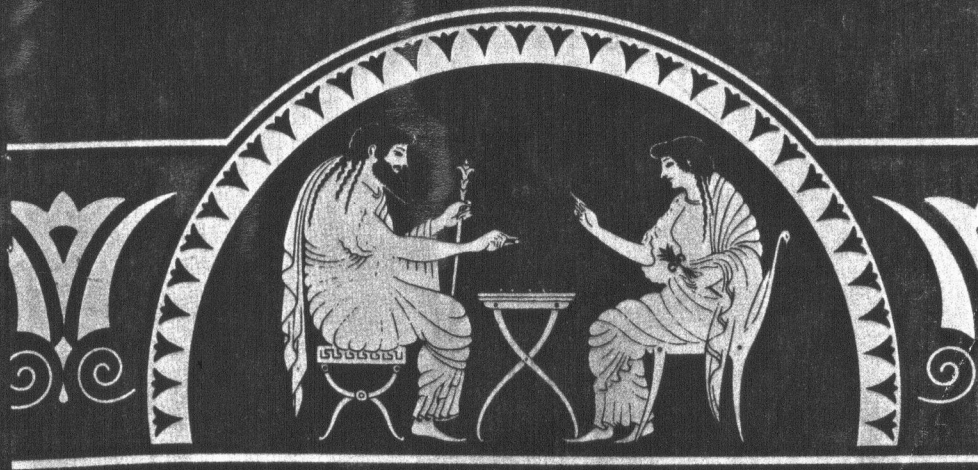


# PENTE®



# PENTE®

THE CLASSIC GAME OF SKILL  
(Pen tay)

For 2 players or partners  
Ages 8 to adult

Rules © 1982 Gary Gabrel  
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PENTE is a fast moving game of skill for two or more players which resembles checkers in ease of learning and simplicity, plays like a sophisticated tic-tac-toe, and yet approaches chess in its tactical depth and wonderful variety.

PENTE is actually an outstanding innovation, derived from several closely related board games that have been popular in the Orient for centuries. Among these games are GO (probably the oldest game in the world), Niniku-Rinju, and Go-Moku. PENTE is a contemporary game which combines the best elements of all three—the simplicity of Go-Moku, the flashy tactics of Niniku-Rinju, and the profound strategy of GO. And all of these games can be played on the PENTE board.

PENTE can also be played by four players (see **TEAM PENTE**) or by any number from two to six (see **ADVANCED VARIATIONS**).

PENTE is much more than a single game—it's a whole new concept in game sets. Incorporated in one attractive and durable set are a variety of games appealing to a wide range of tastes. This aesthetic and versatile interpretation of play highlights both the natural beauty of the games and the joys of play.

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**Note: Keep PENTE stones away from small children who might mistake them for candy.**

## BASIC RULES FOR TWO PLAYERS

**Equipment:** a PENTE board and an ample supply of PENTE stones, one color per player.

**Object of the Game:** There are two ways to win in PENTE:

1. Win by getting five (or more) stones in a row, either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, with no empty points between them, or
2. Win by capturing five (or more) pairs of your opponent's stones.

**How To Play:** Place the board in the middle of the playing area. Start play with the board completely clear of stones. The first player (chosen by chance) begins the game by playing one stone on the center point. Thereafter the players take turns playing their stones, one at a time, on any empty intersection. The stones are played on the intersections of the lines (including the edge of the board), rather than in the squares.

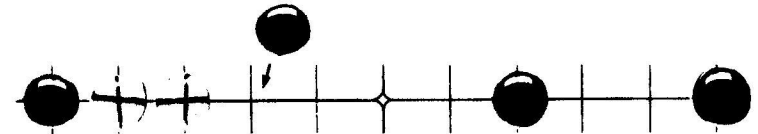
A move is completed when the stone is released. Once played, a stone cannot be moved again, except when removed by a capture (as explained on page 5).

The players take turns adding new stones to the board, building up their positions, until one player wins.

## CAPTURES

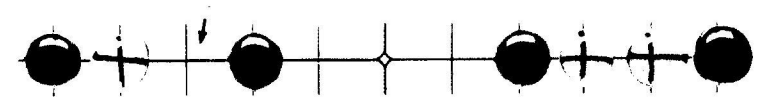
Whenever your opponent has two stones (and only two) which are adjacent, those stones are vulnerable to capture. The pair can be captured by bracketing its two ends with your own stones.

**Example:** Green plays on the point indicated by the arrow, bracketing Yellow's pair of stones. The pair is thus captured and removed from the board, leaving the final position as shown.



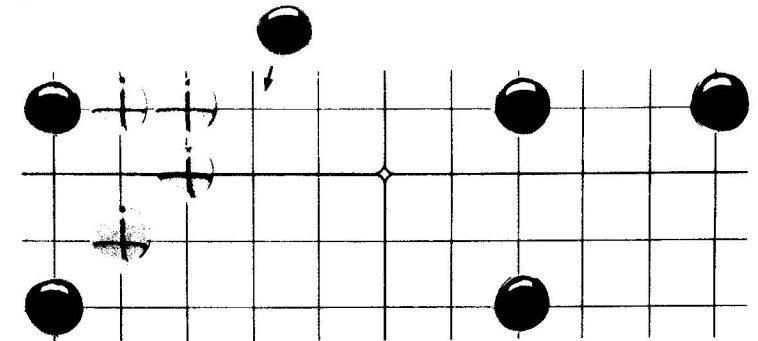
Captures can be made along diagonal as well as horizontal and vertical lines. All four stones involved must be consecutive and in a straight line. As soon as the capturing play is made, the captured stones are removed from the grid and placed in view along the border so that both players can see how many stones have been taken.

**Moving into a captured position**—A stone may legally be played onto any empty intersection, even if that point has been previously occupied, and even if it forms a pair between two enemy stones. Thus Yellow's move in the diagram below is safe and no stones are removed from the board.



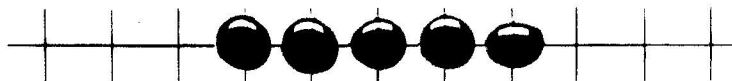
**Multiple captures**—It is legal to capture two or more pairs with a single move.

**Example:** Green's move brackets and captures two separate pairs of Yellow's stones.



## FIVE IN A ROW

The five-in-a-row must be consecutive and in a straight line to win. It may run in any direction—horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. It need not be exactly five—six or more stones in a row win as well.



**Playing Hint:** If you obtain the advantage of having an unblocked four-in-a-row, called **tessera**, you have practically won the game—whichever end your opponent blocks, you can play on the other end and achieve the winning five-in-a-row.



Therefore, if your opponent has an open three, as shown below, one end of the three should be blocked immediately to prevent the formation of the deadly tessera.



This axiom, that you must block an open three, applies unless you have a better move—like a move to make four, or a good capture on this move or the next that will remove stones from the row or pose a superior threat. Even if the three stones are not adjacent, they must still be blocked to stop the win. The three dotted circles in the diagram below are all possible blocking moves.



## ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT PENTE

**Does six-in-a-row also win?**

Yes, six or more stones in a row wins the game as well.

**Can a stone be played on the edge of the board?**

Yes, you may play on the very edge of the grid; and also inside the four hemispheres, each of which covers three "invisible" intersections that can be used.

**Can I break up a five-in-a-row by capturing one of its stones?**

No, when a player gets five-in-a-row, he or she wins immediately. It does not matter if the opponent can "capture across" the winning five-in-a-row, even if that would be his or her fifth capture.

**What happens if I form a pair between two enemy stones? Are they captured?**

No, you cannot "capture yourself" by moving into a captured position. Instead, the pair remains on the board.

**After making a capturing move, do I have the option of leaving the captured stones on the board?**

No. Captured stones must be removed. However, if all players overlook that a move is a capture only to realize it later in the game, the "captured" stones remain on the board.

**What happens if the position gets disrupted?**

Move carefully, as he or she always loses who drops the pieces and messes up the board!

**Who moves first?**

The first player has a slight advantage. Therefore some method of chance should be used to decide who plays first in the first game. In following games, the loser of the last game moves first. The advantage of the first move can be eliminated by using the tournament rule—see Tournament Rule in **ADVANCED VARIATIONS**.

**Can PENTE be played by more than two people?**

Yes! You can play Partners with two teams of two players, alternating turns, using the same rules as in Basic Two-Player PENTE. And you can play Team PENTE. In addition there are game variations for 2 to 6 players. See **ADVANCED VARIATIONS**.



## BASIC RULES FOR FOUR PLAYERS

You can play Partners with two teams of two players. Players alternate turns, using the same rules as in Basic Two-Player PENTE.

## TEAM PENTE FOR FOUR PLAYERS

**Equipment:** a PENTE board and an ample supply of PENTE stones, one color per player (four colors in all). This may require purchase of additional stones. See ACCESSORIES.

**Object of the Game:** One team wins when:

1. One player gets five (or more) of his or her own stones in a row, just as in Basic Two-Player PENTE, or
2. The team captures 10 (or more) stones from their opponents.

**How To Play:** The players split up into two teams, with team members sitting opposite each other. The first player moves onto the center point. Thereafter the players take turns, in a clockwise direction, placing their stones on the intersections of the lines, just as in Basic PENTE. Each player controls different colored stones and cooperates with his or her partner for a team win.

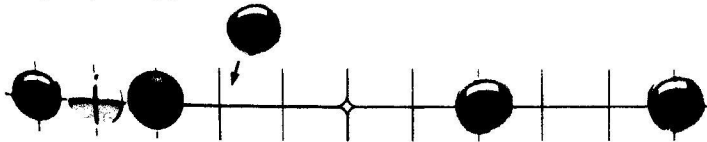
## CAPTURES

In Team PENTE (and the other multi-player games listed in ADVANCED VARIATIONS) captures can be made in two ways:

1. **Normal Captures**—Just as in Basic Two-Player PENTE, a pair of stones of the same color may be captured.
2. **Mixed Captures**—It is also possible for one player to capture a pair of stones of two different colors. The bracketing stones must be of one color. In the diagram below Green captures a yellow stone and a red stone.

It is legal to capture your partner's stones. However, only those stones taken from your opponents count toward the winning total of 10. You may not capture your own stones.

During the game it is not legal to discuss specific strategy with your partner.



## ADVANCED VARIATIONS

The game of PENTE is readily adaptable to a wide range of tastes. After you've become comfortable with Basic PENTE, try out one of the intriguing game modifications listed here.

## POINTS For 2 Players

This variation introduces a certain element of "risk" into the game and provides a new way of keeping score which more accurately determines the relative strengths of the players.

The rules and strategy of POINTS are the same as for Basic PENTE. (Use of the tournament rule is optional.)

Although each game is still won by getting five-in-a-row or five captures, an additional objective is to win by as many points as possible. The first player to score a designated number of points (usually 21 or 50), over a series of games, wins the match.

**Scoring Points**—When the game is over, points are counted and scored as follows:

- The player, if any, who got five-in-a-row receives 5 points as a bonus.
- Each player receives 1 point for each capture he or she made.
- Each player receives 1 point for each four-in-a-row he or she has still remaining on the board. (Four-in-a-row is 4 stones, consecutive and in a straight line. Any that were wiped out during the game do not count.)

Playing with points introduces new strategies into the game by challenging both players to take calculated risks in order to gain as many points as possible.

For instance, if one player accumulates an overwhelming advantage, such as an unblocked four, he or she may prefer to delay making the winning move for a while in an attempt to gain even more points.

**Handicaps**—Playing points allows for an easy handicapping. For example, in a match to 21, a veteran player may give an intermediate player an edge of 5 or 10 points—thus evening the contest.

## POINTS For 3, 4, 5, or 6 Players

With each extra player, it becomes more and more difficult to get five-in-a-row since there are more players to block each threat. Therefore, this variation requires only four-in-a-row to win, giving each player a better chance of success and keeping the games fast-paced.

**Object of the Game:** To win the match by being the first player to score a designated number of points (usually 21) over a series of games. A game ends when a player makes four-in-a-row or 4 captures. Both normal captures and mixed captures are allowed.

**How To Play:** The first player moves onto the center point. Thereafter the players take turns, in a clockwise direction, placing their stones on the intersections of the lines as in Basic PENTE.

**Scoring:** When the game is over, the points are counted and scored as follows:

- The player, if any, who gets four-in-a-row receives 10 points as a bonus.
- Each player receives 1 point for each capture he or she made.
- Each player receives 1 point for each three-in-row (trio) he or she has still remaining on the board.

The strategy in this variation is different from Basic PENTE in that players can put too many winning threats on the board at one time. Here, unlike Basic PENTE, playing too aggressively can backfire and throw the game open to end suddenly and with unexpected results.

## COMPLICATION

This is a variation which increases the complexity of the game. It is not used in tournaments.

There are two parts to this variation:

1. A player must make exactly five-in-a-row to win. Six or more in a row are neutral and do not count for or against a win.
2. A player cannot move to form a double three if both threes are capable of developing into fours.

Note that this restriction does not prohibit moving to make a three and a four, or two fours. Nor is a player expected to obey this "rule of three and three" if the opponent threatens to make a five which can be blocked only by a move that forms two open threes.

## TOURNAMENT RULE

As players increase their skill, the advantage of moving first in Basic PENTE becomes more and more significant. Therefore, the following modification has been introduced for use in tournaments or other serious games. It neutralizes the advantage of the first player by imposing a slight positional constraint upon him or her.

**Tournament Rule I**—The first player's second move must be at least three spaces from the center point. A square can be drawn between the four inner "stars" on the board. The first player's second move must be on or outside the perimeter of this square. No other restrictions are imposed on either player.

## SOME BASIC STRATEGY

The best strategy for winning PENTE is to try to seize the offensive. The player who is on the offensive is able to exercise more control over the game's direction and, therefore, over its final outcome. Basically, you get on the offensive by making stronger moves than your opponent, which usually means having more stones in a row, so that he or she has to block your rows and not vice versa.

You will find that **threes** are the basic building block of threats in PENTE and come in a variety of shapes. Use them to gain the initiative by quickly developing a series of intersecting threes and fours and extending them in all directions. Keep moving to give yourself as many options for further play as possible, placing the stones so that they build upon each other, until an unstoppable "double threat" is achieved.

When looking for good moves consider those that seem to come naturally. Moves that give the position balance or symmetry often work very well, as do moves that are visually striking or appealing. Often the point where your opponent would like to play next is also the best place for your stone.

## ETIQUETTE

It is a customary, but not mandatory, refinement of this game to announce "three" or "tria" when moving to make an open three; also to call "four" or "tessera" when making four in a row. This is so that your opponent will not forget to stop the formation of an open four or five. The idea is not to win because of your opponent's blunder or oversight, but to win in spite of his or her seeing every threat. Pointing out your opponent's errant move also demonstrates your own confidence and mastery of play.

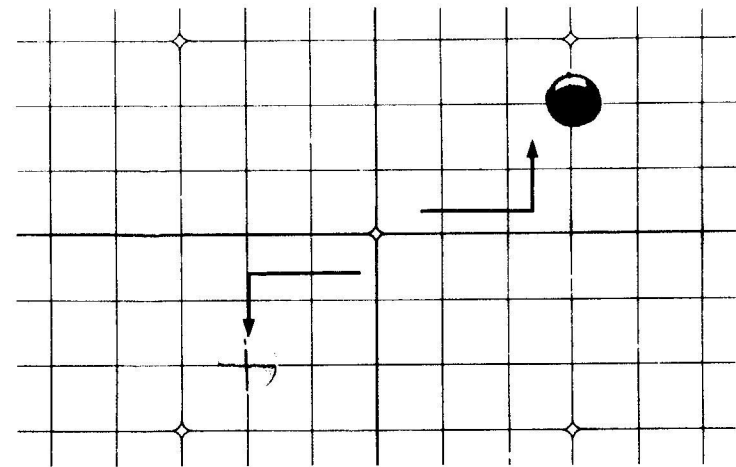
## NOTATION

To play over the moves of a game recorded in PENTE notation, or to record your own games for future use, employ the following easy system.

Each move of the game is recorded by noting its distance from the center, using the symbols R for Right, L for Left, U for Up, and D for Down.

For example, in the diagram below, the green stone is located at R3U2. Note that we have simply abbreviated the phrase "Right 3 and Up 2." The yellow stone is on L2D2 (Left 2, Down 2).

If a stone is played on an "axis line" (that is, if one of its coordinates is zero), then the zero coordinate is simply deleted. For example, R3 would be a point that is 3 intersections to the Right of Center, but zero points Up or Down. A move onto the center intersection is written 0. Capturing moves are marked with an asterisk or put in parentheses.



## ACCESSORIES

### BOOKS

There are several books available offering in-depth instruction and advanced theories of play. **PENTE STRATEGY: BOOK I** and **BOOK II** and **THE OFFICIAL BOOK OF PENTE** are available at most book, fine gift, and department stores.

### STONES

PENTE stones are available from your retailer and by mail from Parker Brothers. To order by mail:

Indicate first and second choice of colors. Colors available are yellow, red, green, blue, purple, and brown.

Send check or money order for the correct amount, \$3.95 plus 75¢ postage and handling for each bag, to Pente Extra Gems, P.O. Box 5782, Wyoming, MN 55092.

Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Prices subject to change without notice.

### JOIN THE U.S. PENTE ASSOCIATION

The U.S.P.A., founded at the 1982 World Open PENTE Championship in Dallas, Texas, is an association of PENTE players formed to assist the growth of PENTE strategy and tournaments throughout the world.

If you would like more information on how to join or to learn about tournaments in your area, write to: USPA, P.O. Box 2583, Stillwater, OK 74076 or Parker Brothers, P.O. Box 1012, Beverly, MA 01915. ATTN: Consumer Response Dept.

## CARE OF YOUR PENTE SET

### IF YOU HAVE A PENTE SOFT SET

To clean your PENTE set use mild soap and water.

Avoid use of abrasive cleaner.

To preserve your game repack it in the following order:

1. Instructions
2. Roll board with face out and square the ends.
3. Beads
4. Cap securely

## PENTE SETS AVAILABLE

Pente—The Classic Game of Skill—is available in a variety of sets suited to a wide range of discriminating tastes and lifestyles.

### • PENTE BOARD GAME

The standard board game with 2 sets of glass stones and a classically-designed game board.

### • PENTE SOFT SET

A durable vinyl board rolled in a distinctive black or red tube, with 2 sets of glass stones and 2 velvet-like pouches.

### • POCKET PENTE

A portable PENTE that fits easily in any pocket. Trifold game board has a black, leather-like cover and red and black markers.

### • PENTE GLASS

Game board of clear, tempered safety glass with 1 in. legs for a unique tabletop format. Comes with 4 sets of glass stones and 4 velvet-like pouches—ready for Team or multiple-player PENTE.

### • PENTE DELUXE

A wooden game board that makes an elegant addition to any decor. Includes all the equipment needed for Team or multiple-player PENTE: 4 sets of glass stones and 4 suede pouches.

## PARKER BROTHERS

We will be happy to answer your questions or comments about PENTE. Write to the Consumer Response Department in the location nearest you:  
In the U.S.A.: Parker Brothers, P.O. Box 1012, Beverly MA 01915.  
In Australia and New Zealand: Parker Games, 104 Bourke Road, Alexandria, N.S.W. 2015.  
In the United Kingdom: Parker Games, Owen Street, Coalville, Leicester LE6 2DE England.