

American_Checkers

COLLABORATORS

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Contents

1	American_Checkers	1
1.1	This is the Guide to the Game of American_Checkers.	1
1.2	introduction	1
1.3	rules	2
1.4	preferences	3
1.5	installing	4
1.6	credits	6

Chapter 1

American_Checkers

1.1 This is the Guide to the Game of American_Checkers.

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This is version 1.0 of the game, American_Checkers  
by Thomas F. Powell 5th. Nov. 1996  
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This version of the game is Giftware, and was created with Amos1.36 on an Amiga 2000HD. It is workable for both Pal. and Ntsc. modes using Workbench 2.01+ and with 1 Meg+ of Ram. See (Installation).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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A Short Introduction.
The Rules of the Game.
Preferences and more.
Installation
Credits.

1.2 introduction

A Short Introduction To Checkers.

I learned to play this game when I was only a small boy. I have named it American_Checkers only to distinguish it from the English game 'Draughts' by Steve Hargreaves, which I have already seen on the 'market'. Why the Americans changed the name of the game, I cannot say. The play and the rules are the same, as far as I know, but please see (Rules - especially rule (5) and (6)). To try and please all, I have included some Preference 'Buttons' that will allow you to make your own choice. If someone wishes to make a comment on the subject, I would only be to happy to hear from them, see (Credits).

I have another game on CD, called Naughts and Crosses, and have since found out there is also one with the same name around, should have called mine, Tic_Tac_Toe. The American name for the same game.

Checkers is played on the same type board as Chess, but you only have two types of men, Pawns and Kings. It is what one might call, 'poor man's chess'. To give a game of logic like Checkers, the intelligence it deserves, is a big challenge, but have learned a lot from writing 'Naughts and Crosses'. I am no artist, so not only do you get 'poor man's' chess, with 'poor man's intellect', you also get 'poor man's graphics', (as Maxwell Smart would say, 'sorry about that.').

I nearly scramble my brains, wear out my typing fingers (all two of them) and almost double my intake of nicotine, just so a computer can beat me at a game. I must be stupid!

But, it's FUN, programing computers, isn't it??

1.3 rules

The Rules as I know them.

(1). To Start, ALL Men are Pawns. The Computer will use the pawns at the TOP of the board and move or jump DOWN the board. Your pawns are at the BOTTOM and move or jump UP the board. ALL pawns can only move in the one direction.

(2). To be Crowned a King, a Pawn must either move or jump onto a square in the last line at the opposite end of the board. Once becoming a King, he may now move or jump in any diagonal direction (up or down the board).

(3). Both the Computer's and your Men use only the Dark coloured Squares. ONLY Diagonal moves and jumps are made. The Light squares are illegal, should you try to use one of them, the computer will place your man back to its previous square and call 'illegal move'.

(4). A jump consists of physically jumping over the oppositions pawn or king and landing in an empty square diagonally opposite. You cannot make two jumps in a row with different men.

***** THE NEXT TWO RULES CAN BE CHANGED! *****

(5)a. 'YOU MUST MAKE A JUMP','Yes'. (Default rule).
If there is a jump that you can make, then you MUST make that jump. If you did not SEE the jump and move some other man, the computer will reverse your move and point out the man you must jump.

(5)b. 'YOU MUST MAKE A JUMP','No '.
If you have a jump, but move another man. The computer will allow the move, BUT, will then point out the man you could have jumped, and will then (with great glee), DESTROY your man that did not make the jump.

(6)a. 'CONTINUE-MULTI JUMPS','Yes'. (Default rule).

Your Pawn can make more than one jump at a time, but only UP the board, if however, he becomes a King, he may continue jumping down the board if there are jumps already there to be make.

(6)b. 'CONTINUE-MULTI JUMPS','No '.

The process of a pawn becoming a king, halts any multi jump and the next turn goes to the opponent.

(6). The game is over when You or the Opposition loses his last man or cannot make another move or jump.

There may be some controversy about rule number (5)a / (5)b and rule (6)a / (6)b. I learned the game by the default rules, but others have told me differently. So, when in doubt, I say give the customer a 'button' that will change the Rules, then everyone can be happy.

A stalemate may sometimes happen with both you and the computer moving back and forth between two squares. Should this happen I suggest you call it a draw and click on 'Another Game'.

One rule I'm not sure if I have programed correctly is, if at some stage during the game either you or the computer end up with a man or men, that just cannot make another move or jump. Trying to achieve this type of ending in a game is pretty hard to do. If you should come across this situation and the game does not end correctly, please let me know, then in the next Version I will include a, 'set up the board the way you want it and play from there', added to it. This will allow me to get it right, and you to set up your own finishes.

One other thing, should the computer at any time, start moving a man back and forth between the same two squares, when it is clearly able to make other moves. It is up to you to pursue and kill off its men and win the game. The computer is only marking time, waiting for you to make a mistake.

All is fair in love and war!

1.4 preferences

A Little on Preferences and Other Things.

On starting the game, a preference screen(s) will appear. You have a choice of changing the rules see (Rules), having sound and/or background music and who will go FIRST (See below). You also can change the colour of the pawns, (I know the choice isn't great, but I only have 32 colours to play around with). Needless to say, you cannot have both opponents the same colour, when the red square becomes white the change has taken place. You can save these choices by clicking on the 'Save' button. This will save all preferences to a 'Pref_file', which is loaded upon starting up American_Checkers.

* FIRST * There are three (3) buttons on the 'Prefs' screen

under the heading 'First Move', they are, 'COM' (computer), 'ME' (that means You) and 'RANDOM' (that means the first move will be totally random either you or the computer). The initial default setting is 'RANDOM', but you can alter this at absolutely any time. After the First time you move a man, these 'First Move' buttons are automatically reset to 'ME' (meaning you), to reflect the TRUE turn position during the game. If you alter them during a game, you could give the computer two moves in a row. This might be contrived as Cheating and you could be heavily fined for such an act!

If for some reason you are interrupted somewhere through a game and would like to continue it later on, just click on the 'Save Game' button. If a 'Game_file' is not present it will be made for you. Then on starting American_Checkers next time, just click on 'Load Game' when the Pref. screen shows. The game will be set up exactly as you left it, even the length of the playing time. Saving a game will replace the previously saved game.

A game can really only be saved with 'You to Start', but if you click on the 'computer to start' button before you 'Load Game', the computer will begin first. This means you could play the Finish of a game either way, as many time as you like.

You can see the Pref. screen at any time, by moving the pointer to the Top Right hand corner of the screen, over my name (who doesn't like their name in lights), a pref. button will appear, click on it to see preferences. To remove the pref. screen just click on 'Done'.

There are two (2) buttons, one on each side of the board that you may use to stop the computer saying 'who's turn' it is, they also stop it saying 'you have another turn' and 'you have a king'. These buttons are also save with the 'Pref_file'. The last two (2) other buttons, you can figure out for yourself.

Both the 'Pref_file' and the 'Game_file' are stored in the Checkers directory with all the other files.

The 'Statistics' section at the bottom of the playing screen just gives various bits of info that you can easily recognize. This section does NOT appear in the 'NTSC' version of the game, due to the structure of the NTSC Mode (only 200 lines seen on the Monitor, as opposed to 256 lines for the 'PAL' Mode).

The 'Info' line could have a bit more work done on it, also the computer could be made a lot smarter. If anyone shows any interest in the game, I may be enticed to work a little harder on the program.

One last thing, you make a Move or Jump by moving the Pointer over the man you wish to play, and while holding down the Left mouse button, moving it to the square of your choice, then letting go of the mouse button. I think doing it this way involves the player more into the game than other methods.

1.5 installing

How To Install This Game.

Installing American_Checkers is as simple as simple, so have not bothered to write an installation program. All files come in a Directory (drawer), named Checkers. The files that should be there are,

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Checkers.guide.....The amigaguide you are now reading.
American_Checkers....The game it-self.
Checkers_Readme.....The Online Short file.
Pref_file.....The 'your saved' preference file.
Game_file.....The 'Save a game' file.
a Pics Drawer.....Holding:-
    Checkers.pic.....The Main Board Screen picture.
    Pref1.pic.....The (top) Preference Screen picture.
    Pref2.pic.....The (bottom) " " " ".
a Fonts Drawer.....Holding:-
    two (2) different fonts inside it.
a TTools Drawer.....Holding:-
    Translator.lib.....Important for Amiga 1200 machine.
    Narrator.device.....For the 1200. (See Below).
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A few files I know, but ALL of these files MUST be kept together inside the Checkers directory! So how do we install?

COPY the CHECKERS DIRECTORY to ANY HARD or FLOPPY DISK DEVICE:

You may put the 'Checkers Directory' in a Drawer, or, in a Drawer within a Drawer, as DEEP as you like.

I told you it was simple. Open the Checkers drawer, double click the American_Checkers icon, and you are away!

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***** IMPORTANT *****
*   IF 'American_Checkers' will NOT run. You will Have DO a   *
*   'SOFT BOOT'. You will ONLY have to do this ONCE. The reason *
*   WHY, I am still to find out! But there it is.             *
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*** NOTES for the Amos Programmer ***

The Amiga 1200 model was sometimes sold without the:-

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'Translator.lib' library installed in the 'Sys:Libs' drawer.
'Narrator.device' device " " " 'Sys:Devs' drawer.
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Because I don't like to alter another person's System, I do NOT copy these files to their respective drawers, instead, I 'Add' to the Assignment List, where you have put the 'Checkers' drawer. This will allow the 'Translator.library', the 'Narrator.device' and the 'fonts', that I use, to be found by my program. Then at the Closing of American_Checkers, I 'Remove' the Assignments from the List. This will leave your setup exactly as it originally was.

For the 2000HD machine, I could 'Spack' all the pictures and save them with the program (like I did the Bobs), before I compiled it.

But have found out, Amos prefers to 'Load' the pictures as simple IFF files when used on an Amiga 1200 computer.

If for some reason the program will not run using its specified needs, get in touch with me, I'm sure we can work something out.

1.6 credits

We Must Have Credits

The Intro and background music are the same tune which I picked from my PD collection. Unfortunately I do not have the composers name but would like to thank him for his nice rendition. Seeing as the rest of the work is mine, I must take full responsibility for any Bugs that may appear, forthwith to be known as (Powellus Consilicus).

If you enjoy playing this game, and seeing as I think I may have done my brain some damage writing it, you might like to send me a 'Get Well' card.

As I am not on line YET, all electronic mail correspondence should go to my friend, Helmut Reichert of address:-

'helmutr@connexus.apana.org.au'

who's help I appreciate greatly.

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