Four in a Line
User Guide

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Introduction

Welcome to Four in a Line

Four in a Line is compatible with devices that use version 3 or later of the Palm™ Operating System, including the Palm III™ and Palm V™ organizers.

This User Guide covers all platforms and rather than referring to any specific device, will simply refer to 'your handheld computer'. Readers should note that, unless otherwise stated, the same functionality is supported by all handheld computers available at the time of writing.

About this document

The Four in a Line User Guide explains how to use the Four in a Line application. In so doing, the Guide assumes that the reader is familiar with the standard features of their organizer / handheld computer.

The Guide is also supplied in electronic form as a Portable Document Format (.pdf) file. Software to display .pdf files is freely available from Adobe Systems Incorporated and can be acquired from their World Wide Web site at http://www.adobe.com/acrobat/.

Game overview

Four in a Line is a game for two people playing in opposition. The board consists of 6 rows and 7 columns.

Players take turns dropping coloured pieces into a column of their choice. The piece falls vertically such that it occupies the first available row in the selected column.

Game objective

The object of the game is to be the first player to form a line of four connected pieces of the same colour. A winning line can be vertical, horizontal or diagonal.

Using Four in a Line

Running Four in a Line

When you first run Four in a Line, application information is briefly displayed and a new game is started. The game starts with you as the "Player" using the lighter pieces against a relatively unskilled computer opponent playing the darker pieces. You are the 1st to move.

The Four in a Line Board

View selector

Video buttons

Current player

Beam button
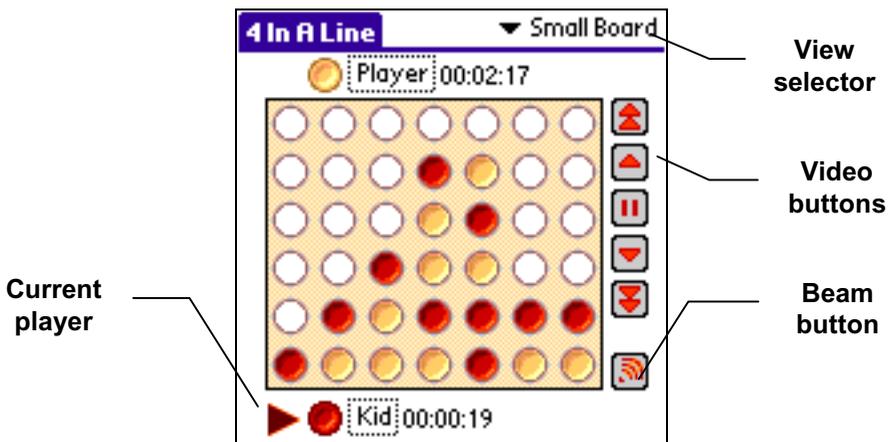
Four in a Line offers a variety of views of the board and by default the "Small board" is presented. The various views make use of a variety of standard components. These are described below.

Selecting views

Tap the View selector to present a popup list from which you can select any of the available views of the board. Note that you can also select any view from the **Show** menu.

The Current player

This shows the name of the player whose turn it is to move. A clock showing the playing time is also displayed. Some views show both players and in these cases, in addition to the clock being updated, the current player is indicated by an arrow.

Tapping the player name presents the **Player Details** dialog which allows you to change the name of the player, whether they are a human or computer player and for computer players, the skill level.

Four in a Line maintains a list of available players. Facilities to create, amend or delete players are described later in this document.

Making moves

To make a move simply tap the column to which you wish to add a piece.

When you tap the desired column or a computer player makes a move, the piece is animated and moves to the new location. You can control the speed of animation by selecting the **Preferences** dialog from the **Options** menu.

Four in a Line offers a range of features that can help with making moves:

- If you would like a hint as to the best move to play, select the **Hint** item from the **Move** menu.

- If you are playing a computer opponent and would like to force them to make a move before they have completed examining all the possibilities, select the **Move now** item from the **Move** menu.

Reviewing a game

The Video buttons allow you to review the current game. Tap the desired button to undo or redo a single move or to undo or redo a series of moves. Note that when a series of moves is being undone or replayed, you can tap the Stop button to cancel the operation.

You can also undo and redo a single move by selecting the appropriate item from the **Move** menu which additionally provides options to undo or redo all moves.

Note that when you review a game by undoing or redoing moves, a computer player will be paused, so that you can examine the board position. To reactivate the computer player and continue playing, simply tap the board.

Beaming

You can share games with or play against other people by beaming games between infrared enabled PalmOS devices running the Four in a Line application.

Four in a Line maintains a list of games stored on your device. Facilities to create, amend or delete games are described later in this document.

To beam the current game, simply tap the Beam button or select the Beam game option from the **Game** menu.

When you elect to receive a beamed game, if the received game matches one already stored on your device *and* offers a valid next move from an opponent, the move is made and the new game state presented. Otherwise, the received game is added as a new entry to the list of games available.

Managing Players

Four in a Line maintains a list of players involved in any of the games stored on your device. You can add new players, delete players or amend their details by selecting the **Players** item from the **Game** menu. The list of players will then be presented.

- To create a new player, tap the **New** button. The player details dialog will then be presented with default values. If you confirm the dialog, the new player will be added to the list.

- To amend the details of an existing player, highlight the player in the list and tap the **Details** button to present the player details dialog. When you confirm the dialog, any changes will be applied.

- To delete a player, highlight the player in the list and tap the **Delete** button.

Note that when you receive a beamed game that involves a player who is not already recorded on the receiving device, the player will automatically be added to the list of players.

Managing games

Four in a Line allows you to store multiple games on your device. When you launch Four in a Line, the most recent game is presented as the current game.

You can create new games, delete games or amend their details by picking the **Select** item from the **Game** menu. The list of games will then be presented.

- To make any game in the list the current game, simply highlight the desired game and tap the **Done** button.

- To create a new game, highlight a game in the list on which you would like to base the new game and tap the **Copy** button. The game details dialog will then be presented. Amend the game details as desired and confirm the dialog to add the game to the list. You can initialise a newly created game using the **New Game** function described below.

- To amend the details of an existing game, highlight the game in the list and tap the **Details** button to present the game details dialog. When you confirm the dialog, any changes will be applied.

- To delete a game, highlight the game in the list and tap the **Delete** button.

Note that when you receive a beamed game that does not match any game already recorded on the receiving device, the game will automatically be added to the list.

At any time, you can reset the current game to its initial position by selecting **New Game** from the **Game** menu. Note that when you do this the list of moves is cleared so that it is no longer possible to redo moves that may have previously been made. If you want to retain the move list, use the **Undo all** function described above.