Poker Squares

Poker Squares is a solitaire game requiring equal parts luck and skill, patience and greed. Unlike most solitaires, where you're merely re-arranging the cards, in Poker Squares the object of the game is to pile up points!

Getting Started

An Introduction To Poker Squares
How To Play Poker Squares
Revision History

Customizing Poker Squares

Preferences
Scoring Options
Multimedia Sound

Advanced

Statistics
Strategy
Structure Of PSQ.INI

Support

How To Contact The Author
Other Shareware By Randy Rasa
Future Features?

Registration

How To Register
Registration Form

If you enjoy this game, please support it!

Introduction To Poker Squares

Background

Poker Squares is a standard solitaire, described in numerous solitaire reference books. I originally wrote a version of this game way back in 1988, when I first started writing computer games.   This original version ran in DOS text mode, and was a modest success. Version 1.28 is still available (as freeware) from this <u>web page</u>, with QuickBASIC source.   If you're interested, check it out.

I wrote the current version of Poker Squares because I've always considered it a fun little game, and I wanted to be able to play it as a native Windows application.

I hope you enjoy playing it as much as I've enjoyed writing it!

Requirements

- Since Poker Squares is written with Visual Basic version 2.00, it requires the **VBRUN200.DLL** run-time library.   In order to keep the file size as small as possible, this file may not have been distributed with this program.   The file is available on most Internet, BBS, and online services shareware collections, or should be available from wherever you obtained this software, or from the <u>author</u>.
- This program requires Windows 3.0 or later.   It was developed under Windows 95, and has been tested under Windows 3.1, Windows 3.11, and Windows 95.
- To utilize Poker Square's multimedia sound, a sound card (or Microsoft's speaker driver) is required.   In addition, Windows 3.1 or later, or Windows 3.0 with the multimedia extensions, is required.
- This program requires at least four megabytes of RAM.
- This program requires at least 640x480x16 video capability; 800x600x256 or higher is highly recommended.
- If the screen resolution is less than 800x600, or if you reduce the size of the window enough, the the cards will be reduced in size, in order to fit within the reduced are. The cards may appear coarse or distorted -- this is normal.   If this effect is objectionable, increase the size of the window, or run Windows with a higher-resolution video driver.   Using the smaller cards will also make the program run somewhat slower, because of the time required to dynamically re-size cards.
- You may wonder why I didn't write Poker Squares for Windows 95.   Well, I wanted to, really I did.   In fact, the initial version of the game was produced with Visual Basic 4 for Windows 95, and it worked well. The problem was that the file sizes were huge. The runtime library was twice as large as VB2's, and with all the support DLLs and OCXs, the package size would easily have reached 1.5 meg.   I don't know about you, but I prefer small and fast to slow and fat any day.   And honestly, there's just not that much that VB4/Win95 brings to the party for card games, or at least for this particular game. So, for the time being at least, Poker Squares is a 16-bit program.   If you really want to see a 32-bit version, let me know and I'll give it some consideration ...

Credits

- Poker Squares was designed, written, and tested by Randy Rasa.
- Poker Squares was written with Microsoft Visual Basic for Windows, version 2.0.
- This help file was written using RTFGEN, a freeware utility from Dave Baldwin (CompuServe ID 76327,53).
- The card images are from Chris Howard's Book, "Programming Games for Beginners", ISBN 0-672-30313-2.
- The MIDI music is a tune called "Vanessa Mary", composed in 1971 by Han de Bruijn.

Legalese

Poker Squares is shareware!   It is not freeware.   It is not public domain.

As shareware, you can play it, copy it, and give it away as you wish.   In fact, you are encouraged to distribute the program to friends, family, and strangers alike.   This includes distribution via the internet, world wide web, electronic bulletin board systems (BBS's), user's groups, CD-ROMs, and disk-distribution services. All that I ask is that the package remains unaltered and complete. Refer to the **VENDINFO.DIZ** file for detailed distribution information.

The registered version may not be distributed.

Standard Limited Warranty

This software is sold "as is", without any warranty as to performance or any other warranties whether expressed or implied.   Because of the vast number of possible hardware and software environments in which this software may be used, no warranty of fitness for a particular purpose is offered.   The user assumes the entire risk of using this program.   Any liability of the author will be limited to product replacement or the refund of the registration fee.

http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/freeware.html

How To Play Poker Squares

Getting Started

The game is begun by taking a pack of 52 cards, shuffling it, and dealing the first twenty-five cards face-up into a pile to become the stock.   The remainder of the cards are not used until the next hand.

Object

The object of the game is to move cards, one at a time, from the stock and place them into a 5 x 5 grid so that each of the rows, columns, and diagonals   forms the best possible poker hand.

Moving Cards

To move a card from the stock to a position on the grid, simply click on one of the empty positions.   Once a card has been placed, it cannot be moved.

Scoring

You earn points for each type of poker hand you can create.   The number of points awarded per hand is based on one of two methods -- either American or English systems. Refer to the scoring   section for details.

Poker Squares Scoring Options

Poker Squares offers two ways of scoring.   The American system is based on the odds of forming the hands in regular poker, while the English system is based on the likelihood of forming the hands in Poker Squares.

The scoring for each hand is:

Hand	American	English
Royal Flush	100	30
Straight Flush	75	30
Four Of A Kind	50	16
Full House	25	10
Flush	20	5
Straight	15	12
Three Of A Kind	10	6
Two Pairs	5	3
One Pair	2	1

Poker Squares keeps <u>statistics</u> for each hand using both scoring methods, so you can switch between them at any time.   You can select the scoring method in the <u>preferences</u> dialog.

Poker Squares Statistics

Statistics

Poker Squares keeps track of a number of game statistics, including the number of games played, average score (American and English scoring),   and best and worst scores.   These stats can provide you with feedback as to how well you are playing, and give you an incentive for improvement. If you're the kind of person who just wants to play, and doesn't care about "the numbers" ... well, just ignore them.   Statistics are entirely optional.

Clearing The Statistics

The statistics can be cleared by clicking on the "Clear Stats" button in the statistics dialog.   If you answer "yes" to the "Are you sure?" question, all statistics will be reset.

Improving Your Scores

For hints on improving your scores, refer to the <u>strategy</u> section.

Poker Squares Strategy

Poker Squares requires a fair degree of skill to get consistently good scores, though even the best moves can be ruined by a stretch of bad luck.

A typical strategy is to try for flushes on each of the first four rows, and full houses, fours of a kind, or straights on the columns. The last row is often used as a dumping place for cards that don't fit elsewhere.   This approach often yields several flushes without hurting your chances for higher-scoring hands.

Straights are the most difficult hands to create, because they require you to give up a chance for safer hands, such as pairs and threes of a kind. You'll often get the first three cards of a potential straight, then be tempted to give it up for a quick payoff.   But if you hold firm, your faith will be rewarded at least some of the time.

Poker Squares Sound

Poker Squares has the ability to play various sounds in response to your actions.   This requires Windows 3.1 or later (or Windows 3.0 with the multimedia extensions) and a Windows-compatible sound board.

Sound Effects

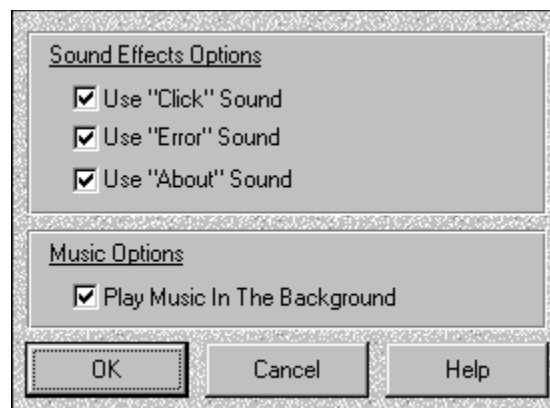Poker Squares produces the following sound effects:
- **About** - This sound is produced when the "About" box is displayed.
- **Click** - This sound is produced when you move a card   from the stock to one of the empty positions on the grid.
- **Error** - This sound is produced when you try to move a card   from the stock to a position that already contains a card.

Music

Poker Squares has the ability to play background music using the PSQ.MID file.   If you want to play a different song, simply copy the   MIDI file into the Poker Squares directory, and name it PSQ.MID.

Sound Options

Select "Sound ..." from the "Options" menu to bring up the   following dialog ...

Click on the picture for help on each control ...

Use this check box to enable or disable the "about" sound.

Use this check box to enable or disable the "click" sound.

Use this check box to enable or disable the "error" sound.

Use this check box to enable or disable the MIDI music.

Click this button to accept the changes you made, save them to the initialization file, and return to the game.

Click this button to return to the game, abandoning any changes you may have made.

Click this button to bring up this help topic ...

Poker Squares Preferences

Poker Squares offers several configurable options from which to choose. Your selections will be saved in PSQ.INI, and recalled each time the program is run.

Click on the picture for help on each control ...

Select the scoring method you wish to use.   This may be changed at any time without adversely effecting a game in progress.   For more info on the different scoring modes, refer to the scoring topic ...

If this box is checked, then a dialog box will pop up if you make an error, and explain to you what went wrong.

Check this box to determine whether or not to use "textured" dialog boxes.   Uncheck this if the textures do not look right on your screen, or if you find the effect objectionable.

Click this button to accept the changes you made, save them to the initialization file, and return to the game.

Click this button to return to the game, abandoning any changes you may have made.

Click this button to bring up this help topic ...

How To Contact The Author

Your comments, criticisms, suggestions (and of course, registrations) are always welcome. If you think of something that would make the game better, I'd like to hear it!

This program has been thoroughly tested and debugged, but with the wide range of hardware and software that Windows supports, problems are always possible. If you're having any difficulties with this game, please let me know about it, and I'll do my very best to help. Please describe the problem in as much detail as you can, and include information about your computer's configuration.

The latest version of this game, as well as the author's other shareware offerings, are available from:

World Wide Web

   http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw.html

Support BBS

   FoxFire BBS: 913-722-6577 or 913-722-3321

Internet E-Mail

   rrasa@sky.net

Snail Mail

   Randy Rasa
   18215 Troost
   Olathe, KS 66062-9208

If the addresses above are no longer in service, your best bet is to do an Internet search using one of the search engines.   Search for "randy rasa", and I'll be there somewhere ...

Phone support is not available at this time.

Shareware By Randy Rasa

If you enjoy Poker Squares, these are sure to tickle your fancy as well. At the time of this writing, my other games include:

Four Seasons
A solitaire card game for Windows, also known as "Corner Card" and "Vanishing Cross". This is a very full-featured game, with multimedia sound, undo, a high-score list, and challenge scoring.
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_fs.html.

Solitaire Suite
This is a collection of **seven** classic solitaires, including Calculation, Concentration, Idiot's Delight, Midnight Oil, Monte Carlo, Osmosis, and Royal Cotillion.   Feature-packed and easy to play, this is a very popular collection. Requires EGA or VGA and a mouse.
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_ss.html.

Simple Pleasures
This is a collection of **eight** new solitaires, all in a smooth and elegant program.   All of the best features of Solitaire Suite, plus a few more.   A new favorite!   Requires EGA or VGA and a mouse.
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_sp.html.

Pyramid Deluxe
This is a SuperVGA version of the classic solitaire card game, featuring 640x480x256 graphics, hint mode, undo, demo mode, and full scoring statistics for up to ten players. Requires 386, SuperVGA and a mouse.
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_pd.html.

FoxFire 13 for DOS
This is a new, original solitaire conceived by Todd Svec, and written by Randy Rasa.   It is one of the first DOS solitaires to feature SoundBlaster sound, and offers all the features you've come to expect from my games, including multi-player support, undo, and color configurability.   Requires EGA or VGA and a mouse.
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_ff.html.

FoxFire 13 for Windows
This is a Windows version of FoxFire 13 for DOS, and shares the original's great gameplay, and offers excellent sound support to complement a full range of features. Addictive!
Get it at ... http://www.sky.net/~rrasa/sw_ff.html.

More great games are in the works!

How To Register Poker Squares

Registration Requirement

Poker Squares is shareware.   You may freely evaluate it for a reasonable period (30 days).   If you continue to use it beyond the evaluation period, you need to register it.

Registration Benefits

When you register you will receive a registration code good for all future updates of Poker Squares.   This code will allow you to convert current and future shareware versions to registered versions, getting rid of the opening reminder screen in the process.

Unlike some commercial apps, you are not stuck in an endless cycle of expensive upgrades.   With Poker Squares, you register once, and that's it. What this essentially means is: **Free Updates!**

You'll also get special discount pricing on other games   I've written.   Basically, if you register Poker Squares for the full   price ($10.00), you'll get a $5.00 discount on each of my other games.   This amounts to a savings of 33-50% over the list price.   If you order all the games, you'll save twenty bucks -- the equivalent of   getting two games free!

Also, if you provide me with your Internet e-mail address, you'll receive   notification of updated versions and new releases.

Finally, you'll receive the peace of mind of knowing that you've done the right thing, you'll be supporting the shareware process that made this game possible, and you'll encourage me to write more games in the future.

Printing The Registration Form

Click on the "Print Registration Form" button in the About dialog to bring up an on-screen form which you can fill out, then either:

- **Print** to the currently-selected printer.
- **Save** to a text file, which can then be e-mailed.
- **Copy** to the Windows clipboard, to be pasted into another application

Be sure to fill out the form completely and accurately.   If you're mailing or faxing the form, and paying by credit card, please sign on the "Signature" line.

Remember, shareware is user-supported software.   If you use it, please register. Your support is appreciated!

Poker Squares "About" Box

This dialog box is displayed each time you run the program (in the shareware version) or if you select the "Help-About ..." menu item. Once you have registered, received your code, and entered it, this box will no longer be displayed automatically each time you run the program.

You can click on the Register ... button to enter your registration code, or to print a registration form.

Click this button to exit the about box.

Click this button to enter the   Registration Dialog ….

Click this button to print a registration form.

Poker Squares Registration Form

Name:			Print
Address:			Save As Text File
City / State / ZIP:			Copy To Clipboard
Country:	○ USA ○ Canada ● Other:		Cancel
E-Mail Address:			Help

Which Programs Would You Like To Register?

☑ Poker Squares ($10.00)
☐ Four Seasons ($10.00)
☐ Solitaire Suite ($15.00)
☐ Simple Pleasures ($15.00)
☐ Pyramid Deluxe ($15.00)

☑ Send the latest version on disk ($2.00)

Registration Fees:	$10.00
Diskette:	$2.00
Shipping & Handling:	$5.00
Sub-Total:	$17.00
Mult-Registration Discount:	$0.00
Total Payment:	$17.00

Method Of Payment: ○ Cash   ● Check   ○ Money Order   ○ Credit Card
Card Type: ○ VISA   ○ Mastercard   ○ Discover

Account Number:	
Expiration Date:	
Exact Name On Card:	

Click on the picture for help on each area of the screen ...

Once you've filled in the on-screen registration form, print it out and send it in!

There are three ways to get the form to me:

1. Send it to: Randy Rasa, 18215 Troost, Olathe, KS 66062-9208.
2. Fax it to: 816-746-9991 -- credit card orders only!
3. E-mail it to "rasa.software@dden.com" or "rrasa@sky.net" -- credit card orders only!.

If you e-mail your registration, you'll get the registration code in a day or so --   otherwise it will ship within two weeks of receipt of order.

Click this button to print the registration form to the currently-selected printer. If any information is missing, you'll be prompted to enter it.

Click this button to save the registration form to a file called PSQ_FRM.TXT in the Poker Squares directory. If any information is missing, you'll be prompted to enter it.

Click this button to copy the registration form to the Windows clipboard. From there you can paste it into another application for printing. If any information is missing, you'll be prompted to enter it.

Click this button to exit the registration form window.

Click this button to bring up this help topic …

Enter your name and address here.   Be sure to enter your complete postal address.

Select your country here.   Shipping and handling is free to the US and Canada, $5.00 elsewhere.

If you have an Internet e-mail address, enter it here.   If you do so, I'll automatically keep you informed of program updates and new releases.

Select the programs you want to register.   Note that every program after the first garners you a $5.00 discount.   Register all five, and you'll save twenty bucks!

Select this if you want me to send you the latest version of Poker Squares to you on disk. If you have access to the Internet, there is no need for a disk, as the latest version is always available on my web site.   A disk is $2.00 extra, to cover the cost of the media and extra postage.

This area shows you an up-to-date total, including each program you're registering, diskette, shipping, and whatever discount you've earned by registering multiple programs at once.

Select the method you prefer to pay for Poker Squares.   Cash must be in US dollars.
Checks must be in US funds and drawn on a US bank.   Credit cards may be Mastercard,
VISA, or Discover.   If you choose to pay by credit card, please complete the information at
the bottom of the form, and sign the registration form after you print it out.

Poker Squares Revision History

This program is an ongoing development.   I will issue new versions as necessary, to add or improve features, correct problems, address user concerns, or add requested   features. Once the program is mature, I will generally release updates every six months   or so.

v1.00 12/15/88

- Original DOS text-mode version.

v1.20 04/22/89

- Released to public as shareware.

v2.00 05/17/96

- Released Windows version.

Poker Squares Registration Dialog

Here's where you enter the registration code you will receive as a registered user of Poker Squares.   Once you enter the correct code, you need never see the shareware reminder screen again.

Note: In the registered version, the "Register ..." menu item will be changed to "Un-Register", which will allow you to convert the game back into an un-registered version, for easy copying to friends ...

The Future Of Poker Squares

Here are some ideas I have in mind for future versions of Poker Squares:

- Support for multiple players.
- Top-ten score list.
- More scoring methods (I'm thinking of a "challenge" mode, where higher-value cards are worth more.   For example, three kings would be worth more than three fours).
- Support for a "small straight" hand.
- Add an easy way to play multiple music files.
- Add extra sound files.
- Session stats.
- Undo.
- Selectable background color and/or wallpaper.

None of these are carved in stone, of course, so if you have an idea that you think will make the game better, please let me know!

The Structure of PSQ.INI

The file PSQ.INI is used to save information about the program, so that it can be recalled the next time the program is run.   This file is stored in the same directory as the rest of the Poker Squares files, and may be deleted if you want to start "fresh".

Although it is not recommeded that you edit the contents of this file, here is its structure, in case you are adventurous:

    [Startup]
    Width = width of Poker Squares window, in twips
    Height = height of Poker Squares window, in twips
    Left = position of left edge Poker Squares window, in twips
    Top = position of top edge Poker Squares window, in twips

    [Options]
    Textures = should "textured" dialogs be used (0 = no, -1 = yes)
    Scoring Method = scoring system to use (1 = American, 2 = English)
    Display Errors = display error message on mistakes? (0 = no, -1 = yes)
    'About' Sound = play "about" sound? (0 = no, -1 = yes)
    'Click' Sound = play "click" sound? (0 = no, -1 = yes)
    'Error' Sound = play "error" sound? (0 = no, -1 = yes)
    Music = play background music? (0 = no, -1 = yes)

    [HandsWindow]
    Enabled = should the "hand values" window be displayed? (0 = no, -1 = yes)
    Left = position of left edge "hand values" window, in twips
    Top = position of top edge "hand values" window, in twips

    [Statistics]
    GamesPlayed = total number of games played
    TotalScoreA = total "American" score
    BestScoreA = best "American" score
    WorstScoreA = worst "American" score
    TotalScoreE = total "English" score
    BestScoreE = best "English" score
    WorstScoreE = worst "English" score

Of course, if you play with the values in the [Statistics] section, that means you're a cheater. And cheaters never win.   You know that, don't you???

End-Of-Hand Dialog

This dialog box appears automatically at the end of a hand, and allows you to either begin another game, exit the program, or view the statistics.   Pressing 'Esc' will deal another hand.

Are You Sure You Want To Abandon This Hand?

If you answer "yes", then the current hand will be abandoned (and count against you in the statistics) and the game will end.   If you answer "no", the current hand will continue.

Oops!

This dialog is displayed if you try to make an illegal move.   If you're unsure of how to play the game, refer to the how to play section …

Exit

Select the "Exit" item from the "Game" menu to exit the program.   You may also press Alt-F4, Ctrl-X,   double-click the control box, or click the "close window" button (in Windows 95). If a hand is in progress, you'll first be asked if you want to abandon the current hand.

Hand Values Window

This window shows you the value of each poker hand that you may create, using the current scoring mode. This window will stay on to pf the main Poker Squares Window.   To get rid of it, press F3 or select the "Hand Values" item on the "Options" menu.

New Hand

The "new Hand" menu item is used to deal a new hand.   If a hand is in progress, you'll first be   asked if you want to abandon the current hand.