

The Game of the Amazons (El Juego de las Amazonas)

a board game invented by Walter Zamkaskas

The Game of the Amazons (or simply Amazons) is an abstract game of territory for two players, played on a 10x10 board. Each player has four *amazons*, which move like chess queens : any number of vacant squares in a straight line -- orthogonally or diagonally. After it moves, an amazon must fire an *arrow* in the same manner from its landing square (one or more vacant squares orthogonally or diagonally) -- the square where the arrow lands is then marked with a poker chip or other counter to indicate it is blocked (in the computer version blocked squares are colored red). No amazon or arrow may move into or through a blocked square. White moves first, moving one amazon and firing an arrow with that amazon. The players alternate moving, and the player last able to make a move wins.

Strategy -- the players should attempt to use amazon moves and arrows to block the opponent, trying to hem the enemy amazons into small regions and wall off large regions for one's own amazons. In most cases, once the board is divided (by blocked squares) into regions so that each region contains only amazons of one color, the game is essentially over and the player with the largest number of squares available to his/her amazons will win. The computer version presently requires the game to be played out to the last move before it declares a winner, but players may disregard this after they have a little experience.

History and Credits -- **El Juego de las Amazonas** was invented in 1988 by Walter Zamkaskas of Argentina, and first published in issue number 4 of the puzzle magazine *El Acertijo* in December of 1992. The game was informally introduced to the postal gaming club The Knights of the Square Table by Michael Keller in 1993, where it gained immediate popularity. An authorized translation by Mr. Keller was published in January 1994 in *World Game Review*. The first international match was a friendly team match, played by fax between Argentina and the United States in 1994-1995; the six games were split 3-3. A team postal match between Italy and the United States is in progress.

El Juego de las Amazonas (The Game of the Amazons) is a trademark of Ediciones de Mente. For more information, contact : Jaime Poniachik, Publicaciones Aperiódicas, Casilla de Correo 74, Sucursal 12, 1412 Buenos Aires, Argentina (fax. 054-1-962-8343).

Computer Version -- **The Game of the Amazons** was programmed in Microsoft Visual Basic 3.0 for Windows by Michael Keller in April and May of 1995. The following files are contained in the distribution file *amazons.zip* : *amazons.exe*, *amazonlm.dat*, *amazons.wri* (this information file), *file_id.diz* (a summary file), and three Visual Basic support files : *vbrun300.dll*, *grid.vbx*, and *cmdialog.vbx*. The program requires Windows 3.1 (not tested under 3.0), a Windows-compatible mouse, and VGA graphics. The program is provided as is, and no guarantees as to its performance are given. Reports of bugs may be sent to <Wgreview@aol.com>, or to the address below.

How to Play the Computer Version -- The program can be started using File Manager, or an icon added to a Program Manager group (follow the instructions in your Windows manual). When the program starts, click on the credits window to deactivate it. The program will be set up with the human player playing White against the Easy computer opponent -- this setting may be changed by clicking on the New Game button and selecting a human player or a computer player for White and Black -- you can go second, play another human, or even watch the computer play a game against itself. To make a move, click the mouse (left button on multi-button mouse) on the amazon you wish to move, then click on the square you wish to move it to, and then the square you wish to fire an arrow to. You cannot make an illegal move; the computer will indicate any illegal moves you try. When the computer is moving, it will print "I'm thinking...." in the message box below the board, and once it has chosen a move, it will tell you how many moves it had available, a value for the position after its chosen move (larger numbers indicate positions the computer regards as better for it), and the move it selected. The moves of the game, in algebraic notation, are also listed in the window to the right of the board. You may save a game in progress at any time when it is your move -- click the Save Game button and enter a name (e.g. game1.amz) in the dialog window, then click OK. You may restart a saved game whenever you wish (except while the computer is selecting a move) by clicking the Load Game button; enter the name you chose earlier. If you wish to take back the last move you made, click Undo Move. You may quit the program at any time (except during a computer move) by clicking the Exit button.

This is a free computer version of The Game of the Amazons. The compressed file AMAZONS.ZIP may be freely distributed; do not distribute individual files. A registered version is available with additional features, including print options for game records and diagrams, a setup mode, and stronger computer opponents. Buyers of the registered version will be able to get future updates free by electronic mail (or for \$1 to cover diskette and postage), and discounts on registered versions of additional game programs planned for the near future. The registered version is available for \$12 postpaid (payable to **Michael Keller**) from : Michael Keller, World Game Review, 1747 Little Creek Drive, Baltimore, MD 21207-5230. Both versions are copyright 1995 by Michael Keller.

Subscribers to World Game Review are entitled to purchase the registered version at a reduced price of \$10 postpaid. WGR (founded in 1983) is a general game/puzzle magazine edited and published by Michael Keller, and available for \$11 per four issues. (You may purchase a subscription and the registered version of Amazons at the same time). For more information write to the address above, or by e-mail to <Wgreview@aol.com> .

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