

# PACRU

Pacru™

A strategy game for 2,3 or 4 players

[www.pacru.co.uk](http://www.pacru.co.uk)

Introduction:

This guide explains how to **Pacru**, a game of strategy based only on the board, tiles and pieces: no dice are involved.

If you don't already know a Pacru player, one of the easiest ways to learn how to play any of the games is at **[www.pacru.co.uk](http://www.pacru.co.uk)**. The site allows anyone with Internet access to learn and play for free – and you can download the software and learn off-line if you wish.

This edition of the Pacru Guide comes with the software version of the game, but the rules are just the same for the real board. (There are two other games, Lilacru and Divacru, that you can play on a real board.)

2,3 or 4 players

Pacru can be played with 2, 3 or 4 players.

**Starting The Game {R1}**

**Choosing Colours**

**Setting up the board for the opening position**

Each player is represented by one colour: and they use the pieces and tiles of that colour.

The order of play between the different colours is a matter of choice. You can decide which player is using which colour, and the order of play, by any reasonable means. The illustrations are from a game where the order of play had been Red, Black, Yellow, Blue.

Make sure the board has only the neutral (white and grey) tiles on it arranged in diagonal lines across the board. If there are three or four players in the game, then each player has three pieces to start: for the two player game each has four. See picture opposite.

### **Counting Tiles**

With two players make sure you have 42 tiles in front of you and visible to the other player. If there are three players then you each have 28 tiles, with four players 24 tiles. Put aside remaining tiles.

### **Taking Turns {R2}**

Take it in turns to move one piece at a time. As an alternative you can **reorient** one piece (explained later). You cannot pass on a turn.

### **Moving {R3}**

You move a piece in one of three directions. Move it straight ahead, or forwards at a 45 degree angle to the direction the piece was pointing. After a move, leave the piece pointing in the direction you've moved it. This is the only way that pieces move from tile to tile.

## Six Special Actions

### Borderland Change {R4}

Although there is only one kind of piece in **Pacru**, and it can only move in three directions, you have six special actions the piece can perform when it moves. The first special action is the **borderland change**.

When you move a piece across one or more borders, and set your piece down in a different **borderland** (a **bordercrossing**) then you replace one of the neutral tiles in this destination **borderland** with a tile of your colour.

**Power of  
Movement {R5}**

Each of your pieces has a **power of movement** depending on the **borderland** in which it starts its move. Count the tiles of your colour in the **borderland** and that number is the **power of movement** of the piece. If there are no tiles, the **power of movement** is one. You can move that particular piece any number of tiles between one and its **power of movement**.

**Long Move {R6}**

When you move your piece more than one tile (a **long move**), you cannot change direction in the middle of the move. You must move in a straight line (directly ahead, or ahead at 45 degrees). At the end of the move leave the piece pointing in the direction you have moved it.

**What is forbidden  
in Pacru {R7}**

Except for a **connection jump**

- *You may not jump over any piece*

Except for a **pincer**

- *you may not move onto a tile occupied by a piece*
- *you may not move onto a tile that is another player's colour*
- *you may not change a tile that is occupied by a piece*

## Connection Change {R8}

When you make a **long move** from one tile of your colour to another tile of your colour (a **connection**), and you are not jumping any pieces, you must change all the intervening tiles to your colour. If this **connection** is also a **border crossing** then you must choose either to gain tiles from the **connection change** or from the results of the **border crossing**: you cannot claim both benefits.



**Connection Jump  
{R9}**

When you move from one tile of your colour to another tile of your colour, you are allowed to jump any intervening pieces. However when you make a **connection jump**, you do not make a **connection change** and so no intervening tiles are changed.

**Borderland  
Transformation  
{R10}**

When you set your piece down having crossed a **border**, if there are no neutral tiles (whether occupied by a piece or not) left in the destination **borderland**, then you change any tile within the **borderland** to your own colour.

## **Pincer {R11}**

When a piece has a power of movement such that it could reach a tile occupied by an opposition piece, and there are no intervening pieces, then it is said to be **attacking** that piece.

You can make a **pincer** when two or more of your pieces are already **attacking** an opponent's piece at the start of your turn. In the **pincer** you remove the opposing piece from the board, change the tile it was on to your colour, and move one of the **attacking** pieces onto the tile. The **pincer** can be done even when the opponent's piece is occupying a tile of their colour.

**Meeting {R12}**

When you move a piece so that you have two of your pieces both occupying tiles of your colour and directly facing each other on adjacent tiles you have achieved a **meeting**. As a result of the meeting you change any tile anywhere on the board to your own colour.

**One move involving more than one special action {R13}**

When you make a move involving any one of the six special actions, the move may also involve another at the same time (a **pincer** may also be a **borderland change**). You get the benefits of each action, except for moves which are both borderland crossings and connections where you have to choose between the tile benefit for the crossing and that of any connection change.

**Reorientation  
{R14}**

**Using Your Turn  
For Reorientation**

You can use your turn in a different way and instead of moving one piece, you can **reorient** one piece.

When you **reorient** a piece by 45 degrees, you must choose two of your own tiles and change them back to neutral. When you **reorient** by 90 degrees, you must choose four of your tiles to change back to neutral.

*You can only use a turn to **reorient** if you have one or more pieces you could move if you chose to: if none of your pieces can make a move from one tile to another you are out of the game.*

**LOSING THE  
GAME {R15}**

A player is out of the game if they lose their last remaining piece.

A player is out of the game if, on their turn, none of their remaining pieces can move from tile to tile (this is called a blocked turn). In this case all their pieces are removed from the board.

When a player is out the game, their tiles remain on the board.

**WINNING THE  
GAME {R16}**

You can win the game in any of these ways:

- you are the only player with piece(s) left on the board
- you reach the target number of tiles (depending on how many players *started* the game)
  - 2 players ... 42 tiles
  - 3 players ... 28 tiles
  - 4 players ... 24 tiles

## Pacru Rules FAQ

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- R16 WINNING THE GAME**

Rule numbers refer to the rules brochure, and the same rules can be found on the “brief rules” link on the opening page if you download the game.

**Key Questions:** where the answer should help clarify existing statements of the rules of how the game should be played (e.g. a question such as “Can you jump over more than one piece in a connection jump?” ... and yes you can).

**General Questions:** Any other questions.

### **R1: Starting the game**

**Key Questions:** None so far.

**General Questions:**

Q. Is there an advantage to going first?

A. There has not been sufficient research on this as yet but it is possible there is some small advantage. As soon as we have substantial evidence on this we will publish the conclusions on this site. In two-player tournaments it is best to play an equal number of games as the first or second player.

Q. Why isn't there a fixed order of play for the different colours?

A. Because there doesn't need to be. If you want to decide quickly just use this order of play: Black, Red, Yellow, Blue. Some players prefer to play with one favourite colour: and if the players can agree colours then it seems best to vary the order of play rather than for the player attached to the colour blue always to be the last to take their turn. The simplest thing is to play in the order black, red, (yellow, blue) and play several games with the person to go first changing each time.

Q. How do you decide who has which colour?

A. If a random method is required then anything the players agree will do: tossing a coin, putting pieces in a bag and picking them out with eyes closed, or deciding on the order of colour turns and then putting one piece of each colour in a clean mug and players picking them out with eyes closed.

Q. How can the starting position be easily remembered?

A. Try using a photo or diagram of the starting position, setting it up, then taking off the pieces. Repeat this using different colours till you remember. Explaining it in words is harder. As you sit facing one side of the board, the nearest three rows of the board to you (marked out by the first horizontal borderline you come to) will contain three of your pieces. All three are pointing into the board (with their backs against the outer edge of the board): one just inside the borderline and on the left edge of the board, one just inside the borderline and on the right edge of the board. One will be placed in the middle of the side in front of you. If you are playing the 2 player game then you each have a fourth piece, and this is pointing into the centre of the board, and is placed on the corner tile on the right at the opposite side of the board to you.



Q. Why are there two “neutral” colours?

A. Simply to pick out the diagonal lines and make the opening position of the tiles pleasant to look out.

Q. Which of the two “neutral” colours should be in the corners?

A. Whichever you think looks better.

Q. Does it matter where the players sit in relation to the board?

A. No. As long as players are near their own off-the-board tiles they could sit anywhere around the board even side by side.

## **R2 Taking turns**

**Key Questions:** None so far.

**General Questions:** None so far.

## **R3 Moving**

**Key Questions:**

Q. Can you move a piece across several borders in one move, if you have the necessary power of movement?

A. Yes. There are no special rules limiting the movement of pieces crossing borders: only the general rules about what is forbidden.

**General Questions:**

Q. Why does it matter that the tiles are counted out and visible to the other player?

A. This is a simple way to see how near winning each player is. When you place your last tile on the board, you have won.

Q. Can you explain the movement of pieces more? I don't understand the three directions a piece can move in.

A. Try any of these explanations:

1) If a piece is facing out the side of a tile, then it can move to a tile in the direction it is facing, or to the tile diagonally forwards to its left, or the tile diagonally forwards to its right. If a piece is facing out the corner of a tile, then it can move diagonally to the tile in the direction it is facing, or to the tile along the row forwards to its left, or the tile along the row forwards to its right.

2) Think of the piece as though it could move like a ship. It can go to, or through, the three adjacent tiles for which it needs to turn the least: straight ahead in the direction it is pointing, or slightly to the left or right.

Q. Can you explain the way that a piece ends up pointing at the end of a move?

A. Point the piece in the direction it would continue to travel if it hadn't stopped.

Q. I don't understand the difference between normal movement of a piece and a long move. Is there one?

A. A long move is simply the name given to movement that is further than from one tile to the next.

Q. If a piece is on a tile at the edge of the board, and facing out the side of that tile towards the edge of the board, can it move?

A No it can't. The player can, however, use their turn to re-orient the piece. Players need to be aware that if none of their pieces can actually move at the start of a their turn, then they are out of the game and all their pieces will be removed from the board.

#### **R4 Borderland change**

### **Key Questions:**

Q. If a piece ends its move on a neutral tile after a border crossing, can that tile itself be changed to the player's colour?

A. Yes it can.

Q. If a piece moves across several borders in one move, does the player get tiles in each borderland?

A. No. It is only in the borderland where the piece ends its move that the player changes a tile.

Q. Does a player have to take a tile when making a borderland crossing?

A. Generally yes. The only exception is when making a connection move at the same time, and decided to take tiles as part of a connection change instead of the borderland change. Tile changes are mandatory.

Q. If a piece ends its move in a different borderland and all neutral tiles in that borderland are occupied, what does the player gain?

A. If all neutral tiles are occupied, then there is no borderland change.

Q. If the only neutral tile is already occupied by a piece of a player's own colour, can the player change that tile when setting down a piece in the borderland?

A. No. As a general principle you cannot change an occupied (by any colour piece) tile. The only exception is the pincer.

Q. Given that general principle about not changing occupied tiles, how can it be acceptable for a player to land on a neutral tile in a new borderland, and then change that tile?

A. Think of the arrival and tile change as happening simultaneously.

### **General Questions:**

Q. If all the tiles in a borderland are coloured, what happens then with a borderland crossing?  
Is there no borderland change?

A. In this case the “borderland transformation” rule comes into play. You change any (unoccupied) tile in the arrival borderland to your colour.

## **R5 Power of movement**

### **Key Questions:**

Q. If a player has no tiles in a borderland then they can move one tile at a time. If they have one tile then does that mean they can cross over one tile at a time, that is to say move along two tiles?

A. No. When you have no tiles or one tile of your colour in the borderland you have a power of movement of one (tile) only. This means that a piece can only move to an adjacent tile and cannot cross over any tiles. You cannot make a long move.

Q. Do you have to move a piece to the full distance of its power of movement?

A. No. You can move the piece any number of tiles from just one up to the full power of movement.

Q. If I have a power of movement of three, can I move from the current tile to an adjacent one, and then use the rest of the power of movement to move in a different direction?

A. No. The whole of a long move must be executed in a straight line in one of the three specified directions. There is no changing of direction in the middle of a move.

### **General Questions:**

Q. If a player has three tiles in one borderland, and moves a piece from there across three tiles into another borderland, and then has only one tile in that destination borderland: what is the power of movement of that piece on the next turn?

A. The power of movement is always determined by the number of tiles the player has in the borderland that the piece is in when it starts its move. The power of movement the piece had for a previous move is irrelevant.

Q. If I have three pieces in one borderland, do they each have a power of movement of three?

A. No. The power of movement does not depend on the number of pieces in a borderland, only on the number of tiles of your colour.

## **R6 What is forbidden in Pacru**

### **Key Questions:**

Q. You cannot move onto a tile that is another player's colour, but can you move across such tiles in the course of a move?

A. Yes you can. What you cannot do is set your piece down at the end of its move on a tile that is another player's colour.

### **General Questions:**

Q. If you cannot move onto a tile occupied by another piece, can you capture other pieces?

A. You can only remove another player's piece from the board by using the pincer. A player can also lose all their pieces at once if they cannot move any piece at the start of their turn (they are blocked).

## **R8 Connection change**

### **Key Questions:**

Q. Is a connection limited in length to the first tile of your own colour that you come to as you are moving?

A. No. A connection can involve moving over intervening tiles that are either your own colour, neutral or opposition colours or a combination of all of these. Any intervening tiles that are neutral or opposition colours get changed to your colour..

Q. If I make a move that starts on a tile of my own colour, goes over some other tiles, then goes over a tile of my own colour, and finally finishes on a neutral tile, can I make a connection change for the tiles between the starting tile and the first tile of my own colour?

A. No. For a move to be a connection, the entire move must start and finish on your colour.

### **General Questions:**

Q. If I make a connection but all the intervening tiles are already my own colour, what do I gain?

A. You would not gain any tiles from the connection itself. The only difference between this and any other long move would be that because it is a connection, you would be able to jump any pieces that were on the intervening tiles (connection jump)

## **R9 Connection jump**

### **Key Questions:**

Q. How many pieces can you jump in one move?

A. There is no limit.. If you have a power of movement of eight, then you could jump over seven pieces that were on intervening tiles.

### **General Questions:**

Q. What advantage does a connection jump give?

A. If there is an intervening piece between your piece and a tile you wish to move it to, then there is no other way to get directly to that tile except by a connection jump. If the piece cannot make a connection jump to that tile because the move is not between two tiles of its own colour, then the piece cannot move directly to that tile until the other piece has moved off the intervening tile.

### **P10 (borderland transformation)**

#### General Questions:

Q. I have set my piece down in a different borderland and there are no unoccupied neutral tiles? Can I change one of the opposition tiles to my own colour?

A. No. You can only do this if there are no neutral tiles at all in the borderland: if the only neutral tiles in the borderland are already occupied then you cannot change any of the tiles as part of the borderland crossing.

Q. If my opponent has turned all the tiles in a borderland to their colour, then can I use a borderland transformation to change one of the tiles to my own colour?

A. No you cannot. However the tiles could be changed by a connection change that went right over the borderland, or you could choose to change one of the tiles in the area if you made a meeting change.

## **P11 Pincer**

### **Key Questions:**

Q. If the piece that I use to make the pincer has made a borderland crossing, do I gain a tile for that, as well as the taking the tile that the pincer piece was on?

A. Subject to the normal rules about borderland crossings, yes.

Q. Can I only pincer a piece if my attacking pieces are on adjacent tiles to the pincer piece?

A. No. A piece can be attacked from any distance: all that matters is that the attacking piece could reach the tile where the piece being attacked is sitting.

### **General Questions:**

Q. Can a piece jump over another to take an opposition piece in an pincer?

A. No. It is not possible to attack another piece if there is another piece in the way. This follows from the fact that an attacking piece would have to get to the piece being attacked by using a connection jump, since this is the only way that a piece can be jumped. However a connection jump could never be valid because that would mean the piece being attacked would be standing on an opposition colour tile, and that can never happen.

Q. My opponent has just moved so that they have two pieces attacking one of mine. How can I protect it?

A. You have a number of options:

If you are already attacking one of the opponent's pieces with two or more of your own, then you can pincer one of the attacking pieces.

You can move your piece out the way so that it is on a tile which is not being attacked by two or more pieces belonging to an opponent



You can put a piece of yours between one of the attacking pieces and the piece of yours that is being attacked.

You may be able to make a move which reduces the power of movement of one of the attacking pieces so that it can no longer reach the piece of yours under attack (e.g. by a connection change or borderland transformation or meeting).

## **R12 Meeting**

### **Key Questions:**

Q. Last turn I reoriented one of my pieces. This turn I have moved it so that it directly faces another of my pieces and both of them are on my own colour tiles. Is this a meeting?

A. Yes it is. What you cannot do is reorient a piece so that it directly faces another and then claim this as a meeting. On the turn when you make a meeting it must have been done by moving one of the pieces involved.

Q. I have moved one of my pieces across a border and made a borderland change to the tile the piece has landed on. This means that my piece is now directly facing another of my pieces which was already on an adjacent tile of my colour. Is this a meeting?

A. Yes it is.

Q. I have just made a move involving a pincer and changed the tile the pincering piece landed on to my colour. This means that my piece is now directly facing another of my pieces which was already on an adjacent tile of my colour. Is this a meeting?

A. Yes it is.

### **General Questions:**

Q. I have just made a meeting. My opponent has a borderland that is completely their colour, can I choose to change one of the tiles in this borderland to my colour?

A. Yes you can (subject to the general rule that the tile changed must be unoccupied).

### **R13 One move involving more than one special action**

#### **Key Questions:**

Q. I have made a move which involved a borderland crossing and a connection. Can I get the benefits of both actions/

A. No. This is the only case where you have to choose which benefit you wish to get.

Q. I have made a move which involved a borderland crossing, a pincer, and a meeting. Do I get the associated benefits from each of these actions?

A. Yes.

### **R14 Reorientation**

#### **Key Questions:**

Q. I have just one piece left – am I allowed to reorient it?

A. Provided that on the turn when you reorient it you could move it instead, then yes.

Q. Can I choose to reorient over 90 degrees in one turn?

A. No. In one turn you can only reorient either 45 or 90 degrees.

Q. I reoriented a piece 90 degrees last turn. Can I reorient the same piece again this turn?

A. Yes.

#### **General Questions:**

Q. I have two pieces left. One cannot move, and the other can make just one move but would then not be able to move further. Am I allowed to reorient the piece that cannot move at the moment?

A. Yes. As long as you have at least one piece that could move this turn then you can use your turn to reorient any other piece. It does not matter that by moving that piece it would itself become stuck.

### **R15 Losing the game**

**Key Questions:** none so far.

#### **General Questions:**

Q. I have just removed the last piece of one of my opponents using a pincer. Do I get to take all the tiles of their colour too?

A. No. The tiles remain on the board until they are removed in one of the usual ways (e.g. by a connection change).

Q. I have made a move this turn, but my pieces are now in a position where none of them could move. Does this mean I am blocked and have lost the game?

A. You need to wait till your next turn to decide this. It is possible that another player may do something on their turn which means all your pieces cannot move (they might reorient a piece and turn a tile to neutral which you could move a piece onto).

### **R16 Winning the game:**

#### **Key Questions:**

Q. On my turn in a two-player game I have achieved 42 tiles on the board, but I took the first turn in the game. Is the other player entitled to make one more turn and see if they reduce my tiles below 42?

A. No. The game ends at the end of the turn of the player who has achieved 42 tiles, or more, on the board.

Q. Can a player win if the other players in the game resign?

A. Yes.

**General Questions:**

Q. It is my turn in a two-player game and I am just about to make a connection change. I currently have 41 tiles of my colour on the board. The connection change involves changing 7 tiles to my colour, but I only have 3 coloured tiles left. Can I still make the move?

A. Yes. What matters is that during your turn you would have achieved 42 tiles of your colour on the board: if you end up entitled to have 48 tiles placed on the board that is fine, and if you cannot place 48 tiles because you do not physically have 48 tiles of your colour then that is irrelevant.

Q. How does a player resign in Pacru?

A. By removing all their remaining pieces from the board.