces or one of your opponent's, you can't castle.

These are the permanent restrictions:

1. If a player has moved his king before he's had a chance to castle, he can't castle.
2. If a player has moved his king rook before he's had a chance to castle kingside, he no longer has the option of castling kingside.
3. If a player has moved his queen rook before he's had a chance to castle queenside, he no longer has the option of castling queenside.

Even when castling is possible, you can only do it once per game.

There's much to remember about castling. It may seem like too much to remember. But it's the single most important action you can take to protect your king. Castling defends and attacks at the same time: simultaneously entrenching the king behind a stockade of pawns on the flank and bringing the long-range firepower of the rook to bear on the center.

Chess Notation

To help us describe the action in a game, we call a horizontal line of squares a *rank* and a vertical line a *file*. Each rank has a number and each file has a letter (**Fig. 10**).

Chess notation uses abbreviations for the pieces:

King = K
Queen = Q
Bishop = B
Knight = N
Rook = R
(There is no abbreviation for the pawn.)

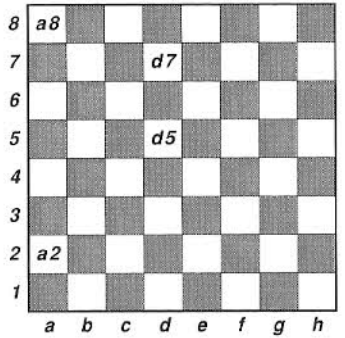


Fig. 10: Rank and File

A move is described by listing the piece, the departure square and the arrival square. For example, a rook moving from a2 to a8 is recorded as Ra2-a8 (or, if you want to save space, as Ra8). A pawn moving from d7 to d5 is recorded as d7-d5 (or simply as d5). A capture is described in the same way; you simply list the capturing piece followed by an "x" (takes) and the destination square (e.g., Rxa8).

Castling is recorded by a special notation: 0-0 for kingside castling, and 0-00 for queenside castling.

Check is noted by adding a plus sign at the end of a move. Checkmate is two plusses.

Capturing en passant is noted by adding the abbreviation "e.p." at the end of a move.

Pawn promotion is indicated by parentheses: e7-e8(Q) or a7-a8(R), for example. The letter inside the parentheses shows what piece the pawn was promoted to.

Strategies for Chess

Three of the main elements of chess theory sound like something out of Star Wars: *space*, *time*, and *force*. Space describes the chessboard as a battlefield, so to speak, with the *high ground* (key positions) located in middle of the board. Time refers to the important task of moving pieces quickly into attack positions (kill or be killed!). Finally, force is about power—the power of your pieces.

Control of space in the opening game is best established by pawns, knights, and (sometimes) bishops. The four central squares (e4, d4, e5, d5) are of highest importance, and control of the center allows you to attack your opponent effectively from either your queen or king side of the board. **Fig. 11** shows a typical effort to control these squares, after four moves.

It is not necessary to occupy a space in order to control it. **Fig. 12** shows how the white knight is exerting control over two central squares (marked by black squares) without occupying them. The knight threatens to capture any black piece that tries to advance into the middle. At least as important, any white pawns moving into the center will be protected from capture.

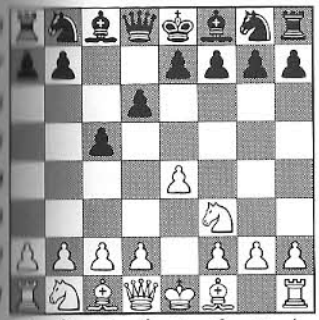


Fig. 11: Control of Space

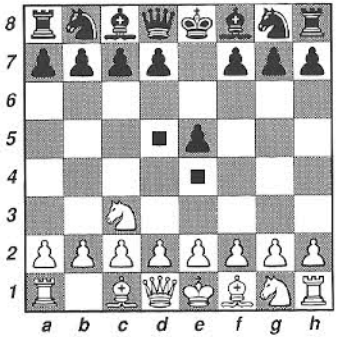


Fig. 12: Control of Space (2)

Another important chess concept is time. Time refers to rapid deployment of pieces. Experienced chess players typically do not move any piece twice until they have developed a strong board position. Tactically, this is important because a player who gains the offensive advantage early will often win the game.

It is generally agreed that the development of knights and bishops as attack pieces takes precedence in the opening game. Initially, the queen is better off sheltered behind the front lines; if she moves out, she will be attacked by opposing pieces and forced to retreat. **Fig. 13** shows an example of a strong board position that can be achieved quickly. Here, white's knights and bishops have great flexibility in movement.

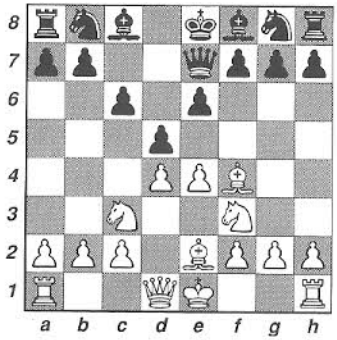


Fig. 13: Rapid Development of Pieces

To complete the development of your pieces, castle your king (**Fig. 14**). If you neglect to do this, it will be easier for your opponent to pressure your king.

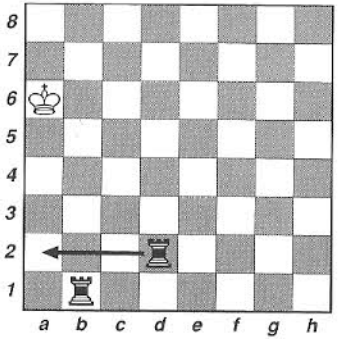


Fig. 14: After Castling

After the game has developed, the third basic chess concept, force, becomes relevant. The force a piece has is based on its mobility. The power of a chess pieces determines its point value (e.g., rook = 5 points). Generally, you do not want to make exchanges (trade pieces) if you are going to lose a more valuable piece than your opponent.

Note, however, that these values are not absolute, but are approximations. For example, if the queen is blocked up behind a lot of her own pieces, she is ineffective. In terms of real value, she may not be worth her usual 9 points (but wait until she moves!). What this means is that sometimes a player may sacrifice a valuable piece in order to achieve a more important goal, such as a checkmate.

Checkmating your opponent, even when you have a big advantage, is not always easy for a novice chess player. Pieces that can move horizontally (queens and rooks) have the easiest time bagging the king. A queen or rook can form an impassable wall across the board, which a king cannot cross (**Fig. 15**). You can use these pieces to isolate the king, forcing him into a side or corner. Moving the rook as shown (Rd2-a2++) will result in checkmate.

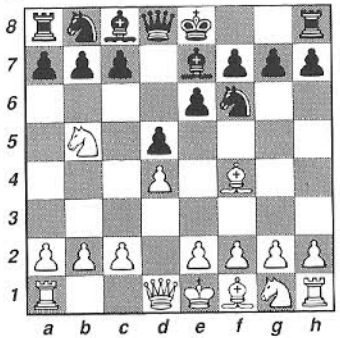


Fig. 15: Mate in One Turn

Advanced Strategies for Chess

While a lengthy discussion of chess is beyond the scope of this book, learning a few important strategies can help tremendously in improving your game. This section describes the fork (or double-attack), pin, and skewer. The opportunity to employ one of these methods doesn't usually appear unplanned (although you can get lucky). It often requires foresight. You may need to look ahead a couple of turns so you can set something up.

A fork describes a situation in which a piece is threatening to capture two enemy pieces at the same time. **Fig. 16** shows a simple fork maneuver that can be developed in just a few moves. (To attempt a fork this quickly, you must take a risk by violating the previously mentioned principles of time and space. But, hey, life is short. If your opponent is relatively inexperienced, you can make up for lost ground later.)

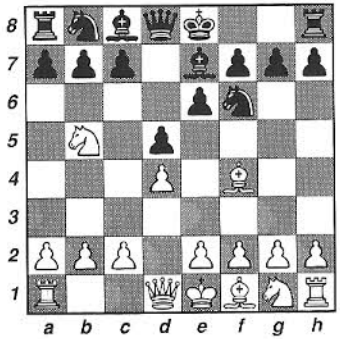


Fig. 16: Setting Up a Fork

The white knight's next move is Nb5xc7+ (shown in **Fig. 17**). This puts the king in check, while threatening the black rook. Notice the key role played by white's bishop. The bishop is protecting the knight from black's queen, preventing her from dissolving the fork by capturing the knight. The result is that black is forced to move the king out of check, allowing white to capture the rook.

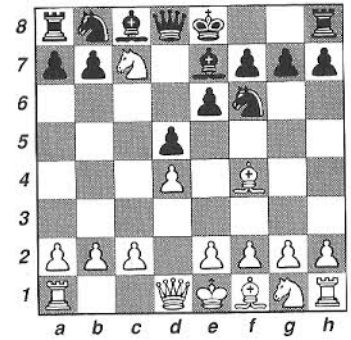


Fig. 17: Executing a Fork

Conversely, if you're playing an experienced chess player, be on guard and try to foresee where your opponent may be attempting to ambush you with a fork.

Fig. 18 shows an example of a devastating attack using a pin. A pinned piece is one that cannot move without exposing a comrade behind it to attack. In this case, the black queen is being pinned by the white bishop. The queen can't move because the king would be in check. Her best option will cut her life tragically short; she can capture the bishop before going down at the hands of the white rook.

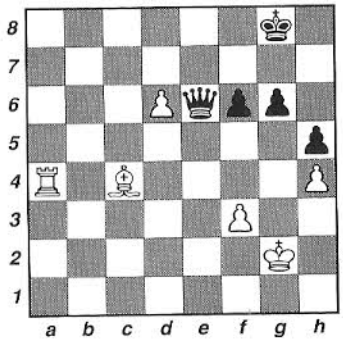


Fig. 18: Pin

A skewer is like a pin in reverse. With a skewer, the more valuable piece is out front and forced to move, allowing easy capture of the less valuable piece behind it. In this slightly revised board setup (**Fig. 19**), the bishop forces the queen to move aside. The bishop will capture the rook before being captured himself, winning the exchange (5 points versus 3).

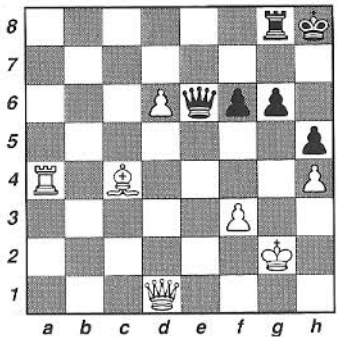
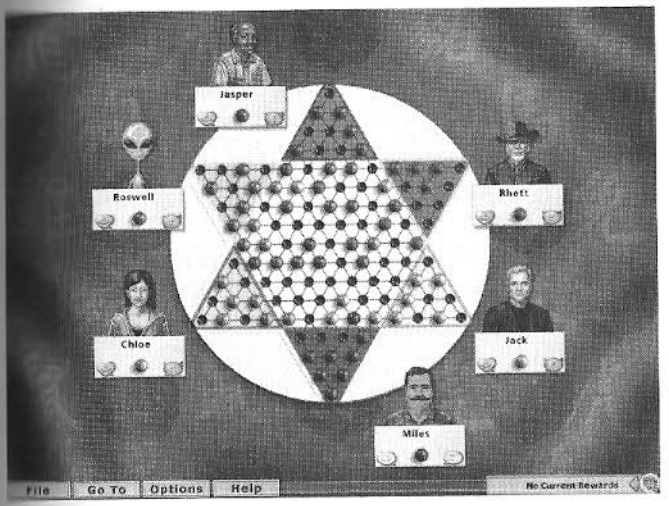


Fig. 19: Skewer

Chinese Checkers



How the Game Evolved

Chinese Checkers owns the oddest name in the **Hoyle Table Games** package: It wasn't invented in China, and it has nothing to do with Checkers!

Everyone agrees that this game first appeared in the late 1800s and that it first became popular in Sweden. This inventor simply took the Greek game of *Halma* (meaning *jump* or *leap*) and changed its look. Halma is played on a square board, Chinese Checkers is played on a board shaped like a six-pointed star. Halma uses flat pieces moving from square to square, Chinese Checkers uses marbles moving from hole to hole. In both games, the object is to be the first to occupy an enemy camp with your own pieces.

Although the marbles in Chinese Checkers move by jumping or leaping another marble, as in Checkers, this doesn't mean the two games are related. In Checkers, the jump is part of the business of capturing; Checkers is a war game, and the piece jumped is

removed from play. In Chinese Checkers, the jump is just one way of getting around the board; Chinese Checkers is a racing game, and the piece jumped stays where it is.

By the way: Chinese Checkers is indeed played in China. (Perhaps the Chinese learned the game from a Swede.) In China, they use 10 marbles per player, as opposed to the 15 sometimes used in Europe. **Hoyle Table Games** uses the Chinese variation, which is the form also used in the United States.

How the Game is Played

The goal in Chinese Checkers is to be the first to move all of your marbles into the point opposite your home base. Two, three, four, or six people can play, but never five (because one player wouldn't have an opponent opposite him or her). Two people set up exactly opposite each other. Three people alternate every other point. (With three people, you aim not for the point directly opposite but for the home base of the opponent on your right.) Four people set up opposite again.

Each player starts with a set of 10 marbles set up in the 10 holes or indentations of his home base. Play passes clockwise around the board. You can move one marble on your turn. You can move to any adjacent hole, forward, backward, diagonally, or sideways. If the square next to your marble is occupied by your enemy or by one of your own pieces, but the square on the other side is vacant, you can jump to that vacant square. A marble can make multiple jumps in the same turn.

Strategies for Chinese Checkers

Where can you seek the best methodology for playing Chinese Checkers? The Code of Hammurabi? The Bhagavad-Gita? Your best bet is the nearest playground; leapfrog has much to teach the would-be victor of this racing game. While bounding over several of your opponents' pieces looks impressive, it can leave a marble out in no-man's land, with nowhere to go next. It is better to construct your own marble chains, taking turns leapfrogging over your own pieces.

One way to do this is by using zig-zag patterns as you cross the board. For an example of this, see **Fig. 1**. The player with the dark marbles is moving with a zig-zag up through the middle. The piece at the back of the zig-zag can advance two jumps in this example. The only drawback of the zig-zag is that it is easily halted by your opponent.

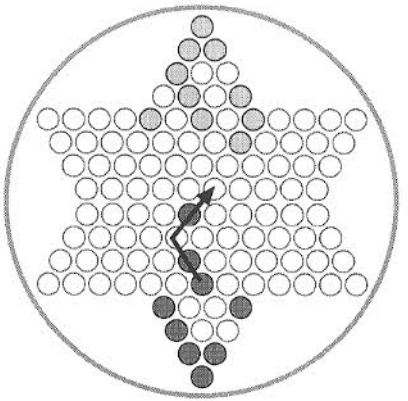


Fig. 1: Zig-Zag Chain

Other patterns work equally well or even better. **Fig. 2** shows the player on the bottom using a diamond-shaped pattern. **Fig. 2** also shows the player on the top moving down in a triangular pattern.

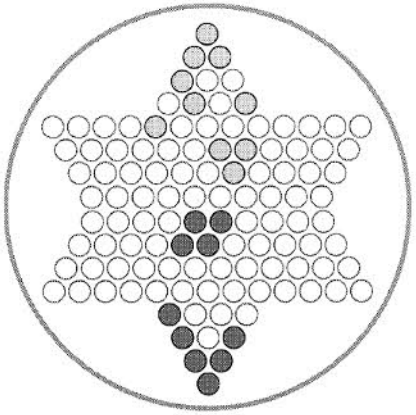


Fig. 2: Diamond and Triangular Chains

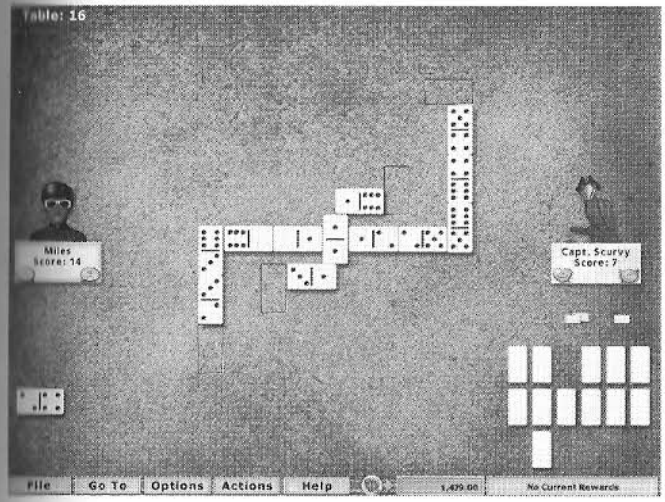
Defense in Chinese Checkers is optional. One defensive strategy is to place your marble in another player's home base. You can maintain this block longer if you place your marble in a home base adjacent to your destination base. If you're behind, this may help you to catch up. Conversely, if others have played this nasty trick on you, make sure their marbles can leave by giving them a way to jump out. (They can't resist a double jump!)

Another way to stop your opponent from advancing is to create a diamond-shaped block composed of four marbles. When the block ends, use the diamond to advance your marbles.

The construction of marble chains is key in games with two to three players. Different circumstances may call for different types of chains. If your opponent is leaving you alone, construct chains that will allow you to make longer leaps.

In the six-player game, the board gets jammed up, and soon you will be forced to abandon subtlety in favor of a more obvious strategy: look for opportunities to jump your opponents. Remember to look backwards. Sometimes, a long forward jump can be achieved in a roundabout way.

Dominoes



How the Game Evolved

The typical table game is played on a specially arranged board using pieces with specific powers. The board doesn't have to be a portable surface of wood, metal, fabric, or plastic; it can be drawn or inscribed in the ground, or, as in the case of Dominoes, the "board" can be built as the pieces are laid out. Dominoes would appear to be a typical table game—and yet, if you want to learn this game's history, you'll have to start with playing cards.

Let's start with the principles behind all card games. There are really only three: the higher cards takes the lower card (Spades and Bridge, for example), similar cards make combinations (Poker and Gin Rummy), and some combination of the two (Pinochle).

The Chinese Have it Both Ways

The principle of combining cards by suit or rank is probably the oldest of the three. The evidence? The Chinese version of

Dominoes. "Dice is one of the oldest games of chance, and Dominoes are only a different arrangement of the dice markings," writes Catherine Perry Hargrave in *The Fireside Book of Cards*. In the 1920s, Hargrave researched not only the history of playing cards but also how cards fit into and reflected their societies. "Both games very probably originated in China, and the Chinese seem to have been playing the domino game, either with tablets made of ivory or bone or with slips made of parchment or early paper, at the time when paper money was also being used to play a card game."

The Chinese invented printing and paper money in the years 600 to 900. People began playing with the money almost immediately (as well as spending it!). Playing cards most likely evolved from this money, and one kind of playing card became the equivalent of our Dominoes.

Chinese Domino cards included a set of 21 cards with markings of red and black dots (corresponding to the pips on our Dominoes *bones*). There were also as many as four extra suits with fanciful decorations instead of dots. These decorations included chrysanthemum blossoms, bamboo, butterflies, bats, crabs, coins, scrolls, mythical figures—you get the idea.

"There is a theory," Hargrave speculates, "that these domino cards also found their way into Europe in the 13th century, and that [the mythical figures] became the stranger persons on the 21 high cards of the Tarot series." We note this theory here only because of the sense of wonder it imparts. Dominoes were not reliably reported in Europe before the 18th century (see below), by which time the Tarot was well-established.

Whatever may have become of these figures, there seems to be a clear connection between Dominoes and playing cards. Merilyn Simonds Mohr makes the case in *The Games Treasury*, pointing out the playing-card terms in Dominoes. We *shuffle* the bones before each game, *draw* bones to form a *hand*, and dig in the boneyard when we can't play (which Mohr calls the equivalent of the expression *Go fish*). The 28 bones make up a *deck*, and the deck can be

broken into *suits* (one suit is all the bones with one blank half, a second is all the bones with one pip on one half, etc.).

Dominoes Takes Its Time Leaving China

Though dice spread relatively quickly around the globe, Dominoes was a sluggard. Chess, Checkers, and Backgammon were firmly entrenched in Europe before the first mention of Dominoes appears (in Italy in the early 1700s). It was mostly likely brought to Italy by merchant traders, though that still doesn't explain the tardiness of the game's arrival. Dominoes spread to France and then to France's colony in Canada. When the British defeated the French in the Seven Years War (1756-63) and took control of Canada, French POWs brought Dominoes to England, where they found an enthusiastic following.

Joseph Strutt, an Englishman who compiled one of the first serious studies of games in English (*Sports and Pastimes*, 1801), thought Dominoes "a very childish sport." Dominoes, Strutt huffed, "could have nothing but the novelty to recommend it to the notice of grown persons in this country." Strutt was a better researcher than a judge of public taste, and Dominoes has been one of the world's more popular pastimes ever since.

How the Game is Played

Hoyle Table Games includes four versions of Dominoes: Draw, Block, Sebastopol, and Fives). These are the general rules (specific rules for each version follow):

Dominoes are rectangular tiles marked with every combination of numbers (21 of them) that can be rolled with two dice. The tiles are called *bones*. In addition, six bones are blank on one half, and one bone is blank on both halves, making 28 bones in a set or deck. The *heaviest* bone is marked with six dots or *pips* on each end: 6-6. (When comparing bones, one is heavier than the other if it has more dots; the other is lighter.)

Bones whose ends are alike (as with 6-6) are called *doublets*. Each doublet belongs to a single *suit*.

To begin a game (no matter which version), the bones are placed face-down on the table and shuffled (moved around at random). Each player draws a certain number of bones at random to form his or her hand. For the first play, a bone is laid face-up on the table. The next bone laid down must match the first in some way. For example, if the first bone played is the 6-5, the next one down must have a 6 or a 5. You set the new bone down with matching ends touching.

One object of a Dominoes game is to get rid of all the bones in your hand. There may also be scoring involved in the course of play. Dominoes variations fall into two categories, according to what you must do when you have no playable move. In the *block* category, a player with no playable move loses a turn. In the *draw* category, the player draws more bones from the common pile (the *boneyard*) until finding one that can be played. If no such bone turns up, the player loses a turn.

Playing Block

This is the simplest variation. If two people are playing, they each draw seven bones for a hand. If three or four are playing, they each draw five. (This distribution of bones is the same for Block and Draw; Sebastopol has its own distribution, as explained below.)

The player holding the highest doublet *sets* it—that is, lays it down as the first play. The turn to play then rotates to the left. Each play is made by adding a bone to an open, or exposed, end of the layout, with equivalent numbers touching. The layout in Block always has two open ends. Two branches are built off the sides of the set (the doublet that began the game). All doublets are customarily placed crosswise, but this doesn't affect the number of open ends.

If a player has no legal move, he or she passes. The game ends when a player gets rid of his or her hand or when no player is able to add to the layout. The player with the lightest remaining hand wins the total number of pips on all the bones remaining in the other hands. Multiple games are usually played until one player reaches the agreed-upon amount of points to win.

Playing Sebastopol

This sounds like a battle in the Crimean War, but so far as is known, the Charge of the Light Brigade has nothing to do with it. There's no boneyard. Four people play, each drawing seven bones. The 6-6 is set, after which play rotates to the left of the first player. The 6-6 is open four ways, and the first four plays after the set must fill each opening—no branch may be extended before these four bones are laid down. All other Block rules apply.

Playing Draw

If you've mastered Block, then you have only one thing to remember about Draw: a player having no playable bone must draw from the boneyard until a playable bone turns up. Once the boneyard is empty, a player with an unplayable hand must pass. Draw is the most popular variation of Dominoes, and it's the default game option.

Playing Fives

Fives is a scoring variation of Dominoes that belongs to the draw category of Dominoes games. Fives is typically played with two players, with each player drawing seven bones for a hand. In Fives, unlike most other Dominoes games, you can make certain plays during the game that give you points.

As in Draw Dominoes, if a player can't play a bone, he or she must draw from the boneyard until a playable bone turns up. Once the boneyard is empty, a player with an unplayable hand must pass.

The first play in Fives depends on the game rules you decide on. In the standard rules, any bone can be played first, not necessarily a doublet. You can change the rules such that the first play must be the highest doublet in the game.

The first doublet played in the game is called the *spinner*. Bones can be played extending from the spinner in all four directions.

Other doublets played in the game after the spinner is played do not extend the play in other directions, only the spinner does.

In Fives, as bones are played on the layout, a line is formed called the *line of play*. Open ends of non-doublet bones at the ends of any lines of play, and doublets touching only one other bone are counted after each play. Scoring occurs if this count (the *table count*) totals a multiple of five; one point is awarded for every multiple of five in the table count. Thus a table count of 5 is worth one point, 10 is worth two points, 15 is worth three points, and so on. The current table count is shown at the top of the screen.

Until a spinner is played in the game, there is only one line of play. When a spinner is added to the layout, bones can be played extending from all four directions of the spinner, so there are potentially two lines of play.

Fig. 1 shows the first two plays of a game. The first player chose the 6-6 doublet as his first play, making 6-6 the spinner. Notice that the figure shows that bones can be played in four different directions from the spinner. Both ends of the spinner in **Fig. 1** were initially open, and so the table count started out at **12** (6+6), which didn't score for the first player, as 12 is not a multiple of five.

The other player then played a 2-6, creating a vertical line of play starting with the 2-6 and ending with the spinner 6-6. When the spinner (or any doublet) ends one end of the line of play, both sides of the bone are scored. Therefore, the table count in **Fig. 1** is **14** (2+6+6): two points for the 2 at one end of the line of play, and six points each for the two 6s in the spinner at the other end of the line of play. This is another non-scoring play.

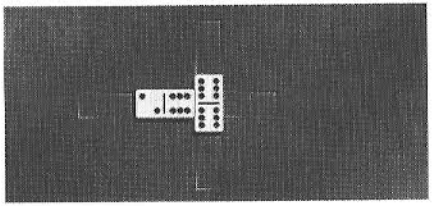


Fig. 1: A Non-scoring Layout

Fig. 2 shows the third play of the same game. The 6-3 bone was played on the other side of the spinner, and the table count becomes **5** (2+3): two points for the 2 at one end of the line of play, and three points for the 3 at the other end. The spinner no longer counts towards the table count, since it doesn't have any open ends in the line of play. This play is a scoring play: the table score is a multiple of 5, and the player who played the 6-3 scores one point.

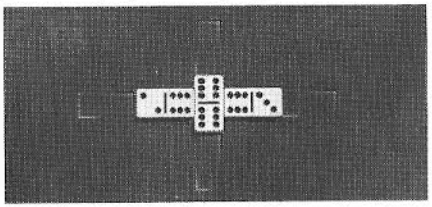


Fig. 2: A Scoring Play

In **Fig. 3**, the 5-2 bone was the first play of the game, for a table count of **7** (5+2). The 5-5 doublet was then played, becoming the spinner (with a table count of **12** (5+5+2)); bones were then played off the spinner in two additional directions. The table count in **Fig. 3** is **12** (4+2+6). The 4 and 2 are ends of one line of play, and the 6 is the end of the other line of play. Note that the bottom end of the 5-5 spinner, although it is available for play, is not yet considered in the line of play and is not counted towards the table count. Once a bone is played below the 5-5 spinner, the open end(s) of that bone will be included in the table count.

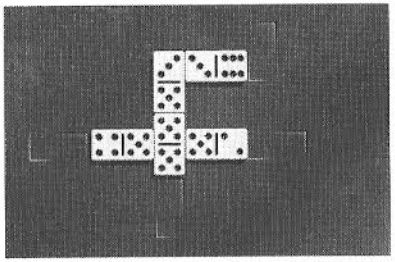


Fig. 3: Extending Play From the Spinner

When a doublet is played on one end of a line of play, both ends of the doublet count towards the score. In **Fig. 4**, the 5-5 doublet played at the right end of the layout adds 10 (5+5) to the table count: the table count is thus 20 (5+3+2+5+5). This is a colossally good play, and worth four points.

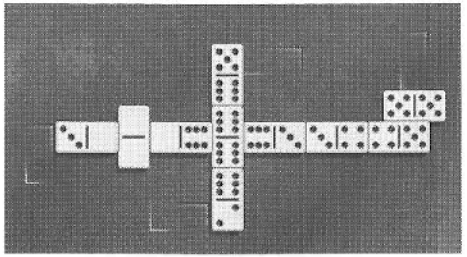


Fig. 4: Playing a Doublet Other Than the Spinner

The game ends if a player gets rid of all of his or her hand or when no player is able to add to the layout.

Each player scores the number of points he or she earned during the game. The player who went out first (or the player with the lighter hand) wins the hand and scores points for the bones remaining in the other player's hand: the total number of pips on the other players' remaining bones is rounded up or down to the nearest five, and that number is then divided by five.

Thus, if the losing player has 23 pips still in hand, the winning player gets five points (25/5); if the losing player has 12 pips in hand, the winning player gets two points (10/5), and so on. Note that 1 or 2 pips remaining in hand would be rounded down to 0 and thus would be worth no points. The winner gets these points even if he or she scored less points in the hand (or the game).

Multiple games are usually played until one player reaches the agreed-upon amount of points to win.

Strategies for Dominoes

The player who spends the least time drawing bones is usually going to win Dominoes. To avoid the boneyard, you need to think about upcoming turns; try to maximize your own options and minimize your opponent's options. Ways you can do this include: playing to your strengths, interpreting your opponent's plays, and determining what bones are unplayed (counting bones). This last category is discussed later in the advanced strategies section.

If your hand is loaded with one or two numbers (e.g., 3's and 5's) you can play to this strength. Try to expand your options on both sides of the board. For example, playing the 3-1 on the right in **Fig. 5** means you can't be blocked next turn by your opponent.

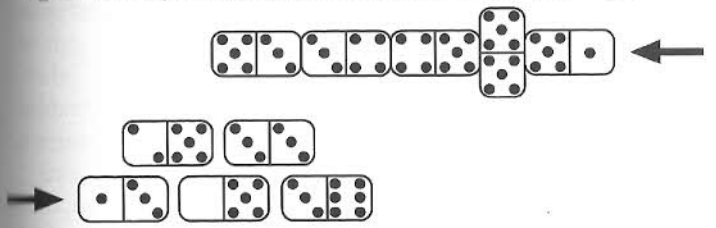


Fig. 5: Playing to Your Strengths

Early in the game, you can often glean useful information by paying attention to the bones played by another player. (This is also true later in the game, but to a lesser extent.) For example, when your opponent leaves a 5 on one end of the board, realize that one or several 5's may be waiting in reserve. Be aware of it.

Remember that the player with the lightest hand wins. A lighter hand is also better if you lose, as your opponent does not gain as many points. Therefore, when all other factors are equal, play your heavier bones.

Because the Sebastopol version of Dominoes has four branches on the board instead of two, it is very difficult to block opponents. The player who takes the first turn often wins. Given the likelihood that you will lose a lot of rounds, it is even more critical to reduce damage by playing your heavier bones in Sebastopol.

In the Fives version of Dominoes, earning points during the game is a matter of keeping count and keeping your points on par with your opponent's points. Hold on to doublet blanks and 5s if possible, as well as the 0-5 bone; when your opponent scores, if you can play these in the right way (keeping the table count at a multiple of five), you can also score points.

In Fives, which doublet is used as the spinner is key to the game. If you have a doublet in hand that you could potentially play as the spinner, look at the other bones in your hand to decide whether it'd be a good play: if you have two or more bones with the suit of the potential spinner (a "suit" in Dominoes simply means the number on one or both ends of a bone), it makes a good spinner. If you only have one bone with the suit of the potential spinner, it is not as good a play. If you have no bones with the suit of the potential spinner, don't use it as a spinner; wait for the other player to play a spinner, and then play your doublet as a doublet.

Also in Fives, although earning points when playing bones is important, don't make the mistake of forgetting to lighten your hand as well. Get rid of your high bones as you see your opponent's hand get lighter. If you fail to go out first, or have more tiles than your opponent at the end of the game, your bones in hand can give your opponent as many or more points as the fives points in the game can.

Advanced Strategies for Dominoes

Counting bones is the essence of "dominoes domination." You can use information garnered from the counting of bones to block your opponent. Suppose you're the player holding the bones shown in **Fig. 6**. The initial impulse is to play the 4-1 (since you have a lot of 1's), but recall that seven bones in the deck contain 6's. Six of the seven are showing and already accounted for (only the 6-1 is missing). Knowing that only the 6-1 is left—either in your opponent's hand or the boneyard—you can try to block your opponent by placing a 6 on both ends of the board. This could easily force him to the boneyard and set him up for a quick loss.

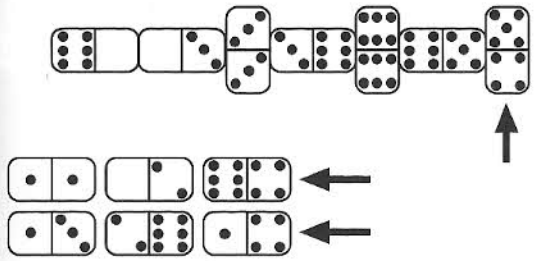


Fig. 6: Counting Bones

Fig. 7 shows an inverse situation in which you can count bones to your advantage. The purpose here is to prevent yourself from being blocked by your opponent.

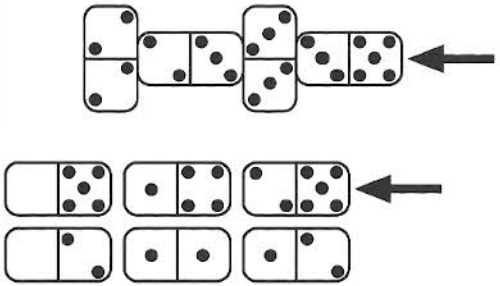
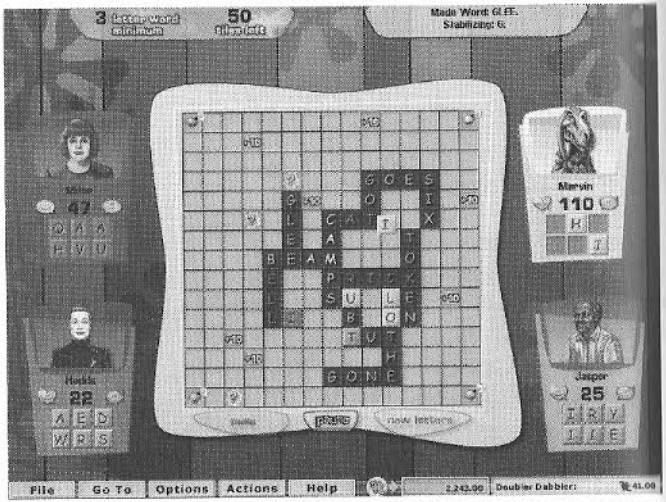


Fig. 7: Counting Bones Defensively

Here, your hand is weak in 3's and 6's, so you want to avoid these numbers. Playing the 2-1 on the left would be a good option because you can play the 1-1 on the following turn if necessary. However, consider playing the 5-2 on the right instead. By playing the 5-2 there is only one bone left in the game that can hurt you—the 6-2 (the 3-2 has already been played and is out of the picture). If you had played the 2-1, on the other hand, your opponent might respond with the 6-2, 5-1, or 6-1, blocking you (on that side) in each case.

DoubleCross



What Is DoubleCross?

DoubleCross is an exciting and competitive word-building game for two, three, or four human or computer players. DoubleCross was created by the Hoyle team at Sierra Entertainment.

DoubleCross is unique because it allows players to place partial words as well as complete words. A partial word is a sequence of letters that can be extended to make a complete word. A partial word you play in one turn can be finished (by you or another player) in another turn.

Another distinguishing feature of DoubleCross is its customizable game board; special spaces, such as bombs and blocking spaces, can be placed on the board to make gameplay more challenging. You can also opt for a timed or untimed game (depending on how fast you like to play!).

The goal of DoubleCross is to score the most points at the end of the game. You earn points by completing words and playing on bonus spaces, and you can take points away from other players.

To help you learn how to play DoubleCross, the status area at the upper-right of the screen describes what happens as you play.

How the Game is Played

You can play DoubleCross with one, two, or three other human or computer players. To add, remove, or change players, click DoubleCross Players on the Options menu.

In DoubleCross, you move tiles to the board to make complete or partial words. There are two ways to place a tile:

- Drag a tile from your rack to the board.
- Click a tile and then click the board.

When you move a tile to the board, before you place it, a box is drawn around the letters that will be evaluated. This helps you estimate whether your play will make a complete or partial word.

Rules for Placing Tiles

There are a few rules to be aware of when placing tiles:

1. The tile must extend from a stable tile. Stable tiles are tiles with a black background.

   In the example below, T cannot be extended from I, because I is unstable. You could place the T to the right of the I, however, because it then extends from the stable tile M.

   If you try to extend a tile from an unstable tile, it is returned to your rack.

2. If a tile you place is not part of a complete or partial word, it will be destroyed, and your turn ends. A partial word is a word that can have letters added to it to make a complete word.

   In the example below, MAI is a partial word; it can be made into several different complete words, such as MAID, MAIL, or REMAIN.

   If you add a V to MAI, however, the V is destroyed, because MAIV is not a partial word (it can't be made into a complete word).

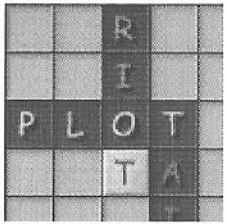
3. You have the ability to undo a move (pick tiles back up into your rack) if the tiles you placed did not complete a word and you didn't place your tiles on a special space. Click Undo on the Actions menu to undo your most recent play.

Making Words

When you complete a word, a tile in the completed word becomes stable if all the words it is part of are completed.

O and P Become Stable When MOP Is Created

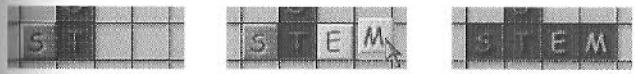
In the next example, T remains unstable. Even though it is part of the complete word RIOT, it is also part of the partial word TA. When TA is made into a complete word, the T will become stable.



When you complete a word, you get 1 point for each letter in the word you made. And, if any of your tiles were made stable when completing the word, you get the word's full value for each tile that was made stable by that play. If the tiles are owned by someone else, that player gets the points. Therefore, you can get points during other players' turns.

Word Scoring Example

In this play, the yellow player, Madeline, makes the word STEM by adding the tiles E and M to the red tiles S and T.



Madeline gets 12 points total: 4 points for making a four-letter word, and 4 points for each of her letters that was made stable (E and M).

However, the red player, Matthew also gets 4 points for this play, because his unstable tile S was made stable by Madeline's play.

Playing on Special Spaces

There are several different types of special spaces on the game board. These spaces can give you bonus points, set off bombs (or add them to your bomb tray to use later), block certain spaces (so they can't be played), or, in the case of the mystery spaces, do unpredictable things.

You play on a special space by placing a tile on it as you usually would, except for blocking spaces, which simply block off certain spaces on the board, so no one can play tiles on them.

For a special space to take effect, you must make a legal play on it. For example, if you don't make at least a partial word when placing a tile on a bonus point space, you won't get the bonus points.

For a description of each of the special spaces, see "Special spaces on the DoubleCross board" later in this chapter.

Ending Your Turn

Click the Pass button when you are done playing tiles.

To get new tiles instead of playing, click the New Letters button at the start of your turn; your turn is passed to the next player. You can get new tiles on your turn only if you have not played any tiles in that turn, but you can play a directional bomb at the start of your turn and still get new tiles.

When your turn ends, your rack is refilled with new tiles, and the other players play their turns.

Ending the Game

The game is over when there are no more tiles left (an indicator at the upper-left corner of the screen shows how many remain) and a player has no more tiles at the start of his or her turn.

In addition, the game ends if no one plays during his or her turn and the last passing player chooses to end the game.

At the end of the game, points are deducted for tiles in your hand and for unstable tiles on the board. The player with the most points wins the game!

DoubleCross Rules

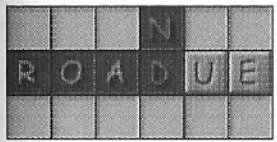
The following rules apply in DoubleCross:

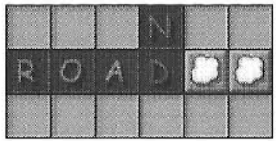
- A word is considered complete when it has at least three letters. You can change the game to require at least four letters for a complete word by changing the Minimum Word Size in the DoubleCross Settings dialog box.

- You can make a partial word even if it is not possible to ever complete the word (for example, if the word is built near the edge of the board or if other tiles are in the way).
- Letters aren't made stable until after any special spaces they are placed on take effect. Therefore, playing on a colored bomb might destroy a tile before it has a chance to become stable.
- Two different partial words can extend in two opposite directions from the same stable letter. In the next example, both OAD and DUE are partial words (ROAD and DUET, for example), but OADUE is not a partial word.

When either of the words are completed, tiles on the other side of the stable letter are destroyed if they are no longer included in any partial words.

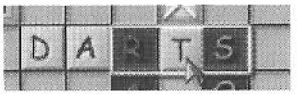
In the example below, making ROAD will destroy both unstable tiles on the other side, because they aren't used in other words.





- If a tile is placed next to a series of letters, all letters up to the first stable letter (and all adjacent stable letters) are required to be part of a word, but letters on the other side do not need to be included. In the following example, although the blue T is placed next to a long string of letters, only TH is required to be a word or partial word; the letters A, T, and E are ignored.

- Even though not all adjacent letters are required to be a word or partial word, if a word is created, it is made stable.
  In the next example, only RTS is required to be a word or partial word. However, because DARTS is a complete word, it is made stable.



Scoring in DoubleCross

DoubleCross scoring is described below. Note that plays made by other players can affect your score, and plays you make can give points to other players.

Action...	Score...
Completing a word	+1 point per letter in word
Stabilizing a tile in a word	+full word score*
Playing on a colored bomb	+8 points
Playing on your own colored bomb	+16 points
Picking up a directional bomb**	+2 points
Picking up a multi-directional bomb**	+4 points
Having a letter blown up (by bombs or illegal plays)	-4 points
Having tiles left in the rack at game end	-4 points per tile
Having unstable tiles left on the board at game end	-1 point per tile

* See the scoring example earlier in this chapter.

** You get points for directional bombs even if you don't have any more room for them in your bomb tray.

Special Spaces on the DoubleCross Board

There are five types of special spaces that can be placed on the DoubleCross game board: bonus point spaces, mystery spaces, colored bombs, directional bombs, and blocking spaces. All of these spaces are optional and can be turned on and off in the DoubleCross game settings.

Bonus Point Spaces

Bonus point spaces give you bonus points when you play on them. Each space on the board starts out as +5 points.

When you play a tile on a bonus point space you immediately get the number of points shown on the space, and the value of each bonus point space remaining on the board is increased. (Bonus point spaces can be worth a lot of points near the end of the game!)

Mystery Spaces

Mystery spaces do unpredictable things. You never know what might happen when you land on a mystery space. The only way to find out is to try it!

Colored Bombs

Colored bombs are placed in the corners of the game board. There is at least one bomb of each player's color in a game.

If you play on a colored bomb that is a different color than your own, all of the unstable tiles of the same color as the bomb are destroyed. In addition, any unstable orphaned tiles (tiles that are no longer connected to other letters) are destroyed, and the tiles' owner or owners lose points for those tiles.

If you play on your own colored bomb, the bomb is considered defused and will not do anything; you will get points for defusing it, however.

Directional Bombs

A directional bomb can be placed on the board to destroy all unstable tiles in its path (indicated by its arrows). Tiles are destroyed regardless of color.

Directional bombs can be placed anywhere on the board, except on a blocking space.

There are three types of directional bombs:

 The north-south bomb can be placed on a square of the board to destroy unstable tiles in the same column as that square.

 The east-west bomb can be placed on a square of the board to destroy unstable tiles in the same row as that square.

 The north-south-east-west (multi-directional) bomb can be placed on a square of the board to destroy unstable tiles in the same row and column as that square.

Directional bombs are different from bonus point spaces and colored bombs, because they don't go off immediately. When you play on a directional bomb space, the bomb is moved to your rack, and you get points for picking it up (4 points for a multi-directional bomb, 2 points for the other directional bombs.) If you already have two bombs, you don't get any more bombs, but you still get points for playing on a bomb.

After a bomb destroys tiles, any orphaned tiles are destroyed, and points are deducted from the tiles' owner or owners for each blown up tile.

Note on playing colored and directional bombs: Sometimes when tiles are destroyed, other tiles may be made stable. If the destruction of a tile causes another unstable tile to no longer be part of any partial words, it will become stable. The exception is when the tile is in the "line of fire" of the bomb's explosion, in which case it will be destroyed even if the explosion of a previous tile would cause it to be made stable.

Note that the player who owns the tile will get appropriate points for the tile being made stable. Note, too, that it is possible to form a word by blowing up a tile. In this case, the player who placed the bomb gets the points for the word.

Blocking Spaces

Blocking spaces are spaces on the grid where no tiles can be placed. These spaces are dispersed randomly on the grid.

Strategies for DoubleCross

The key to doing well at DoubleCross is to make the longest possible words, using the fewest unstable tiles of your opponents (because using their tiles gives them points).

It's also very important to get to the bonus point, mystery, and bomb spaces before your opponents do. Bonus point spaces are a great way to get points, and you don't have to make a complete word to get the bonus points! Bombs, especially the colored ones, can devastate your opponents (and you).

Be sure to make as many complete words as possible when you play tiles, because unstable tiles can cost you points in the future.

The number of tiles remaining in the game is shown at the top of the screen. When the number of tiles is 30 or fewer, the game might end soon; try to play as many tiles to the board as possible (since unused tiles lose you points). Making complete words is best, but even partial words are helpful, because at the end of the game you lose more points for tiles in your hand than for unstable tiles on the board.

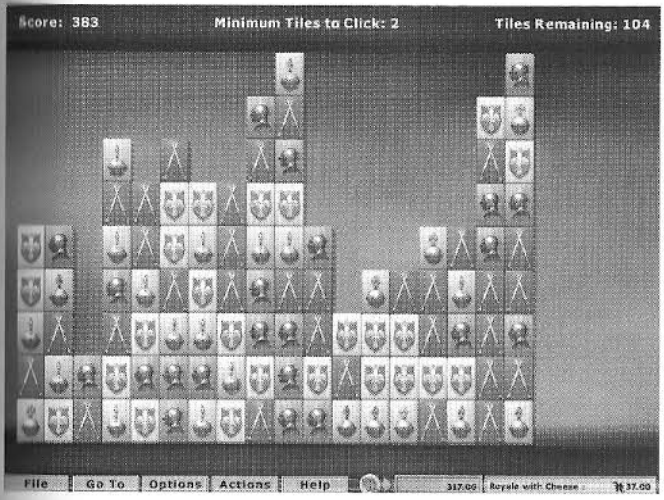
Notes on Playing Bombs

When playing on another player's colored bomb, note that the bomb may orphan some of your unstable letters, destroying them. Know the consequences before playing on a colored bomb.

When placing a directional bomb, maximize your opponent's destruction, but minimize your own.

Holding on to directional bombs until you need to clear tiles off the board can give you an important edge. Note that playing a directional bomb will cause remaining letters to stabilize if they make a complete word.

GRAVITY TILES



What Is Gravity Tiles?

Gravity Tiles is a fun and addictive solitaire puzzle game. In Gravity Tiles, you select groups of similar tiles to remove them from the board, and tiles above those tiles fall down, rearranging the playfield.

Your objective is twofold: to clear the board as much as possible, and to clear large groups of tiles to make more points. (And sometimes you might want to choose just one goal as these objectives can be mutually exclusive!)

There are infinite ways to play a single puzzle, as each decision you make changes the game entirely.

How the Game is Played

In Gravity Tiles, you try to remove as many tiles as you can from the board by clicking groups of two or more matching, tiles to remove them. Removing large groups gives you more points.

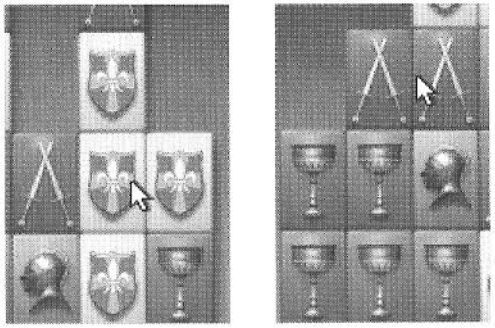


Fig. 1: Removing Groups of Matching Tiles

When you remove a group of tiles, any tiles above those tiles fall down. Try to remove all the tiles on the board. If you remove an entire column of tiles, any columns remaining to the right slide to the left. The more tiles you remove with one click, the more points you score, so try to set up "big clicks."

The game ends when no more groups of tiles can be removed. Note that if you're playing with the Moveable Tiles option (described below), even if you have no more groups of tiles available, the game will not end if you have a drag move available that could continue the game.

Playing with Moveable Tiles

Turn on the Moveable Tiles option in the game settings to let you move tiles to try to make more matches. With this option, you can slide a tile on the top of any column either left or right, one column at a time. If the tile is blocked by another tile or the edge of the board, it stops moving and can no longer be moved in that direction. A tile also stops if you release the mouse. If it is moved so there is no tile immediately beneath it, it drops.

When a tile stops or drops, and it touches other tiles such that it makes a match, the tiles in the matching group are removed. If the tile is stopped or dropped and does not make a match with the tiles it's touching, it is returned to its original place.

Playing with Royale Tiles

When playing with the Royale option turned on, the animated tiles (Holy Orb in Medieval, Eagle in Southwest) are worth more points than the other tiles when removed, particularly when removed in large groups. Removing royale tiles in a group of 15 or more tiles scores so many more points relative to the other scoring opportunities, creating large groups of royale tiles is the goal of Gravity Tiles Royale.

Strategies for Gravity Tiles

It is often safe to remove groups of tiles at the top of the board first, as these will have minimal effect on other tiles and it is easier to tell what is going to happen when they are removed.

A good strategy is to clear tiles on the left side of the board first, since columns that are removed collapse the board from right to left.

When using the Moveable Tiles option, there may be more than one place you can move a particular tile; make sure you are moving it to the most strategic place before moving it or letting go of the mouse. Note that if columns have been removed from the right edge of the board, you can drag tiles to the rightmost empty column (it must make a match as a result of the drop).

Strategies for Gravity Tiles Royale

When your entire focus is on creating a group of one kind of tile, your strategy changes quite a bit. Instead of trying to build towards removing big groups or all the tiles, you focus completely on setting up big groups of royale tiles, at the expense of making big groups of the other tiles. Following are some tactics for stringing together a 15+ Royale Tile chain.

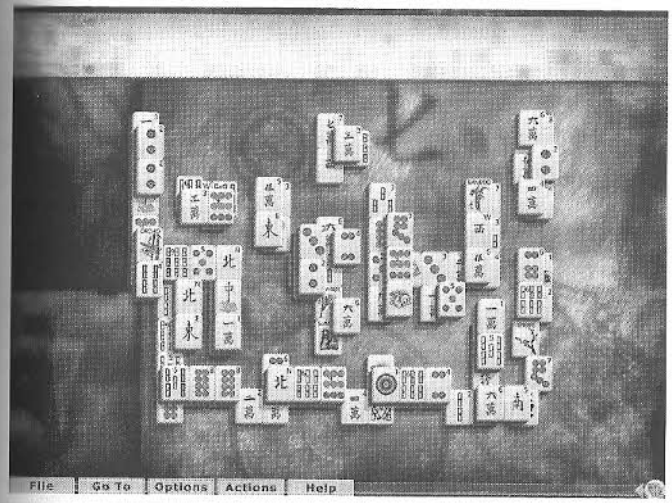
Eliminate columns without Royale tiles. A column without a Royale tile will create a gap in your horizontal chain. Therefore, you must have fifteen or more Royale tiles in consecutive columns for a 15+ removal to be possible.

Bring the Royale tiles up high down low. Since tiles can't ever go up, in order to create a horizontal Royale tile chain, you will need to link them together across the lower part of the grid. Look at your grid, and look for any Royale tiles above the bottom three rows. In order to make high-up royale tiles part of your chain, most of the tiles underneath them must be cleared.

Some Royale tiles are expendable. There are twenty-five Royale tiles, and you only need to string together 15 for the big points. While stringing together all 25 is a great accomplishment, sometimes you have to accept that a royale tile won't be part of the big chain. It is better to cut your losses and focus on the big picture than to wreck your board trying to herd a few stragglers into the fold.

Watch for singleton tiles in "must-clear" areas. If a tile you know needs to be removed is not touching one of it's kind, look a few clicks ahead before removing anything. Make sure you can click your way to having the straggler paired up, or you are sunk.

MAHJONG TILES



How the Game Evolved

Mahjong Tiles (sometimes known as Taipei) is a simplification of *Mah Jongg*, which itself is an American simplification of a Chinese game of the 19th century. (The Chinese original was played by different rules and known by different names throughout that country; one name that's come down to us translates roughly as "Game of the Four Winds.")

An American businessman named Joseph Babcock, who was living in Shanghai at the close of World War I, played the Chinese game and fell in love with it. He thought it would appeal to Americans, so he set about codifying (and streamlining) the rules. Babcock coined the name Mah Jongg for the new version; supposedly, he took this name from the bird that appears on one of the game's tiles. The bird represents a mythical figure called by the Chinese (this is an approximation) Mah Jongg, "Bird of a Thousand Intelligences."

Babcock might not have been as smart as that bird, but his hunch about the gaming marketplace was sound. Mah Jongg became a thunderous hit in the United States, Great Britain, and Australia in the 1920s. The game is still played today, though it no longer commands an army of fanatics as it did 70 years ago.

Mah Jongg is superficially similar to Dominoes in that both games use tiles, or bones, and because the arrangement of the tiles forms the "board." Mahjong Tiles shares that similarity with Dominoes; it also resembles certain card games, such as Solitaire, where uncovering hidden cards is the order of the day.

How the Game is Played

At the start of the game, the tiles or bones are randomly arranged in a pattern; you can choose from one of many pre-designed layouts. Using the Layout Maker, you can even design your own Mahjong Tiles layouts.

Your job is to match exposed tiles in pairs (a tile is exposed if its left or right edge is not touching another tile and there are no tiles on top of it). Each pair, once found, is removed from the layout. You keep matching pairs until there are no more in the layout, trying to end with the fewest tiles remaining. You can then stop and begin a new layout, or "reshuffle" the remaining tiles and continue on.

You can play Mahjong Tiles with another person, if you like. In this game, each player tries to make matches on his or her turn; if a player gets a match correct, he or she gets another try; when he or she misses, the turn passes to the other player.

How Tiles Are Matched in Mahjong Tiles

There are seven categories, or suits, of tiles. Mahjong Tiles uses two different tile sets: Chinese and Egyptian. You can change the tile set you play with in the game settings.

In five of the seven suits, you can only match tiles that are exactly identical by number and picture. You can't match tiles that have the same number only. Two tiles with 9 of Circles match, but a 9 of Circles and a 9 of Bamboo don't match.

In two special suits, Seasons and Flowers, you can match any tiles in that suit. In Seasons, you can match any of the seasons together (Spring and Winter or Summer and Fall, for example). In Flowers, you can match any of the flowers together.

Seasons and Flowers look different in the Chinese and Egyptian tile sets:

Fig. 1: Seasons and Flowers (Chinese)

Fig. 2: Seasons and Flowers (Egyptian)

Note that the tiles you get in a game will depend on the number of tiles used in the grid, so not all games will include Seasons and Flowers.

Strategies for Mahjong Tiles

Mahjong Tiles is like an overstuffed version of Solitaire; the board needs trimming down fast, and it's your job to do it. In comparing Mahjong Tiles and Solitaire, you'll find that the rules are very different (matching pairs versus combining suits and ranks), but the strategy is quite similar.

The playing field in Mahjong Tiles is a puzzle that must be unlocked. Look to see what tiles will unlock other tiles. As in Solitaire, you have no guarantees that the puzzle is solvable at all (a needed "key" may be out of reach behind or beneath a tile). You can, however, postpone or completely avoid the typical dead end (where you have no plays left) by making the best play when you have several choices available.

Fig. 3 shows a simple illustration of how the Mahjong Tiles configuration must be "unlocked" if you wish to win the game. Three available matching tiles have large round circles (with 1's in the upper right corner). You can match two of the three; which two do you choose? The two tiles in the lower right unlock a 3 tile and a 6 tile, while the third tile (upper left) doesn't unlock anything (it's adjacent to a hidden tile). Take the two in the lower right; otherwise, you're reducing your future options.

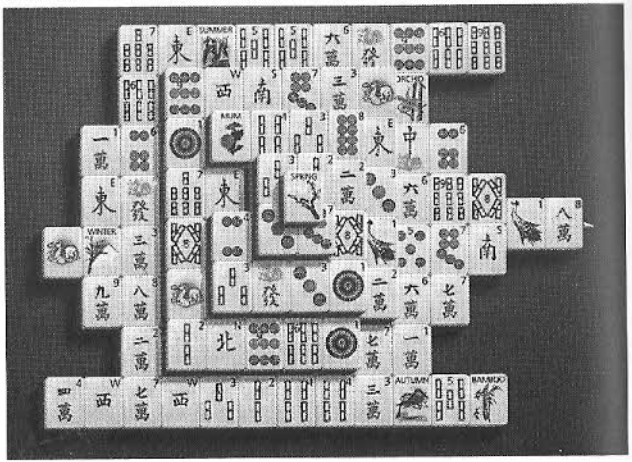
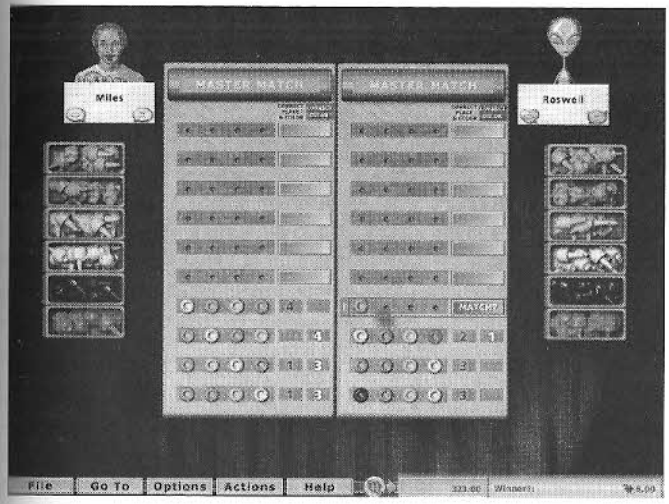


Fig. 3: "Unlocking" Mahjong Tiles

The crucial element that makes Mahjong Tiles more skillful than Solitaire is that you can see most of the tiles. In standard card Solitaire, most of the cards are hidden beneath stacks one to seven cards deep. If you need a specific card, you have to get lucky to pick the right stack. With Mahjong Tiles, on the other hand, you can spend as much time as you want looking for the very best move. So the big question is, do you have time?

Master Match



How the Game Evolved

Code-breaking games like Master Match have been popular for quite some time. Requiring little more than a piece of paper and a logical mind, these puzzles are favorites of mathematicians, physicists, cryptographers and other lovers of logic, but are easy enough for anyone to understand and can help teach valuable analytical skills.

In Master Match, one player creates a puzzle, and the other player tries to guess it as quickly as possible, by analyzing the results given by the code creator as to accuracy and position.

The original concept for Master Match comes from Jotto, a game that's been around for hundreds of years. In Jotto, a player creates a word for another player to guess. Code breaking games have been made with colors, numbers, and letters. Games using colors are popular as it can be easier to visualize patterns.

You can play Master Match with one or two boards. In the standard two-board version, there are two Master Match boards, and each player makes a code for the other player to guess. Then, you and the other player simultaneously try to guess each others' codes.

In the one-board version, you play with one Master Match board. If you're playing with a computer player, that player makes a code for you, and you try to guess it. If you're playing with a human player, you take turns making and guessing codes.

How the Game Is Played

One player makes a code by combining different colored pegs. The other player tries to guess the code in as few tries as possible.

To play, one player secretly places a number of pegs in a row on the board. The other player then makes a guess by placing pegs on the Master Match board. The results of the guess are then shown.

The blue Correct Place & Color result tells you how many pegs are the correct color and are in the correct place, whereas the white Correct Color result tells you how many pegs are the correct color but are not in the correct place. This information helps you make an educated guess at the code in future turns.

Normally, each peg in the secret code is a different color; for a more challenging game, uncheck the No Duplicates option in the game options. Note that regardless of this setting, you can use two or more pegs of the same color when you guess.

A Sample Guess

In **Fig. 1** below, your first guess (on the bottom row) gives a match result of 1 | 2. This tells you that one peg is the correct color and is in the correct place, and two pegs are the correct color, but are not in the correct place.

For your second guess, the match result of 0 | 2 tells you that two of the pegs are the correct color, but none of the pegs are in the correct place.

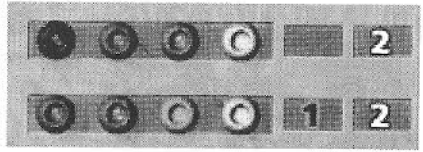


Fig. 1: Master Match Guess

You learn at least two things from the combination of these two results. Although you used three of the same colors of pegs in your first and second guess, in your second guess, only two pegs were the correct color (three were correct in the first guess). So you know that yellow (the only color you omitted) is definitely in the puzzle, and the new color, purple, is definitely not in the puzzle.

Although you left white in the same place in each guess, the result for Correct Place & Color changed from 1 to 0 (nothing), so you know that white is definitely not in the correct place.

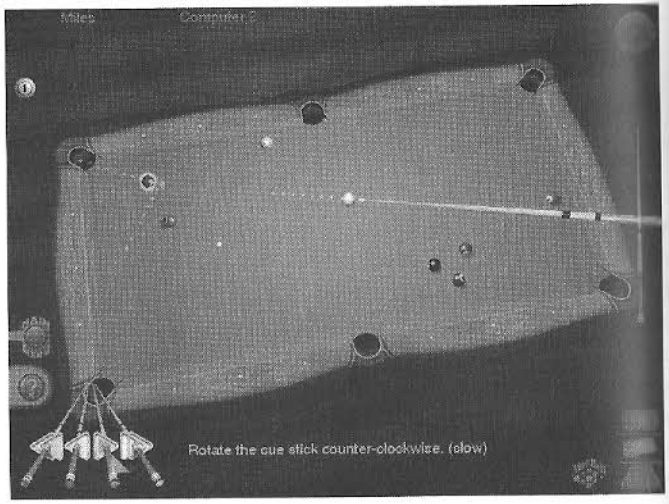
For your next guess, you should add a yellow peg to your guess, and you might want to try guessing white in a different place. Note that although you know yellow is in the puzzle, you don't know which of the other colors in your first guess is correct or incorrect.

Strategies for Master Match

Be sure that each guess you make is consistent with all the results you've had in the past. If your first guess tells you that three colors are right, keep three colors in the next guess. If your first guess tells you that one peg is in the right position, keep one peg (and only one) in one of those positions for future guesses.

If one color is eluding you, try placing multiple pegs of that color in your guess. Placing four red pegs in a row will tell you definitively whether red is in your puzzle. This may also be a useful strategy for the beginning of the game.

Maximum Pool



How the Game Evolved

The modern-day game of Pool, or Billiards, has at least some of its roots in 15th century Europe, where a popular Croquet-style game known as Ground Billiards made its way indoors to become Billiards. The indoor version was played on an elevated table with a green felt covering (a nod to the grass of the outdoor game), and a rim to keep the balls from falling off the edge. The game played like miniature Croquet, though, and not like the Billiards we play today.

The game evolved as its popularity grew, although details regarding the advent of pockets over the original Croquet-style game are sketchy. Over the years, innovators made steady improvements to the balls, cues, and tables to create a more consistent playing field, and to give the player more control over the ball. Slate tabletops, ivory (and ultimately composite) balls, rubber rims, leather cue tips, and chalk all changed the game forever. Pool now stands as one of the most popular pastimes in the world.

How the Game Is Played

Asking how to play Pool is like asking how to play cards: it depends on the game. The basic idea of most Pool games is to strike the white cue ball with your cue stick, and cause the cue ball to knock an "object" ball into one of the 6 pockets around the edge of the table.

Countless game variations have emerged from this foundation; the classics are all represented in Maximum Pool, as well as some "Cool" variations that you can't play anywhere else. Since making a Pool shot is a bit more complicated than rolling a pair of dice, though, a primer on taking a shot is in order before covering the game rules.

How to Shoot

There are several ways to line up a shot in Maximum Pool. First, you can use your mouse to move the cue stick around the cue ball. You point at the cue stick with the mouse, press and hold the left mouse button, and then move the stick to the desired location. Release the mouse button when you're done.

For finer cue stick movements, place your mouse pointer over the cue stick controls located in the lower-left corner of the window. Clicking on the triangular buttons moves the cue stick smoothly around the cue ball. You may also use the left and right cursor keys to move the cue stick. Perhaps the most powerful way to line up a shot is to use Maximum Pool's unique "target" ball. The target ball is slightly see-through and has a small red bull's eye on it. As its name implies, this ball acts like a target, and you place it on the table at the spot you want the real cue ball to go.

You move the target ball by pointing at it with the mouse, pressing the left mouse button, dragging the ball to the desired location, and releasing the mouse button to drop it. Even if you aim by moving the cue stick, the target ball automatically moves around the table to show you where the cue ball will end up.

Striking the ball is easy, too. To hit the cue ball, move the mouse pointer over the cue stick that appears on the right side of

the window, press the left mouse button to grab the stick, move the mouse down to pull the stick back, and then release the mouse button to strike the ball.

You can also use the cursor down key to pull the stick back and the space bar to strike the ball. The farther you pull back, the harder you hit the ball.

For players who prefer a little more control, you can pull the stick back, as usual, but then continue to hold the mouse button down while you push the stick forward to hit the cue ball. This gives you direct control over the strength of the shot based on how fast you push the mouse forward.

Rules to Classic Games

Basic Pocket Billiards

In Basic Pocket Billiards, you get one point for each ball that you legally pocket, and the first player with eight points wins.

You get one point for each ball that you pocket on the break, plus you get to shoot again. Before each shot (other than the break), you must specify a ball that you are going to pocket by clicking on it or pressing the Tab key until the ball you want to sink is highlighted.

If you pocket the highlighted ball, it, and any other balls that go in on the same shot, are considered "legally pocketed" and count as one point. You also get to shoot again.

You continue to shoot as long as you pocket the highlighted ball without fouling. You foul when you sink the cue ball or you knock a ball off the table. Illegally pocketed balls are always returned to the table.

Carom Billiards

This popular European game is played with just three balls—white, yellow, and red—on a table without pockets. The cue ball alternates between the white and yellow ball. With two players, for example, player 1 uses the white ball as a cue ball and player 2 uses the yellow ball as a cue ball. It gets a tad more complicated with

three players, however, as three sequential players must use two alternating cue balls. For example, player 1 uses white on the break, then player 2 uses yellow, then player 3 uses white, and then player 1 uses yellow, then player 2 uses white, and so on.

The player who breaks must hit the red ball first and drive a ball to the rail or it's considered a foul.

You score a point by striking both object balls with your cue ball in a single shot. If you accomplish this without fouling, you get one point and the chance to shoot again.

You lose one point (and your turn) whenever you foul. You foul when you knock a ball off the table, make the cue ball jump, or fail to knock the cue ball or an object ball against the rail.

The first player to reach the agreed upon score wins the game.

Cutthroat

Cutthroat is an enjoyable three-person game where each player tries to knock in all of the **other** players' balls. The first player's balls are numbered 1 through 5. The second player has balls 6 through 10, and the third player has balls 11 through 15. The The last player with any balls remaining on the table wins.

To be a legal shot, the cue ball must hit one of your opponent's balls before hitting any others. You can continue to shoot as long as you pocket a ball without fouling. You foul when you sink the cue ball, knock a ball off the table, or fail to hit one of your opponent's balls before contacting one of your own. It is also a foul if you fail to sink a ball and no balls touch the rail after a ball is hit.

When you foul, both of your opponents have a ball put back on the table plus any of their balls that were pocketed on that shot.

If you don't have any balls on the table when your turn comes up, your turn passes to the next player. Since you can put a ball back on the table when another player fouls, it's always possible to get back in the game.

Eight Ball

The goal of this classic two-player game is to sink the eight ball. Before you do that, however, you must pocket all of your other balls first.

Your balls are either solid or striped. The solid balls are balls 1 through 7. The striped balls are balls 9 through 15. The type of ball sunk on the first successful shot after the break determines whether the shooter is solids or stripes. If balls of both types go in on this shot, the shooter chooses solids or stripes.

You can continue to shoot as long as you manage to sink at least one of your balls without fouling. You foul when you sink the cue ball, knock a ball off the table, or fail to hit one of your balls before contacting any others. It is also a foul if you fail to sink your ball and no balls touch the rail after your ball is hit. If you lose your turn because of a foul, your opponent gets to place the cue ball wherever he or she wants.

If you sink the eight ball with any of your balls still on the table, you automatically lose the game. You also lose if you knock the eight ball off the table, scratch when sinking the eight ball, or sink any other balls in the same shot that you sink the eight ball.

Before attempting to sink the eight ball, you must highlight the pocket you're aiming for by clicking on it with the mouse pointer. If you sink the eight ball in a different pocket, you automatically lose the game. If you fail to pocket the eight ball, you lose your turn. If you sink the eight ball in the highlighted pocket, you win!

Nine Ball

This popular game, in a shocking surprise, is played with a total of nine balls (numbered one through nine) and your goal is to sink the 9 ball. That may sound easy, but there's a catch: you must always hit the lowest numbered ball on the table first.

During your turn, you can continue to shoot as long as you manage to pocket a ball without fouling. You foul when the first ball you hit is not the lowest numbered ball on the table, you sink the cue ball, or you knock a ball off the table. It is also a foul if you fail to sink a ball and no balls touch the rail after you hit the lowest numbered ball.

If you lose your turn because of a foul, your opponent gets to place the cue ball wherever he or she wants. Be extra careful about making too many foul shots. Commit three fouls in a row and you automatically lose the game.

If you do not have a clear shot at the lowest numbered ball after a break, you can choose to Push Out (click on the ? button and select Push Out). After choosing to Push Out, you can hit the cue ball anywhere on the table without a foul. You don't get points for balls that you sink, and you automatically lose your turn after a Push Out. Also, the next player gets the option of taking the next shot or passing it back to you.

Rotation

When you legally sink a ball in rotation, you score its number in points. Sink the 12 ball, for example, and score 12 points. When all balls are sunk, if you have the highest score, you win.

You can't just aim for the highest numbered ball on the table, though. To be a legal shot, the cue ball must hit the lowest numbered ball on the table before hitting any others.

You continue to shoot as long as you pocket a ball without fouling. You foul when the first ball you hit is not the lowest numbered ball on the table, you sink the cue ball, or you knock a ball off the table. It is also a foul if you fail to sink a ball and no balls touch the rail after you hit the lowest numbered ball.

If you lose your turn because of a foul, your opponent has the option of taking his or her turn, or letting you continue to shoot. Be extra careful about making too many foul shots. Commit three fouls in a row and you automatically lose the game.

Snooker

Snooker is a challenging two-player game with 15 red balls and six "color" balls (non-red balls). The object of the game is to outscore your opponent. Each ball is worth a certain point value when you legally pocket it.

Red:	1 point
Yellow:	2 points
Green:	3 points
Brown:	4 points
Blue:	5 points
Pink:	6 points
Black:	7 points

On the break, the starting player has ball in hand in the D-shaped portion of the table. The cue ball must strike a red ball. It is not necessary to send a ball to the rail or into a pocket.

At the beginning of each turn after the break, you attempt to sink a red ball. If you sink a red ball, you try to sink a color ball. You alternate between sinking red balls and sinking color balls.

Red balls remain sunk when legally pocketed. Color balls are returned to the table, unless all the red balls have been pocketed. If all the red balls are gone, even color balls remain pocketed when sunk, and you must shoot at the color balls in ascending order (yellow, green, brown, blue, pink, and then black).

When you are shooting red, the first ball struck by the cue ball must be red, and sinking color balls is a foul. When you shoot reds, you don't have to call the ball or the pocket.

When you are shooting color, you select the color ball you are going to sink (click on it or press the Tab key until it is highlighted). Sinking any other ball or striking another ball first is a foul.

When you foul, the value of the foul is added to your opponent's score. Then your opponent decides whether to shoot or force you to shoot again. If there are two fouls on the same stroke, the highest point penalty foul is counted.

The foul penalty is the value of the ball you are attempting to pocket when you:

1) Miss all object balls
2) Scratch
3) Make the cue ball jump

The penalty is the value of the given ball involved when you:

1) Sink a ball that should not have been sunk
2) Hit the wrong ball with the cue ball
3) Knock a ball off the table

FInally, the penalty is 7 points if you shoot red when you are supposed to be shooting color.

When the black ball is the last ball left on the table, the first point scored or foul committed ends the game. If the game is a tie at this point, one player is chosen at random to decide who shoots next, and the black ball is placed at its home spot on the table. The first shot to break the tie ends the game

Rules to Cool Games

24 Cents

24 Cents is an addictive game with easy-to-learn rules. There are two ways to win this game of loose change: be the first to pocket 50 cents or more, or, be the first to collect exactly 24 cents.

The game starts out with 7 penny balls, 4 nickel balls, 3 dime balls, and 1 quarter ball. Each ball is worth the value of the coin it represents. Legally pocket a quarter ball, for example, and your score goes up by 25 cents. But, to be a legal shot, your cue ball must hit the lowest numbered ball on the table before it hits any others.

You can continue to shoot as long as you pocket a ball without fouling. You foul when the first ball you hit is not the lowest numbered ball on the table, you sink the cue ball, or you knock a ball off the table. It is also a foul if you fail to sink a ball and no balls touch the rail after you hit the lowest numbered ball.

If you lose your turn because of a foul, your opponent gets to place the cue ball wherever he or she wants. And, any balls pocketed on a foul shot return to the table as nickels.

Chameleon Ball

In Chameleon Ball, each player is assigned a color. Your goal is to sink balls of your color. An easy task, if it weren't for the fact that the balls keep changing color.

Let's say you are blue. The cue ball turns blue whenever it is your turn. All of the other balls are Chameleon balls, and they start out gray. When hit by the cue ball, a gray Chameleon ball takes on the cue ball's color. If a Chameleon ball is wearing an opponent's color, you must strike it once to knock that color off; then strike it again to make it blue. You score one point for each blue ball that is pocketed.

Be careful not to knock in balls of another color, or you will score points for your opponent. You lose your turn if you scratch, knock a ball off the table, or fail to sink a ball of your color.

The player with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Mad Bomber

Mad Bomber is a truly explosive game of pool. The goal is to score as many points as you can, or reach 50 points first.

No points are awarded for balls pocketed on the break. After the break, each ball is worth one, two, three, or five points. Sink a ball with a 2 on it, for example and you get two points, as long as it's still a 2 by the time it drops in the pocket. You see, the balls change value when they're hit by the cue ball.

All balls start out as green 3 balls. If you hit one with the cue ball, it turns yellow and "counts down," into a 2 ball. Hit a 2 ball and you make a red 1 ball. Hit a 1 ball and look out! A 1 ball will turn into a short-fused bomb. Fives seconds and – BOOM! – it explodes, scattering surrounding balls across the table.

If any bombs explode before they land in a pocket, the game randomly selects a 1, 2 or 3 ball and spots it on the table. You get a whopping five points for pocketing a bomb ball before it explodes, but you also lose your turn. In fact, you lose your turn anytime you set off a bomb. You also lose your turn if you fail to sink a ball or you foul. You foul when you sink the cue ball, knock a ball off the table, or fail to hit a ball.

If you lose your turn because of a foul, a ball is returned to the table and your opponent gets to place the cue ball wherever he or she wants. This can be a big advantage for your opponent when you're playing on Mad Bomber's "cool" table, since there is only one pocket to shoot for.

Poker

Maximum Pool's Poker brings the popular card game to the pool table, complete with a special "deck" of playing-card balls. Your goal is to pocket the best poker hand.

You and your fellow players must sink two racks of balls to end the game. Both racks come from the same deck, so you will never encounter two identical balls, such as two aces of spades. The player with the best poker hand after the last ball goes in is the winner.

To keep things interesting, at least one ball in each rack is "face down." Balls that are face down have a question mark on them, and you won't know which card they hide until the end of the game.

As in standard Poker, you have to build your hand out of five cards. So, after you've collected five balls, you have to discard a ball for every new one you pocket. To keep the hand you've already built, simply discard your most recently pocketed ball.

You only get one shot per turn. If you sink more than one ball in your shot, you get to keep the first ball that drops in. All of the other balls are put back on the table.

If you foul during your shot, all balls pocketed on that shot are returned to the table. You foul when you sink the cue ball, knock a ball off the table, or fail to hit a ball. After a foul, the next player gets to place the cue ball wherever he or she wants.

Before you take a shot, you can click on the Rank button found on the left side of the window to see a list of Poker hands sorted in winning order. You must have five balls for any of these hands to count – even a pair – because any player that ends the game with fewer than five cards automatically loses.

When you think you have the best hand you'll get, click on the Stand Pat button to signal that you're happy with your hand. If all players decide to Stand Pat, the game ends early.

Rocket Ball

Rocket Ball is a fast-moving game that is easy to learn and a blast to play – the perfect choice if you're looking for a quick game.

Your goal is simply to pocket as many balls as you can, and the table's Rocket Balls are there to keep things moving. Rocket Balls appear as glowing blue balls that blast off when hit with the cue ball. A launched Rocket Ball will continue to fly around the table until it either knocks in a ball or lands itself inside a pocket.

You get one point for each ball that you sink, except the Rocket Balls. If you sink a Rocket Ball, you lose your turn, and it turns on Double Mode. In Double Mode, pocketed balls are worth two points instead of one. You also lose your turn if you scratch, knock a ball off the table, or fail to pocket a ball.

The player with the most points at the end of the game wins.

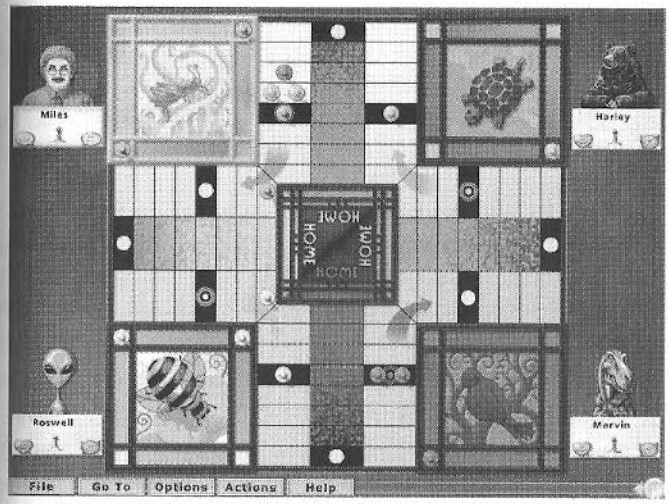
Strategies for Maximum Pool

Don't hit the ball too hard! It's tempting to put a lot of force behind each shot, but you can scratch easily this way. As you play, try to get a good feel for the relationship between how far you pull back the cue and the strength of the resulting shot.

Consider your leave. Where is the cue ball going to stop, assuming you make your shot? Shooting with the next shot in mind is the mark of a good player. Shooting with the next several shots in mind is the mark of an excellent one.

Practice proper English! You can apply spin, known as "English," to the cue ball by adjusting where you hit it. Before your shot, roll your mouse over the cue ball in the upper-right corner of the screen. Clicking on the cue ball changes where you will strike it on your next shot. By hitting the cue ball off-center, you will apply English to it, giving you finer control over where it will come to rest after the shot. It takes some practice, but mastering the application of English will improve your game dramatically.

PACHISI



How the Game Evolved

Racing games have been developed by almost every culture on Earth. When the Conquistadors landed in Central America, they were surprised to find the Indians playing a game on a cruciform (cross-shaped) track with some resemblance to Pachisi.

Pachisi is a Hindu word meaning 25, a reference to the method of scoring used in the original game. It's an old game, perhaps dating from the era in which the Indians (of India) invented Chess (6th century AD). It's still popular in India.

The Pachisi we're familiar with in America was patented by an Englishman in 1896. He called it Ludo, but in this country we call it by its ancient name (though we use the Ludo rules). The modern board is square, but the track on which the pieces race is still cross-shaped.

Americans also know this game as Parcheesi™ (introduced in Britain in 1874), Sorry!™, which uses cards and a square track

instead of dice and a cross-shaped track, and Trouble™, which uses dice in a plastic bubble in the center of the board. You push on the bubble to "throw" the dice. The track is a square.

It's worth mentioning two aspects of Pachisi (besides its name) that help to identify its origins:

First, the pieces move counter-clockwise; this is generally thought to be characteristic of Asian games. In most Western games, the pieces move clockwise.

Second, certain squares on the Pachisi board act as "castles" in which the pieces of one player (or one team) may take refuge and not have to worry about being bumped back to the beginning of the course. In some early forms of Chess, particularly as that game spread eastward toward China, each side could send at least a few pieces to safety inside a castle or citadel.

How the Game Is Played

Players move their pieces (one at a time) out of their starting area, take one trip around the track, and head up the middle (the home stretch) toward home. A piece can't move from its base square to its entry space until the player has thrown a 5 on a die. You have the option of passing the rest of your turns after you have used at least one die value to move. Rolling doubles allows you an extra turn (but you lose a turn if you roll doubles three times).

You can be bumped back to your base if you're not standing on a safety space when an enemy piece lands on you. The "bumping" player receives a 20-space bonus immediately.

Two pieces of the same color on the same space form a blockade that cannot be bypassed by any other pieces. A blockade cannot be advanced up the board with doubles.

The first player to bring all four of his or her pieces home is the winner. To enter home, you need an exact roll, for which you also receive a 10-space bonus.

Strategies for Pachisi

One decision you'll need to make in Pachisi is whether you want to take an aggressive or conservative approach. Invariably, the former will land you back in your starting square and hoping for 5's. We recommend the conservative approach, however, being aggressive does pay off big dividends if you can bump another piece: you get a 20-space bonus!

Conservative play involves entering safety spaces and avoiding being bumped by your opponent(s). You should end your move on a safety space whenever possible. Avoid leaving a safety space unless your piece is relatively safe from enemy pieces.

It is also important how far around the board your piece has traveled. Obviously, you do not want to risk a piece that has almost reached the safety of your home stretch.

Fig. 1 shows an example of taking a conservative approach (the arrows mark possible moves by green).

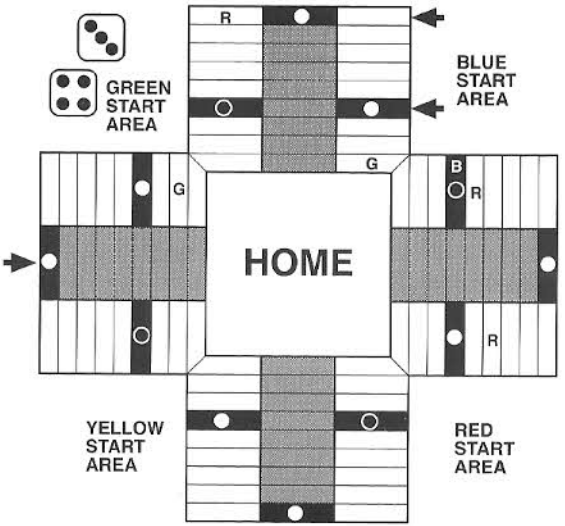


Fig. 1: Playing Conservatively

Here, green might like to advance the front piece as far as possible: seven spaces. However, it is a poor risk. Blue and red, though not dangerously close, are close enough to warrant concern (doubles makes everyone a threat!). Because green's front piece has advanced almost completely around the board, green's first priority should be to keep it safe from attack. He should move this piece three spaces (onto the safety space), and move his other piece four spaces.

Remember: 5's and 7's are the magic numbers. They will take you from one safety space to another.

Advanced Strategies for Pachisi

Even if you play conservatively, at times you will have to endanger your pieces by advancing them forward unprotected (i.e., they're not ending on a safety space or in a blockade). The key is to move the piece that will be least threatened by your opponents. Try to stay at least eight spaces (the more the better!) ahead of your closest opponent. A piece usually moves seven spaces or fewer in a given turn. Of course, also consider the number of enemy pieces behind you; three pieces eight, nine, and 10 spaces back are far more likely to get you than one piece one space back!

You have the option of using just one of your die values, passing on the other. Use this rule to avoid placing a piece in danger. **Fig. 2** shows a situation in which passing on a move is a wise choice. Green can take yellow by moving six. This is definitely good. However, after taking yellow, green can move zero, three, 20, or 23 additional spaces (with the 20-space bonus). Using the 20 will put him in considerable danger from blue and red. Moving three spaces is the less risky option.

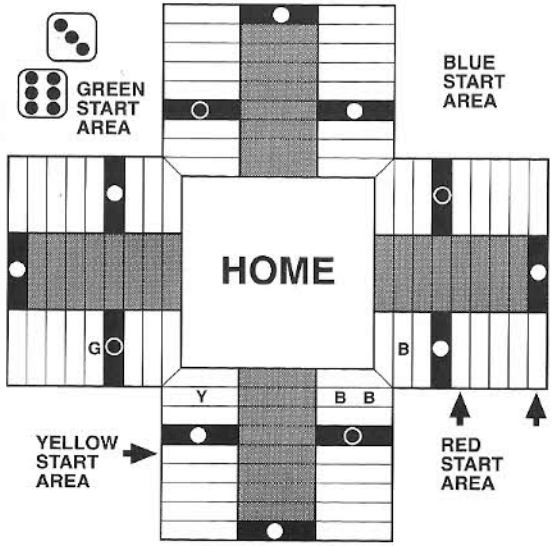
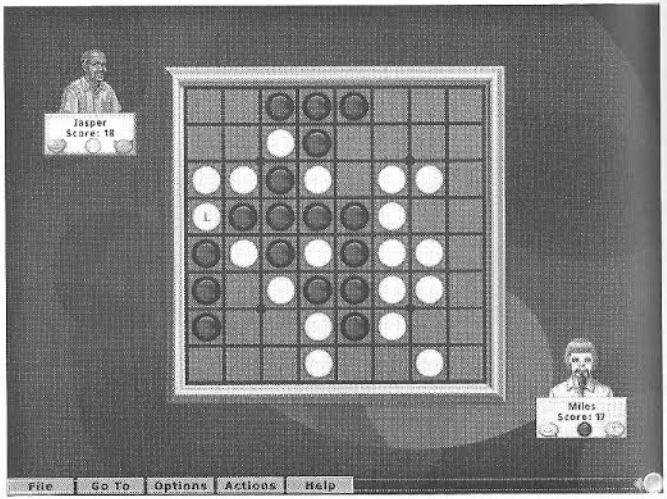


Fig. 2: Passing

Use blockades wisely by breaking them up carefully. If you allow enemy pieces to bump you as soon as you break up the blockade, what's the point? A good place to build a blockade is on your entry square. The best time to build it is upon entering your last piece into play. This will allow you to continue advancing pieces while slowing down your opponents.

REVERSI



How the Game Evolved

In an unlikely coincidence, two very similar games were marketed in the city of London in 1880. One game, invented by John W. Mollett, was called *Annexation*, and was played on a board shaped like a cross. The other game, invented by Lewis Waterman, was *Reversi*. Reversi used the same 8 x 8 square board as Checkers. Which of the two games actually hit the marketplace first is unknown, but Waterman's Reversi survived. This may have been due in part to the fact that Jacques and Sons, Waterman's firm, legitimized the game by publishing The Handbook of Reversi in 1888.

Reversi is similar to, though more accessible than, the ancient Asian game of *Go*. Besides their visual similarity, both games share a theme of controlling territory by surrounding the opponent's pieces in order to reverse them (in Reversi), or capture them (in Go). It seems likely that Waterman and/or Mollett were inspired by Go in the invention of their games.

How the Game Is Played

Reversi is played on an 8 x 8 board with black and white stones. Black moves first.

The only legal moves are those that cause one or more of your opponent's pieces to become sandwiched between your pieces and thus flipped (their color changes to your color). Only sandwiches formed by newly placed pieces count; sandwiches that result from stones being flipped do not themselves cause other stones to be flipped.

If you can't move, you lose your turn. The player with the most stones showing of their color at the end of the game is the winner.

Strategies for Reversi

Most players of Reversi use one of three common strategies, depending on their level of experience. These are:

1. Capture as many squares as you can each turn.
2. Concentrate on capturing stable squares.
3. Attempt to maximize your mobility (your play options) while limiting the mobility of your opponent.

The first of these three strategies is simple: on each turn choose the move that flips as many of your opponent's pieces as possible. This strategy works in certain cases, but you will often find that gained territory is soon lost when your opponent flips the pieces back. It's true that you want as many pieces as possible to show your color at the end of the game. But you will find that haphazardly going for big flips in the early game won't achieve this goal.

The second strategy, capturing stable squares, is more complex. The main idea here is that some squares are more stable, and hence more valuable, than others because they are harder for your opponent to recapture. Corners are the most stable, since they can never be recaptured. Squares along the edge of the board are fairly stable also, since they can only be captured by other pieces on the edge.

Other squares on the board are much more unstable and vulnerable.

Take a look at Fig. 1. Key squares in Reversi have standardized letter designations: A, B, C, and X. All the edge squares are considered valuable (C is better than B; B is better than the A) because they are relatively stable. The corners are not marked because they are obviously valuable. The X squares are discussed below.

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
1		C	A	B	B	A	C	
2	C	X					X	C
3	A							A
4	B							B
5	B							B
6	A							A
7	C	X					X	C
8		C	A	B	B	A	C	

Fig. 1: Types of Squares on the Reversi Board

Advanced Strategies for Reversi

The X squares are generally dangerous plays because they almost always allow your opponent, sooner or later, to take the adjacent corner. Late in the game, or when the corner has already been filled, you may find an X square to be your best play. But before then, you should almost always look for another move.

An example of playing for key squares is shown in **Fig. 2**. Here, Black has taken two edge squares along the top of the board and is in good position. Black can now also take the edge square at b1 (indicated by a question mark). However, doing so would be a costly mistake; it would jeopardize all of Black's key positions (b1, d1, and e1). If Black takes b1, white will move into c1, subsequently gain control of the corner, and wipe out all of Black's edge positions (**Fig. 3** shows the end result). Black must do something else instead; just about anything else would be a better move.

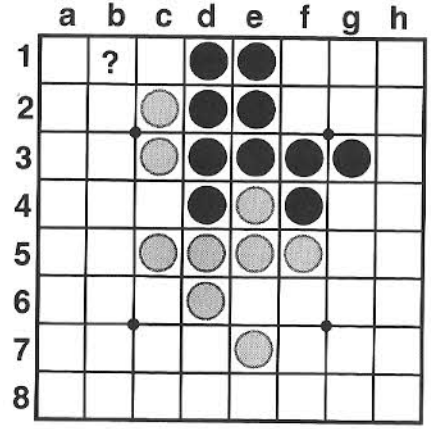


Fig. 2: Playing for Edge Squares

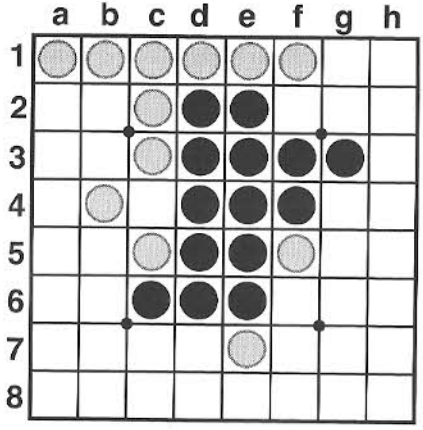


Fig. 3: Losing the Edge

The third strategy, mobility, is more difficult to illustrate. It is also counterintuitive. Looking at **Fig. 4**, your first inclination might be to say that Black is firmly in control. In fact, White is in control; Black is currently immobilized, while White has options for taking pieces on every side.

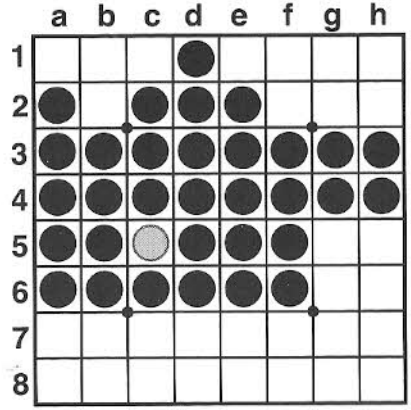


Fig. 4: Who is Winning?

Remember that players are only allowed to make moves that cause one or more pieces to be flipped. By limiting your opponent's choice of such moves, you gain control because you get to choose how the board is developed.

However, it is not easy to achieve a board position where you dominate your opponent in terms of mobility. To do so, you must sacrifice pieces and try to capture central positions instead of pieces along the frontier of play. **Fig. 5** illustrates this concept. White has too much frontier space, and Black is in control.

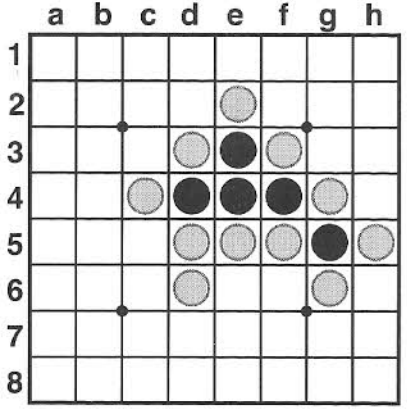
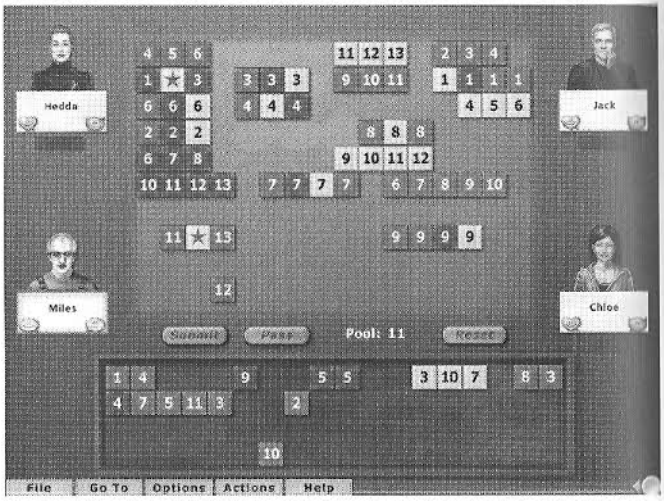


Fig. 5: Black Keeping White on the Frontiers

The trick to controlling mobility is to constantly look at the board from your opponent's point of view. What moves can you make that will leave your opponent with the fewest available moves?

Rummy Squares



How the Game Evolved

Rummy Squares is a derivative of the ancient Turkish game *Okey*, a rummy-like game using numbered and colored tiles that are similar to dominoes in feel and heft. A number of similar rummy game variations exist, including card games like *Carousel*, *Shanghai*, and *Vatikan*. All of these games involve playing cards or tiles to the board in melds (sequences and groups) and allow you to manipulate other cards or tiles in a shared play area.

Somewhat similar to Rummy (you can play on others' melds) and Canasta (there's an initial meld requirement), Rummy Squares is a deceptively simple game which is easy to learn and difficult to master. Because you can manipulate all the tiles on the board in any turn, there can be near-infinite combinations of possible plays at any turn, and any player can change the geography of the entire board.

Some of Rummy Squares' excitement comes from the fact that players can do a certain amount of "grandstanding." Each player's exact number of tiles is kept hidden, and in one play, a player can play all his or her tiles in an exotic combination and go out in style.

How the Game Is Played

In Rummy Squares, you and the other players play tiles to the same board, making rummy hands (melds)—either sequences or groups. Your goal is to get rid of all of your tiles before other players do.

A sequence is a set of three or more consecutively numbered tiles of the same color.

Fig. 1: Examples of Sequences

A group is a set of three or more tiles of the same value all in different colors.

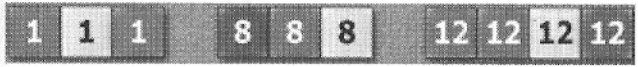


Fig. 2: Examples of Groups

There are two jokers in the game; you can use jokers to represent any other tile in a meld.

Fig. 3: Using a Joker in a Meld

You can manipulate melds containing jokers like any other melds on the board.

Once a joker is on the board, you can take it to use it in a new meld by replacing it with a different tile of the same value and color from your hand. The joker must be used immediately with two or more tiles from your hand.

In **Fig. 4** below, you can replace the joker in the meld with the green 10 in your hand (since the joker represents a green 10).

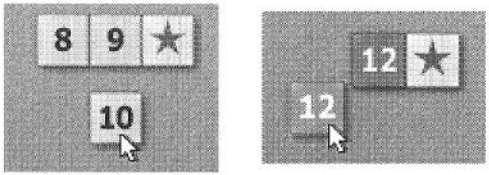


Fig. 4: Taking a Joker

Then, you can use the joker in a new meld with two or more tiles from your hand. You **cannot** use the joker with tiles already on the board.

If someone goes out, and you have a joker in your rack, you get a penalty of 30 points.

Making the Initial Meld

In your first play—called the initial meld—you have to play one or more sets of tiles worth at least 30 points from your hand to the board. This is the only play you can make on this turn; you can't make any other moves until the next turn.

To figure out what tiles are worth, add up their face values. Jokers are worth the amount of the tile they represent.

Playing Tiles

Once you have made your initial meld, you can play tiles to the board. If you can't play any tiles, you pass and receive one new tile.

You can lay down sequences and groups from your hand, or you can combine tiles from your hand with tiles already on the board, in a number of different ways. You can manipulate as many tiles on the board during your turn as you like, as long as at the end of your turn all tiles are placed in valid sequences or groups of three or more tiles.

Some things you can do:

- Extend a sequence or group by adding a new tile to the front or end of it. (**Fig. 5**)

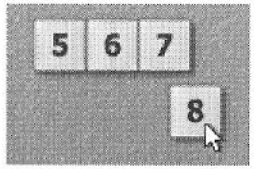


Fig. 5: Extending a Meld

- Move tiles from one sequence or group to another sequence or group. (**Fig. 6**)

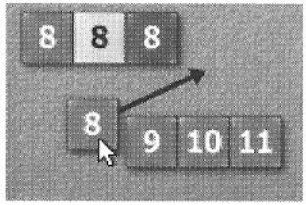


Fig. 6: Moving a Tile From One Meld to Another

- Split a long sequence into two, and add a tile to the beginning or end of a sequence (this is a very useful way to add a tile from your rack to the board). (**Fig. 7**)

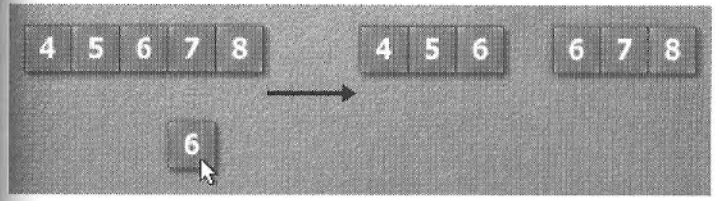


Fig. 7: Splitting a Long Sequence

- Break up an existing sequence or group entirely and use its tiles in other groups. (**Fig. 8**)

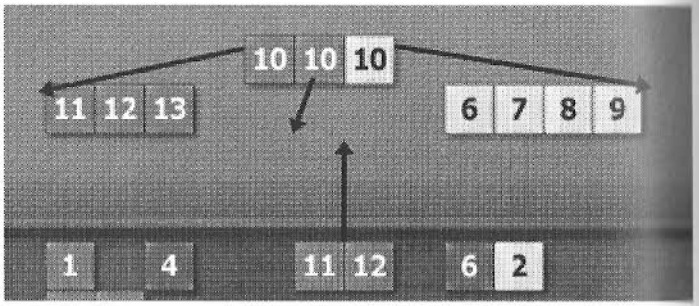


Fig. 8: Breaking Up an Existing Group

Note that there are many different types of moves you can make, and you can manipulate many different tiles on your turn.

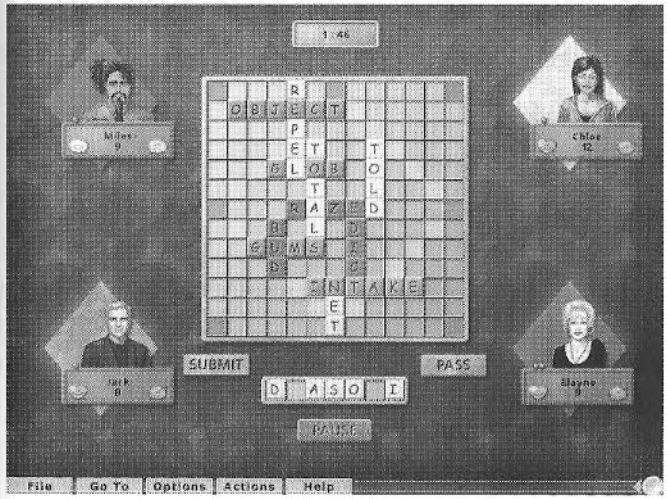
Strategies for Rummy Squares

Try holding back tiles (at least some of them) until later in the game. This prevents other players from using them and forces other players to make plays to the table.

If you have more than one meld in hand, consider holding back a meld to play later; this is better than passing and adding more tiles to your hand.

If you have a choice of how to play a joker, try to play it in such a way that you can use it in a future turn. If you don't need it, hold on to the joker (to prevent others from using it), but be careful not to get stuck with it in your rack at the end of the game.

WORDOX



What Is Wordox?

Wordox is a quick and exciting word game created by Sierra Entertainment. Two to four players can play. Players have a certain amount of time to place a word on the board. Use letters in other words as part of your word to capture those letters from other players (and take points away from them). Playing on orange and pink squares can give you extra points.

How the Game is Played

The starting player must make a word that covers the green star in the middle of the board. Then, players take turns placing tiles on the board to make words; each word must touch one letter already on the board. You must place at least two tiles each turn.

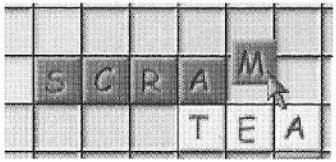
To make a word, move tiles from the tile rack to the board. There are two ways to move a tile to the board: drag a tile from your rack to the board, or click the tile and then click the board.

After you place a tile, you can move it elsewhere by dragging it to a new location. To remove a tile you just placed, right-click it.

Rules for Placing Tiles

- You must play at least two tiles on your turn.
- At least one of the tiles in your word must touch a tile that is already on the board. (Unless you're playing first, in which case your word must cover the green star on the board.)
- All tiles you play on your turn must be placed in a single row or column.
- Tiles you place must make legal words in both across and down directions.

  In the example below, you can place the word SCRAM, because it makes the legal words AT and ME. Note that you are still only placing tiles in a single row.



- All words you create must be recognized as legal words by Wordox. Proper nouns are not legal words.
- Several things will cause your turn to end and tiles to be returned to the rack: playing a word that's not recognized by the computer, playing only one tile, or placing tiles in more than one row or column.

Submitting a Word

When you are ready to submit a word, click the Submit button. If time runs out, any tiles you've placed on the board are automatically submitted as if you'd clicked the Submit button.

If you don't want to make a word on your turn, press the Pass button; the turn then moves to the next player. If all the players consecutively press the Pass button (or make invalid plays), the rack is refilled with new tiles.

The word that you played is evaluated using the Wordox rules (as described in the previous section). If the word is accepted, the tiles in that word (and any tiles on the board that you used that belonged to other players) change to your color.

If your word is not accepted, the tiles are returned to the rack and your turn ends. When your turn ends, the tile rack is refilled and play passes to the next player. All players play with the same tile rack.

Playing Words on Orange and Pink Spaces

If you play a word on an orange space, an orange dot appears on your player plaque (**Fig. 1**).

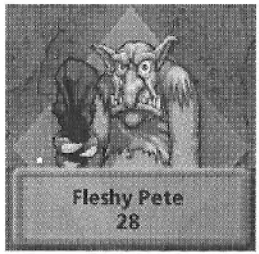


Fig. 1: Fleshy Pete Has One Orange Point

If you place your word on a pink space, you get one point for each orange dot you have; all other players have their orange dots taken away, and get no points for them. The game board clears and the game continues on an empty board.

Capturing Words

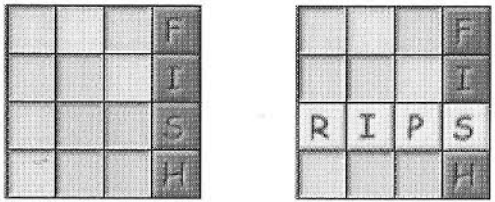
As well as points you get for playing on the orange and pink spaces, you also get points for each tile of your color on the board. Any tiles that you play to make a word become your color after you play them, and any tiles on the board that you used in your word

also change to your color, adding points to your score and taking points away from the tiles' owner or owners.

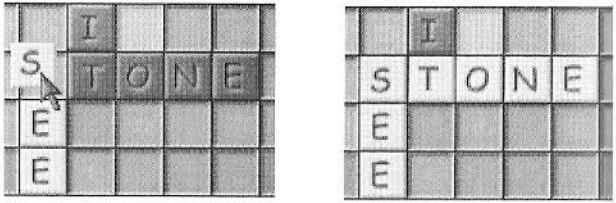
Some Examples

1. Making the word FIRED by adding an F and D to IRE captures the letters IRE. The red player gets five points, taking three points away from the yellow player.

2. Placing RIP captures the S tile in FISH, giving the yellow player four points and taking one point from the red player.



3. Placing the word SEE also makes the word STONE. The letters TONE are captured (since they are part of a new word) and change to yellow. The yellow player gets seven points (for the seven new yellow tiles) and four points are taken away from the red player.



Note: Points are permanently added to your score only after the board is cleared. Even if you make (or capture) a great word, another player can still capture it and take your points!

Ending the Game

The game ends when one of the players reaches the winning score (as set in the game options). The game also ends if all the tiles in the game are used, or if there are not enough tiles left to fill the tile rack; if this happens, the game ends, and the player with the most points wins.

An optional rule requires that the board be cleared before a player can win. See "Options in the game" later in this chapter for information.

Getting Definitions of Words

You can see the definition for a word made by any player by clicking the first letter in that word. Not all legal words have definitions available. (For example, not all verb tenses are included.)

If the first letter of a word is also the first letter of another word, or if a letter is in two words (and is not the first letter of either word), you can left-click that letter to get the definition for the across word, and right-click it to get the definition for the down word.

Strategies for Wordox

Capture, capture, capture. Make new words out of existing words whenever possible. This lets you capture a lot of your opponent's letters, as well as increasing your own. If you can also make a second word in the process, this works even better.

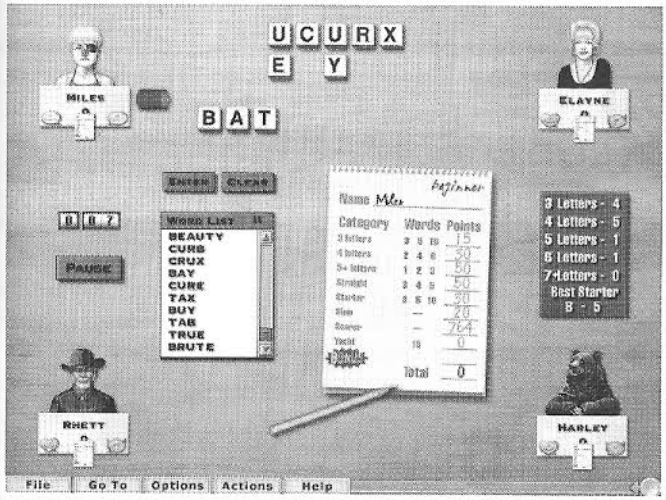
Use as many letters as you can. Since each letter equals one point, playing more letters gives you more points! Try not to play a word like RAIL if you can play GRAIL or FRAIL. After you place a word, before you submit it, take a moment to look over the letter rack to see if you can improve upon your initial play.

Protect your words. When you make words, keep in mind that it is easier to capture some words than others. For example, STAGE and GATES both use the same letters, but it is better to play GATES since it is difficult to expand upon, whereas STAGE can be made into STAGES, STAGED, UPSTAGE, and so on.

Add prefixes and suffixes to words. You can often add an S to an existing word, but prefixes and suffixes are other good ways to take advantage of words already on the board. Some good prefixes: IN, UN, RE. Some good suffixes: ED, ER, ING.

Clear the board whenever possible. Whenever you play a word on a pink square, the board is cleared, so any letters you just played are "free letters" that give you points that can't ever be taken away by another player.

Word Yacht



What Is Word Yacht?

Word Yacht is a competitive word game created by the Hoyle team at Sierra Entertainment. Word Yacht was derived from the classic dice game Yacht, in which players roll dice and try to make poker-like hands to complete categories on a scorecard. Word Yacht combines the excitement and luck of Yacht with the challenge of a competitive word game.

In Word Yacht, you roll ten lettered dice and make words from them to try to complete one of eight different word categories. Having a variety of categories to choose from makes for interesting gameplay. As in Yacht, selecting the appropriate category is part of the challenge.

A distinctive feature of Word Yacht is that it lets players of different skill levels compete on an even playing field by offering different scorecard levels for beginners, intermediate players, and expert players. And Word Yacht's scorecards are weighted, so a

beginner who completes a category will get the same points as an expert (who usually must complete a more difficult category).

You can set scorecard levels for both computer and human characters. Computer players' play will be affected by the card they choose, so a beginner computer player won't do much better on a Beginner card than a human would.

How the Game is Played

You can play Word Yacht with one, two, or three other human or computer players. To add, remove, or change players, click Word Yacht Players on the Options menu.

To begin play, roll the dice by clicking on your dice cup. There are two parts to your Word Yacht turn: making words and choosing a category.

Making Words

You have two minutes to make words from your dice. You can either type the words or click the individual dice.

While typing, you can press Backspace to remove the last letter you typed, or click on a letter to remove it. You can press Escape or click the Clear button to clear the entire word you just typed.

Press Enter or click the Enter button to add a word to your word list.

As you make words, the area on the right of the screen counts the number of words of different lengths you have made and identifies the best letter to use for the Starter category (by identifying the letter that starts more of your words than any other). In the following example (**Fig. 1**), there are five words starting with D.

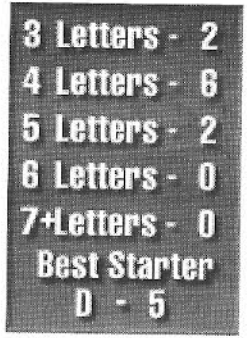


Fig 1: Word Yacht Word Counter

You can make words until the timer runs out or until you have found all the words you need to score a certain category. Because some categories offer several point levels for getting more words, you will usually want to find as many words as you can!

Rules for making words:

- Letters can be used in more than one word but not more than once in each word.
- Words must be at least three letters long.
- If you have an S, you can use both a singular word and its plural (CAT and CATS).
- Words must be recognized by the game dictionary to be added to your word list. Some proper nouns, foreign words, and objectionable words will not be recognized.

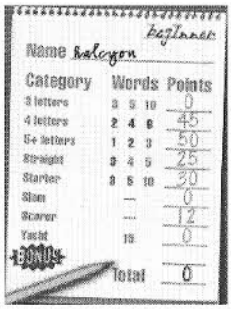
Choosing a Category

At the end of your turn, try to use some or all of your words to complete a specific category. You can place your cursor over a category name to see a description of that category. See "Word Yacht Categories" for a detailed description of the categories.

The Words column shows if you made enough words to reach one of the points levels for that category. The points you can get for

each category are shown in the Points column next to the category. (Zero means you did not complete the category with this roll.)

In the card below (**Fig. 2**), you can score these categories: *4 Letters*, *5+ Letters*, *Straight*, *Starter*, and *Scorer*. *4 Letters* and *5+ Letters* would be good categories to score.



You can take as much time as you want to choose a category. You must pick one category each turn. If you can't score any category in a turn, you must still pick a category; you will score zero for that category, and can't score that category again in this game.

When you have chosen a category, the turn moves to the next player. (If you are playing solo, your next turn starts.) To see another player's scorecard after his or her turn, click the small picture of the scorecard next to that player.

When all of the categories on each player's card are filled, the game is over, and the player with the highest score wins.

Word Yacht Categories

The categories you see in Word Yacht and how many points you get for completing them depend on the level of scorecard you choose to play with. Initially, all players are set to use the Beginner scorecard. To find out how to change player scorecards, see the next section, "Changing your Word Yacht Scorecard."

Most of the categories have three levels of scoring. In the Beginner scorecard, a minimum of three words are required to complete the 3 Letters category, but getting five or ten words gives you additional points. Getting words in between the different word levels doesn't help—getting four words will still just give you the points for three words, for example.

To find out how many points you can get for each level of a category, place your cursor over the category name on the scorecard.

The Word Yacht categories are described below.

Basic Categories (Beginner Scorecard)

3 Letters: Find three or more three-letter words.

4 Letters: Find two or more four-letter words.

5+ Letters: Find at least one word of five or more letters.

Basic Categories (Intermediate & Expert Scorecards)

3 & 4 Letters: Find three- and four-letter words (at least five words for Intermediate, at least ten words for Expert).

5 & 6 Letters: Find five- and six-letter words (at least three words for Intermediate, at least six words for Expert).

7+ Letters: Find words of seven or more letters (at least one word for Intermediate, at least two words for Expert).

Other Categories

Straight: Find a series of words spelled with consecutive numbers of letters. You can have a three-word straight, a four-word straight, or a five-word straight.

You have a three-word straight if you have a three-letter word, a four-letter word, and a five-letter word, **or** a four-letter word, a five-letter word, and a six-letter word, **or** a five-letter word, a six-letter word, and a seven+ letter word (therefore, if you have a five-letter word, a six-letter word, and an eight-letter word, you have a three-word straight).

Examples of three-word straights: DIN, DINE, and ENTER; RAID, DINAR, and RANCID; RANTS, STRAND, and TRANSFER.

You have a four-word straight if you have a three-letter word, a four-letter word, a five-letter word, and a six-letter word, or a four-letter word, a five-letter word, a six-letter word, and a seven+ letter word.

Examples of four-word straights: DIN, DINE, ENTER, and ENTERS; RAID, DINAR, RANCID, and CINDERS.

You have the much more rare five-word straight if you have a three-letter word, a four-letter word, a five-letter word, a six-letter word, and a seven+ letter word.

Example of a five-word straight: DIN, DINE, ENTER, ENTERS, and ENTERED.

Starter: Find several words that start with the same letter (such as BUY, BUG, and BAR, which all start with B). On the Beginner scorecard, you need to make at least three words to score; on the Intermediate scorecard, you need at least five words; on the Expert scorecard, you need at least ten words.

Slam: Use all of your letters at least once. When you use a letter, the die color for that letter changes from red to black to help you keep track of which letters you have used.

Example of a Slam, using the letters DEEFINORRT: ONE, RED, DINE, DIET, FRIEND

Scorer: Score points for all words you make. The points you get depend on your scorecard.

Yacht: Make a lot of words on your turn. On the Beginner scorecard, you need to make at least 15 words; for Intermediate, you need at least 30 words; for Expert, you need at least 40 words.

Bonuses

In addition to the regular Word Yacht categories, you can get bonus points for making long words. (You do not have to get any bonuses to complete your scorecard.)

On the Beginner scorecard, words with seven or more letters give you a Bonus. On the Intermediate and Expert scorecards, words with eight or more letters give you a Bonus.

Changing Your Scorecard

You can change the difficulty of the categories in Word Yacht by changing your scorecard. There are three different scorecards:

- The Beginner scorecard is suggested for people who are learning how to play, word game novices, and younger players.
- The Intermediate scorecard is recommended for people who have some skill with word games.
- The Expert scorecard is designed for true word-finding pros!

The Word Yacht scorecards are designed to let players of different skill levels play Word Yacht together and still have a competitive game. Therefore, a player with the Beginner scorecard should be able to beat a player using the Expert scorecard.

If you find you are consistently getting the highest scores possible on a Beginner scorecard, consider moving up to the Intermediate or Expert scorecard.

To change the scorecard for yourself or other players, click Word Yacht Players on the Options menu, and then select the scorecard type in the Scorecard box under the player whose scorecard you want to change.

Strategies for Word Yacht

If possible, pick the category you are attempting to fill before you roll or as soon as you see your dice. With practice, you will be able to identify whether or not a roll is good for making long words. Look for the presence of common letters, such as S, R and T, or prefixes and suffixes, such as ED or RE.

Rolls that mix common and uncommon letters are better for making lots of words and filling categories such as *3 letters* and *Yacht*.

If you have an S, be sure to make plural versions of any words you find, and make singular versions of any plural words. If you have letters that make a prefix or suffix such as RE or ED, try typing those letters first, so you can examine the letters that are left and try to make a long word using the prefix or suffix.

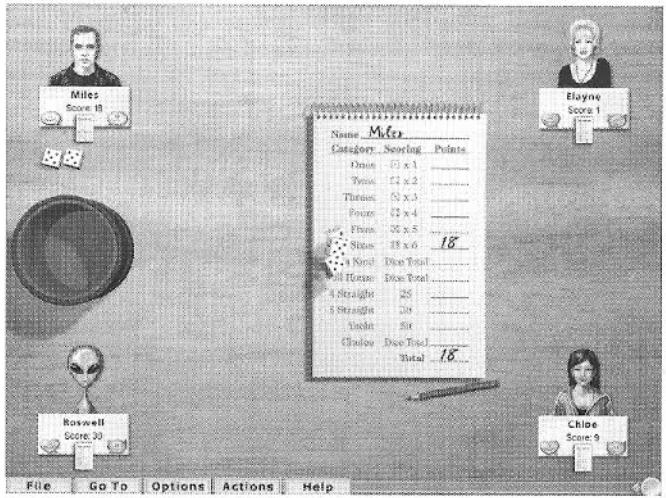
If you can, save the *Slam* category (where you have to use all of your dice) for when you have a bad roll and can't make many words. Although the Scorer is a useful fallback category, try to use it only when it gives you a lot of points; it is the only variable category in the game.

When trying for a *Yacht*, concentrate on making many short words. When trying for a *Scorer*, concentrate on making many longer words. The **Clear Word After Entering** option may make it easier for you to enter words faster.

Bonuses can help you win at Word Yacht, and you get them even if you can't fill a category. If you have great letters but can't seem to complete a category with them, or no good categories are left, look for the longest words possible to try to get a bonus.

When trying to complete the *Starter* category, check the key at the right side of the screen to see which letter is best to use. Note that S is not usually a good starter letter, because it is better used to end words starting with another letter.

YACHT



How the Game Evolved

Most Americans know this game from the popular commercial variant, Yahtzee™. Supposedly, the marketer of this game bought it from Canadians who called it Yacht because that's where they played it. (However, according to the current edition of *Hoyle's Rules of Games*, Yacht is usually played "in a restaurant or bar to decide who pays the check.")

Yacht by any name was originally a means of playing Poker with dice instead of cards (hence another of its names, Poker Dice). Special Yacht dice are made with an ace, king, queen, jack, 10, and 9 replacing the pips of the standard dice. Today, most people play Yacht with standard dice and without much thought for its Poker origins, even though most of the game's terminology comes from Poker.

How the Game Is Played

Yacht uses five dice. Any number of people can play (though with just one person the only goal is to beat your past high score). Points are scored in the following categories as shown:

Hand	*Score*
Ones	Total of ones
Twos	Total of twos
Threes	Total of threes
Fours	Total of fours
Fives	Total of fives
Sixes	Total of sixes
Four of a Kind	Dice total
Full House	Dice total
Four Straight	25
Five Straight	30
Yacht (five of a kind)	50
Choice	Dice total

There are 12 categories, and you have 12 turns. On each turn you roll the dice three times. You can keep one or more die from each roll as desired; you can also discard the die or dice you kept from the first roll if the second roll changes your mind. You can stand pat (stop your turn) after the first or second roll if your hand is good enough.

Your goal is to fill in each category in the list above with the highest possible number. A 4-4-5-5-5 Full House, for example, is 23 points. Once you fill a category, you go on to another. If you throw a second Full House, say a 4-4-4-3-3, you may choose the Fours category. Your score then would be 12 (the threes in this example wouldn't count).

(With Four of a Kind, the number on the fifth die counts in the scoring. Example: 6-6-6-6-1 is Four of a Kind, but it counts as 25.)

Three categories already have scores: Four Straight (25), Five Straight (30), and Yacht (50). These numbers are higher than the highest possible totals on your dice for those particular hands, so consider these scores a bonus.

The Choice category is just that—your choice. Use this category if your hand has a high point value but doesn't fit anywhere else. You'll receive the total points showing on your dice.

At the end of 12 rounds all of the categories will be filled in and the game ends. High score wins.

Strategies for Yacht

If you're playing Yacht for the first time, it's easy to assume that the dice control your fate. However, your scores are liable to improve if you make your decisions carefully. The fact that you can throw the dice three times and pick which ones you want to keep gives you a lot of flexibility. Yacht is a subtle game, and effective strategies can't be reduced to a simple formula. Many factors should affect play in addition to the dice roll, including:

1. Which categories are hardest to score
2. Which categories have already been used
3. How many turns remain
4. How close the total scores are

In the early, you're better off scoring in the categories that are most difficult to fill: Four of a Kind, Full House, Five Straight, and Yacht. Filling these categories early will help you minimize damage that results later on from having to *zero out* categories.

Remember that Four of a Kind and Full House are scored by totaling your dice. A Four of a Kind consisting of four 3's and a 1 adds up to (a rather paltry) 13 points. It is better to go for these two categories if you have high numbers on the dice. Of course, toward the end of the game, you are lucky to fill an empty Four of a Kind or Full House category, even if it's with relatively low numbers.

Sometimes you use up your three rolls and simply end up with crummy dice values that don't give many points in any of your available categories. This happens to novice and expert players

alike. The question is what you should do with this roll to minimize the damage. For example, take a look at **Fig 1**.

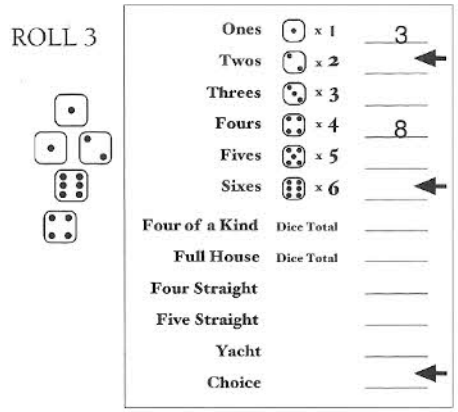


Fig. 1: Scoring a Bad Roll

This roll doesn't give a good score in any of the available categories, but you have to choose one of them. Some of your options (marked with arrows) are:

(a) Use your Sixes category; this gives you 6 points.

(b) Use your Choice category; this gives you 14 points.

(c) Use your Twos category; this gives you 2 points.

Although Sixes or Choice would give you more points on this turn, by choosing the Twos category you avoid wasting scoring potential that you can use later in the game. The most you could ever get in the Twos category is 12 points. So by taking 2 points in Twos you "give up" 10 possible points. The Sixes category can potentially earn 30 points, so by taking 6 points you would be giving up 24 possible points. Similarly, taking 14 in Choice would be giving up 16 possible points.

The Ones category is, of course, the best category for throwaway rolls. Even if you score a 0 in Ones, you only lose 5 possible points.

You should allow game circumstances to dictate which dice to keep and which category to aim for. For example, say you make an initial roll as shown in Fig. 2.

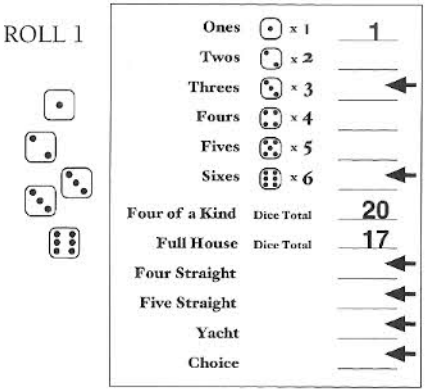


Fig. 2: Choosing a Target Category

Some of your options include:

(a) Keeping the 6 with the plan of going for Yacht (not likely!), Sixes, or Choice.

(b) Keeping the 3s, and going for Yacht or Threes.

(c) Keeping the 1, 2, and one of the 3s, and going for a straight.

Option (a) is not very wise. Re-rolling 4 dice is a lot like re-rolling 5 dice from scratch, but with one fewer roll available—and the difference between two and three rolls is dramatic.

Option (b) is a bit better, but with only two 3s, your chances of getting a Yacht in two more rolls are pretty slim. You will probably be able to get at least one more 3, but scoring 9 (or even 12) in

the Threes category isn't anything to get excited about this early in the game.

Option (c) makes the most sense. It's not ideal (a 2, 3, 4, for example, would be a better starting point for a straight), but the chances are pretty decent that you will be able to roll a 4 with two rolls of two dice.

As the game progresses, however, these dynamics change. It depends especially on what categories are left open. If you roll the same 1, 2, 3, 3, 6 at the end of a close game, and your Threes category is open, going for Threes is a good way to assure yourself some points. On the other hand, if you need a lot of points, going for Yacht may be your only hope for victory.

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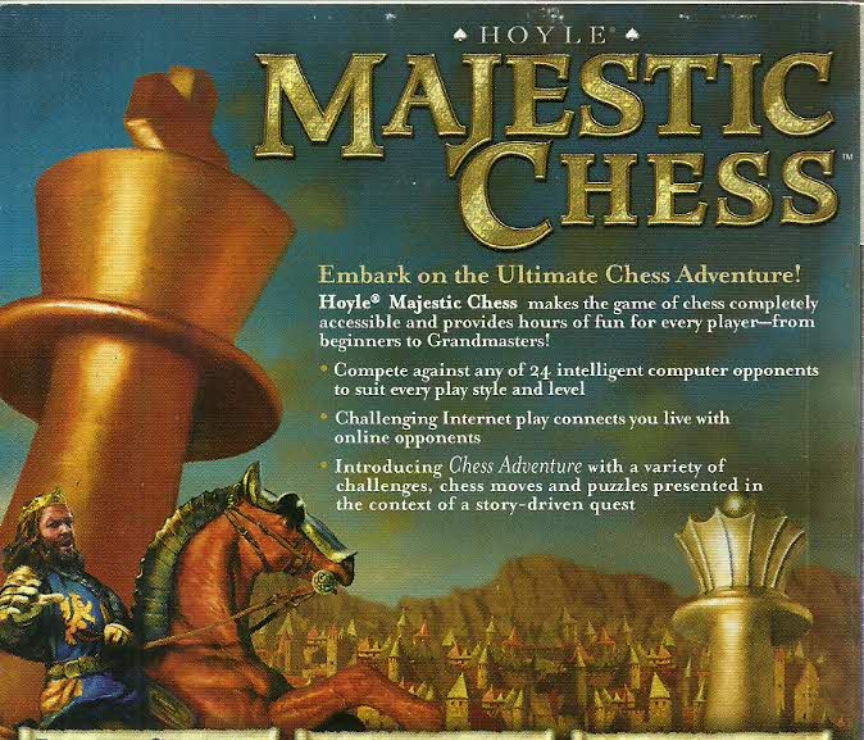

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