Quadrapassel for CoCo

A complete player's manual: every screen, keyboard and joystick controls, Modern and Classic scoring, and high scores for every skill level.



Quadrapassel for CoCo

Download game disk

Source code

Brian K. Holman

Player's manual · Game build 05 · November 2026

© Brian K. Holman 2026

Contents

Quadrapassel for CoCo . . . 3
- Welcome to the CoCo edition . . . 3
- Before you play . . . 3
- Starting the game . . . 4
- Reading the play screen . . . 5
- Keyboard controls . . . 7
- Joystick controls . . . 8
- Pause, actions, and confirmations . . . 10
- Every setting explained . . . 13
- Modern and Classic scoring . . . 16
- High scores and skill categories . . . 18
- Game over and starting again . . . 23
- Saving, backups, and disk messages . . . 23
- Troubleshooting and common questions . . . 24
- Screen directory . . . 25
- Copyright, license, and credits . . . 25

Quadrapassel for CoCo

Welcome to the CoCo edition

Build a careful stack, leave room for the next piece, and turn a falling-block puzzle into a high-score chase. **Quadrapassel for CoCo** brings a familiar game to the Color Computer 3 with seven distinct piece colors, keyboard and analog joystick controls, two scoring systems, and high scores saved to disk.

This player's manual covers **game disk build 05**, `QUADPSL05.DSK`, for a **Color Computer 3 with 128 KB or more**. The screenshots show the actual CoCo game and its menus.

© Brian K. Holman 2026

Get the game and source

- **Download the game disk – QUADPSL05.DSK**. Keep the original and play from a writable copy so the game can save your settings and records.
- **Browse the source code**. The repository contains the GPL-licensed CoCo game, documentation, and component acknowledgements.

A clean-room CoCo implementation

The CoCo game was written anew in C from a behavioral specification, with the goal of being functionally similar to Quadrapassel for Linux and Mac. No Linux or Mac application source code is incorporated into the CoCo game. The Quadrapassel name was deliberately retained for branding continuity, and this implementation uses the GNU GPL, like the reference game.

The rules and reference piece/scoring data preserve their GPL provenance and original contributor acknowledgements. The CoCo edition adapts the controls, display, and storage for the Color Computer while retaining the familiar falling-block experience. Font and library contributions are acknowledged in Copyright, license, and credits.

How to use this manual

For a first game, follow Starting the game, then Reading the play screen. Keep Keyboard controls or Joystick controls nearby. Read Modern and Classic scoring before comparing records, and High scores and skill categories before changing scoring rules or erasing a board.

The names in this manual match the game's menus. Key-shaped labels represent keyboard keys. A "tap" means press and release. "Hold" means keep the control pressed until the action has happened. Let a new screen finish drawing before making its next selection, and let disk operations finish before resetting or changing disks.

Before you play

Machine and media

Play on a **Color Computer 3 with 128 KB or more, Disk BASIC, and a writable game disk**. Use a compatible disk drive or disk-image setup that lets the game read its resources and save your records. The game has been successfully played on a physical 512 KB CoCo 3 and verified in VCC Plus with 128 KB.

The game uses a **320 × 192, 16-color display**. Seven colors identify the pieces; the remaining palette entries support text, background, outlines, and the landing shadow. The same presentation is used on 128 KB and larger CoCo 3 systems.

You can play with the keyboard, a standard analog joystick in either CoCo port, or a combination. **Right** is the default joystick port. One fire button is enough for all essential actions. A second button adds a convenient hard drop. In an emulator, assign the host controller to the intended CoCo port; a USB controller's physical connector is not itself a CoCo joystick-port selection.

Protect your records

Keep an untouched original of the game disk and play from a writable copy. On real media, keep a separate disk backup. In an emulator, copy the complete disk image when you want a backup of both the game and its scores. Back up after the game has finished saving, not during a write.

Every new numbered delivery starts with default preferences and empty high scores. Your previous disk retains its own records; a new build does not automatically import them. Do not overwrite your old score disk just because a newer numbered game disk exists.

Starting the game

1. Insert or mount a writable copy of `QUADPSL05.DSK` in drive 0.
2. From Disk BASIC, enter `DOS` and press `Enter`.
3. Wait for loading and the "READING SCORES" stage to finish.
4. At the title, choose **START** and press `Enter`, `Space`, or tap the primary fire button.

The DOS launcher prepares memory and loads the game. If you need the separately documented manual loading path, use these commands from Disk BASIC:

```
PCLEAR1
LOADM"QUAD.BIN"
EXEC
```

When changing game disks, return to Disk BASIC and load the chosen disk with `DOS`. Mounting a different disk leaves the previous program in memory until you load again. In an emulator, use its normal restart and unsaved-media safeguards.

The title screen



Figure 1: The real title screen, with Start, Settings, Controls, Scores, Credits, and Quit

The title screen is the main navigation point:

Choice	What it does
START	Begins a new game using the current next-game settings.
SETTINGS	Opens difficulty, scoring, appearance, sound, seed, joystick, and timing options.
CONTROLS	Shows keyboard/joystick help and sampled joystick readings.
SCORES	Opens the high-score browser for the current difficulty and Normal/Difficult Pieces choice.
CREDITS	Shows the game and component acknowledgements.
QUIT	Leaves the program and returns to BASIC.

Use `↑` / `↓` or the joystick to move the pointer. `Enter` and `Space` select in menus; the primary fire button selects when released. Release the control before making another choice. `BREAK` backs out of most secondary screens. In VCC Plus, the Mac `Esc` key acts as the CoCo BREAK key while guest input has focus.

Reading the play screen



Figure 2: Gameplay showing the complete board, score, level, lines, next piece, and scoring mode

The board has **10 columns and 20 visible rows**. The falling piece is active; the blocks already placed on the board are settled. Fill an entire horizontal row to clear it. Rows above a clear fall together, and empty rows appear at the top. Keep the stack below the spawning area.

Area	Meaning
SCORE	Points earned under this game's fixed scoring rule. Moving and dropping alone do not award points.
LEVEL	The current speed/scoring multiplier. It starts from difficulty and normally rises every ten cleared lines.
LINES	Total rows cleared in this game, not the number of pieces placed.
NEXT	The one-piece preview. Use it to plan a space before the current piece locks.
HOLD	The type reserved for a later swap. It is empty at the start.
MODERN / CLASSIC	The rule fixed when this game began. This is the game's rule, even if the next-game preference is changed while paused.
P ACTIONS	A reminder that P opens the pause/actions screen.

Seven pieces

Each piece contains four squares. The shapes are L, J, T, S, Z, I, and O. Their CoCo colors are respectively red, green, blue, light gray, yellow, purple, and orange. The orange/yellow and other palette colors can look different on RGB, composite, real monitors, and emulator display settings. Learn the shapes as well as the colors.

The game has four rotation states for each type. Some shapes are symmetric: an O remains square, while an I, S, or Z repeats its visible shape after two turns. Seeing only two distinct pictures for one of those types is normal; a T, L, or J offers four visibly different orientations.

Movement, rotation, and locking

A sideways press moves one column immediately. If held, movement repeats after about 200 ms, then about every 40 ms. If opposite directions are held together, the first held direction stays in control until released.

Rotation tries the requested orientation, with small horizontal adjustments near a wall or stack. If none fits, the piece stays in its previous position. Settled blocks stay fixed while you position the falling piece. See Modern and Classic scoring for the awards earned by clearing rows.

Normal gravity moves the piece downward at the current level's pace. When a gravity step cannot move it down, the piece locks immediately. A hard drop goes directly to the lowest valid position and locks immediately; a soft drop increases the downward pace while held.

A game ends if the next piece cannot spawn, or if locking would leave occupied squares above the board. Keep the stack below the spawning area to stay in play.

Next, Hold, and landing shadow

Press H, or use **HOLD** in the actions menu, to reserve or exchange a piece. The first Hold stores the current type and brings in the preview. Later Holds swap the active and reserved types. A nonempty swap keeps the existing preview. A held piece returns in its starting orientation.

You can Hold **once per locked piece**. You must place the replacement before using Hold again. The actions menu labels the command **HOLD - UNAVAILABLE** when it has already been used or the game is over. Selecting an unavailable action does not consume another piece.

Landing Shadow is optional and starts Off. When enabled, it indicates where the current piece would land if hard-dropped. It is only a guide; moving or rotating changes the indicated landing position. It never represents already settled blocks.



Figure 3: Gameplay with a reserved piece and the landing shadow enabled

Keyboard controls

The keyboard stays usable when a joystick is selected. Use whichever method suits the moment; selecting a menu with the keyboard does not switch the joystick off.

Keys	During play
`←` / `→`, or `A` / `D`	Move left/right; hold to repeat.
`↓`, or `S`	Soft drop while held; release to restore normal gravity.
`↑`, or `W`	Rotate in the preferred direction, counterclockwise by default.
`Q`	Rotate counterclockwise, regardless of the preferred direction.
`E`	Rotate clockwise, regardless of the preferred direction.
`Space`	Hard drop and lock, once per press. Release before dropping another piece.
`H`	Hold or swap, once per locked piece.
`P`	Pause/open actions; press again to resume.
`BREAK`	Pause/open actions.

Keyboard in menus

Keys	Menu behavior
`↑` / `↓`	Choose a menu item.
`Enter` or `Space`	Select the current choice.
`←` / `→`	Adjust a highlighted setting; change category in Scores; choose a seed digit.
`BREAK`	Back/cancel. In Settings, Back retains and attempts to save current changes.
`P`	Resume from the paused actions menu; acts as a back/pause command elsewhere.

Initials-screen exception: use `Enter` or primary fire to select there. `Space` is not a selection key on that screen, and `P` enters a name letter rather than acting as Back. `BREAK` is the keyboard cancel/back control.

Use the arrow keys for menu navigation; the A/D/W/S aliases are primarily gameplay controls. In the seed editor, `↑` / `↓` change the selected hexadecimal digit. In the initials screen, letters enter the name; `←` / `→` cycle the selected letter, while `↑` / `↓` choose the item.

Using the keyboard in VCC Plus

Click the CoCo display, or use VCC Plus's **Focus CoCo Display** command, before typing game controls. Return focus to Mac controls when you want emulator menus. This distinction matters: a Mac shortcut and a CoCo keystroke are different inputs.

If VCC Plus is configured to emulate a joystick using keyboard keys, those reserved keys are delivered as joystick controls. For example, an Arrows + Z/X joystick mapping uses the arrows for the emulated stick and the assigned letters for its two buttons. Choose and understand that mapping rather than expecting the same reserved key to operate two independent input paths.

Joystick controls

A standard analog joystick in the **right port** is the default. Select Left if your joystick is plugged into the left port. Select Off to use keyboard-only input or to isolate a controller problem. The controller does not need a second fire button to reach Hold, Settings, New Game, or Quit.

Joystick input	During play
Left / right	Move sideways with repeat.
Down	Soft drop while held.
Up	Hard drop once; return to neutral to rearm.
Primary fire, short tap/release	Rotate once in the preferred direction. The rotation occurs on release.
Primary fire, held for about 400 ms	Open the actions menu without an additional release rotation.
Secondary fire, if available	Hard drop once on press, like `Space`; release before another drop.

Up on the joystick is hard drop; Up on the keyboard is rotation. This is an intentional difference. Do not treat the two Up controls as aliases.

One-button play

Tap fire briefly to rotate. To use Hold or another action, hold fire until the actions screen appears, release it, move the pointer with the stick, and tap fire to select. **HOLD** and **ROTATE OTHER WAY** perform their action and resume play; other choices open the corresponding menu.

Release fire after changing screens. The release guard prevents the same held press from selecting the next screen's first option accidentally. The two-button hard-drop feature is ignored in menus, so the primary button remains the menu selection control.

Centering and calibration

Let the stick return to its physical center before starting. If the piece drifts with the stick released, open Settings, leave the stick centered, choose **CALIBRATE NEUTRAL**, and select it. Calibration records the current center readings; it is explicit, not automatic during play. Do not hold the stick to one side while calibrating.

The game uses a center dead zone and hysteresis so small changes around neutral do not cause rapid direction changes. Up-drop is rearmed by returning the vertical axis to neutral. On diagonals, the dominant axis helps prevent a sideways gesture from accidentally triggering an Up hard drop.

In VCC Plus, configure the controller's host mapping as well as the game's port. Ensure the primary and secondary physical buttons are assigned to the emulator's Fire 1 and Fire 2. Secondary fire requires a controller with a second independent button; one-button controllers use joystick Up for hard drop.

Controls and readings screen

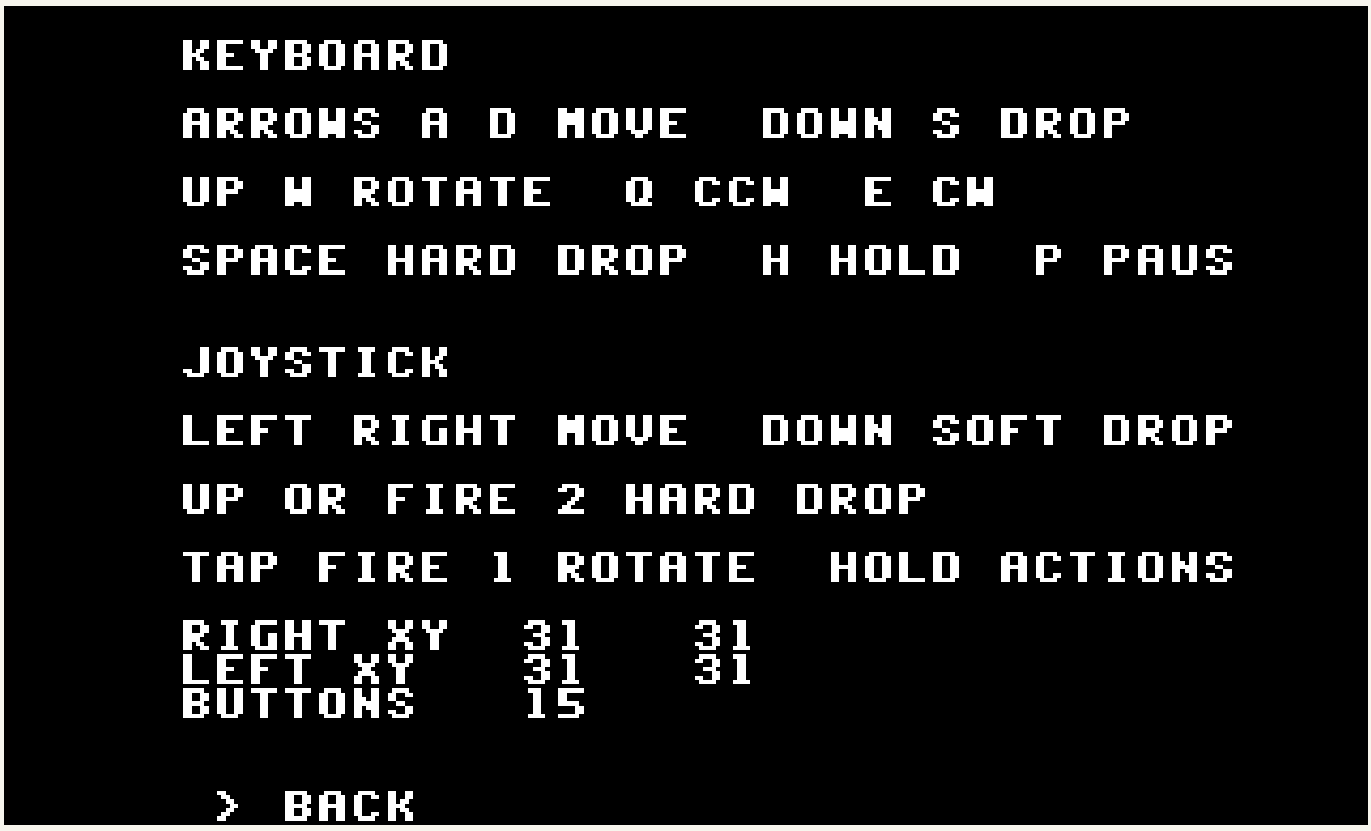


Figure 4: Controls screen with keyboard help and right/left joystick readings

RIGHT XY and **LEFT XY** show axis readings in the game's 0–63 range. The center is normally around 31. **BUTTONS** is the button bitmask; 15 is the usual fully released value. Each time you open Controls, the screen takes a fresh set of readings. Reopen it after moving or centering the stick to compare values.

Pause, actions, and confirmations

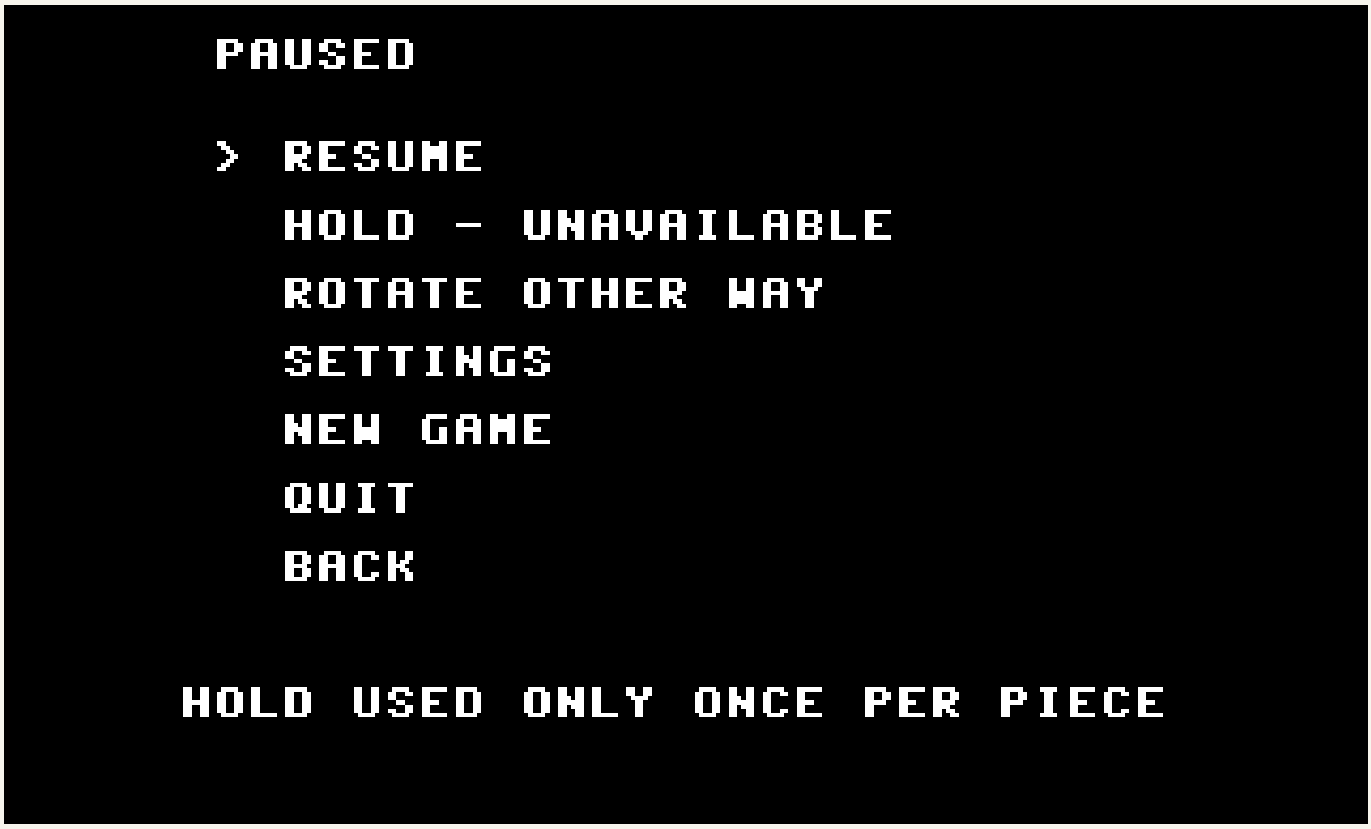


Figure 5: Paused actions menu with Resume, Hold, Rotate Other Way, Settings, New Game, Quit, and Back

`P`, `BREAK`, or a long primary-fire press opens the actions menu. The game is paused while you make a choice.

Choice	Result
RESUME	Returns to the falling piece.
HOLD	Uses the current piece's remaining Hold allowance, then resumes.
ROTATE OTHER WAY	Attempts rotation opposite to the preferred direction, then resumes.
SETTINGS	Opens settings without discarding the game.
NEW GAME	Opens a confirmation before replacing current play.
QUIT	Opens a confirmation before abandoning the game for the title.
BACK	Returns to the game; after game over, returns to the title.

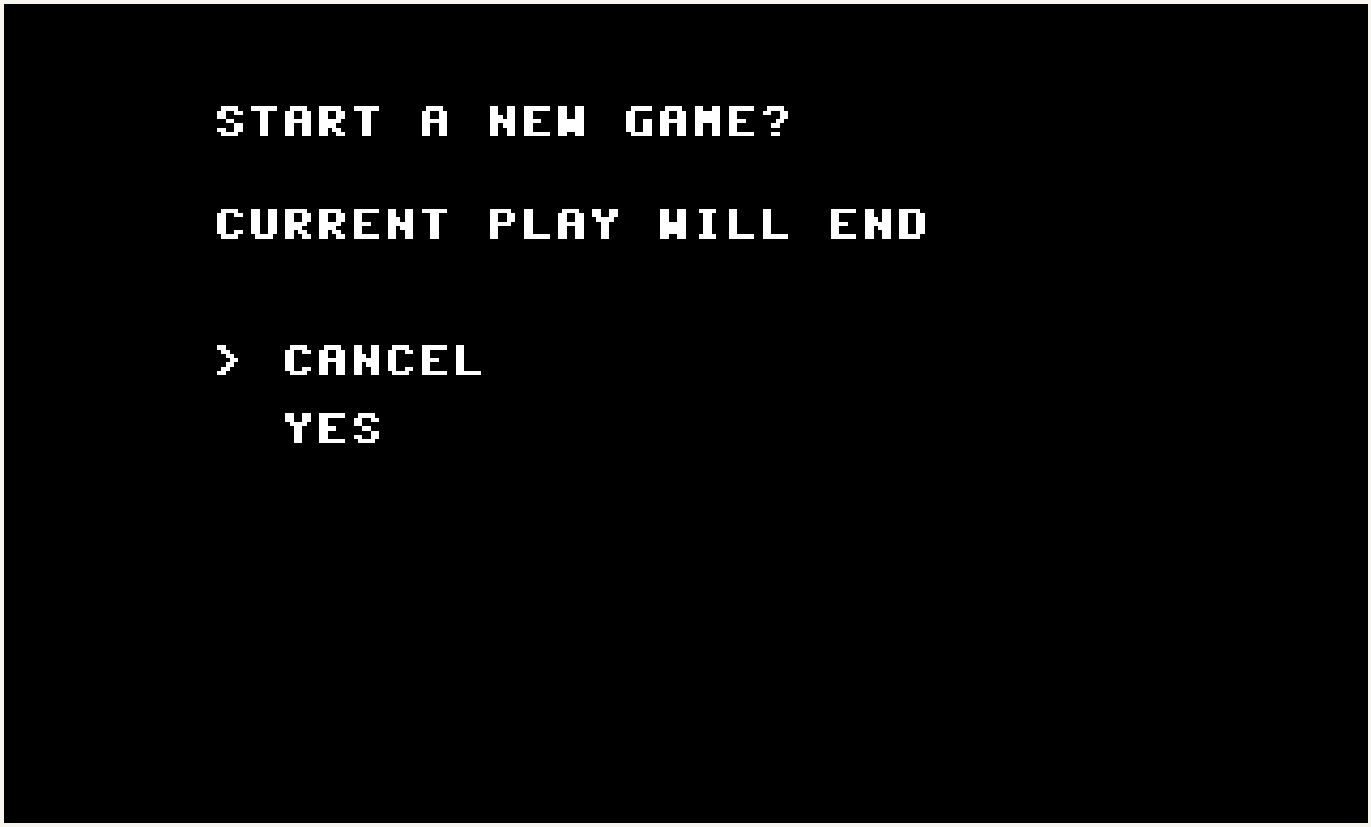


Figure 6: New Game confirmation, with Cancel selected by default

START A NEW GAME? warns that current play will end. **CANCEL** is the initial selection. Choose **YES** only when you want a fresh board using the current next-game settings. An unfinished game's score is not a completed high-score entry.

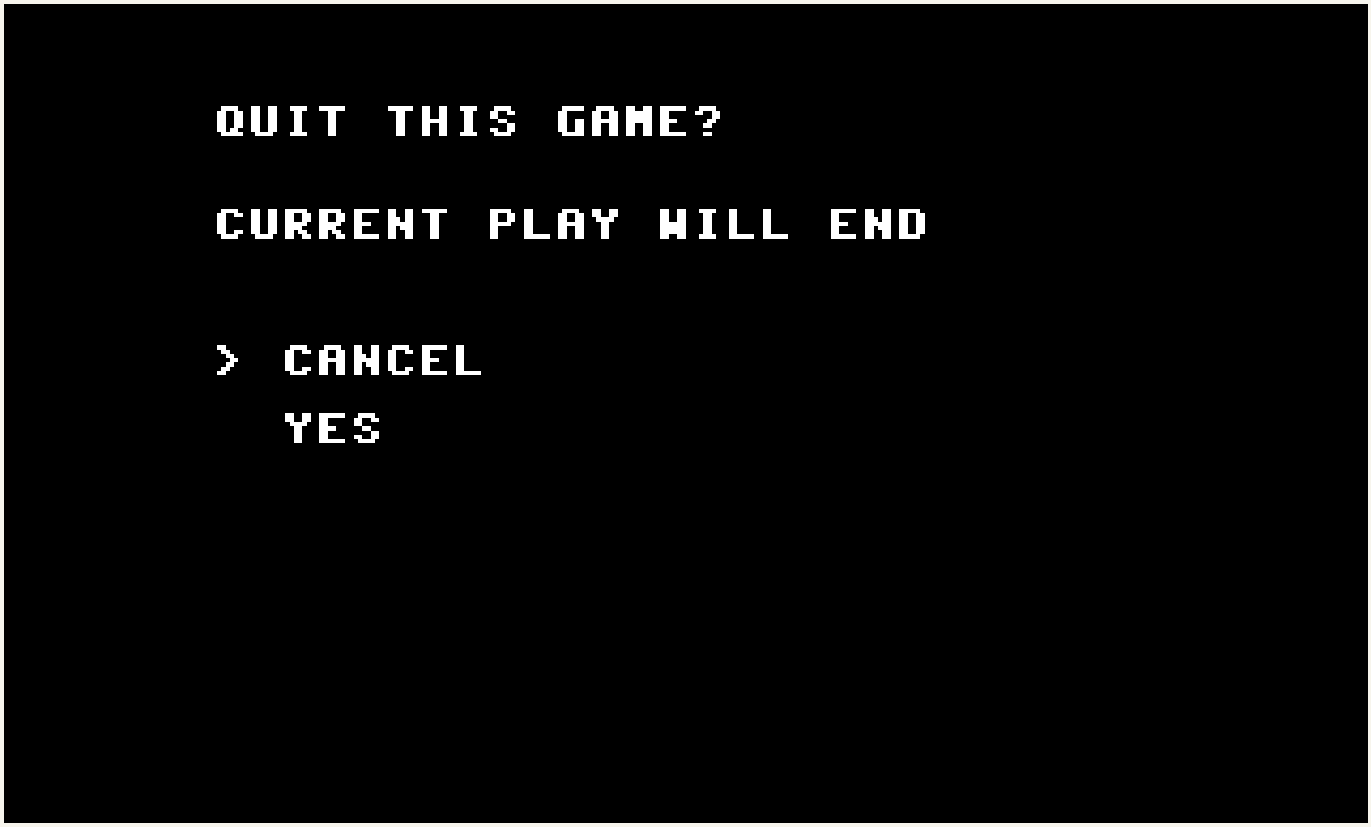


Figure 7: Quit This Game confirmation, with Cancel selected by default

QUIT THIS GAME? also starts with Cancel selected. Yes abandons this game and returns to the title; it does not erase the saved high-score tables. The title's Quit is the separate command for leaving the program for BASIC.

Every setting explained

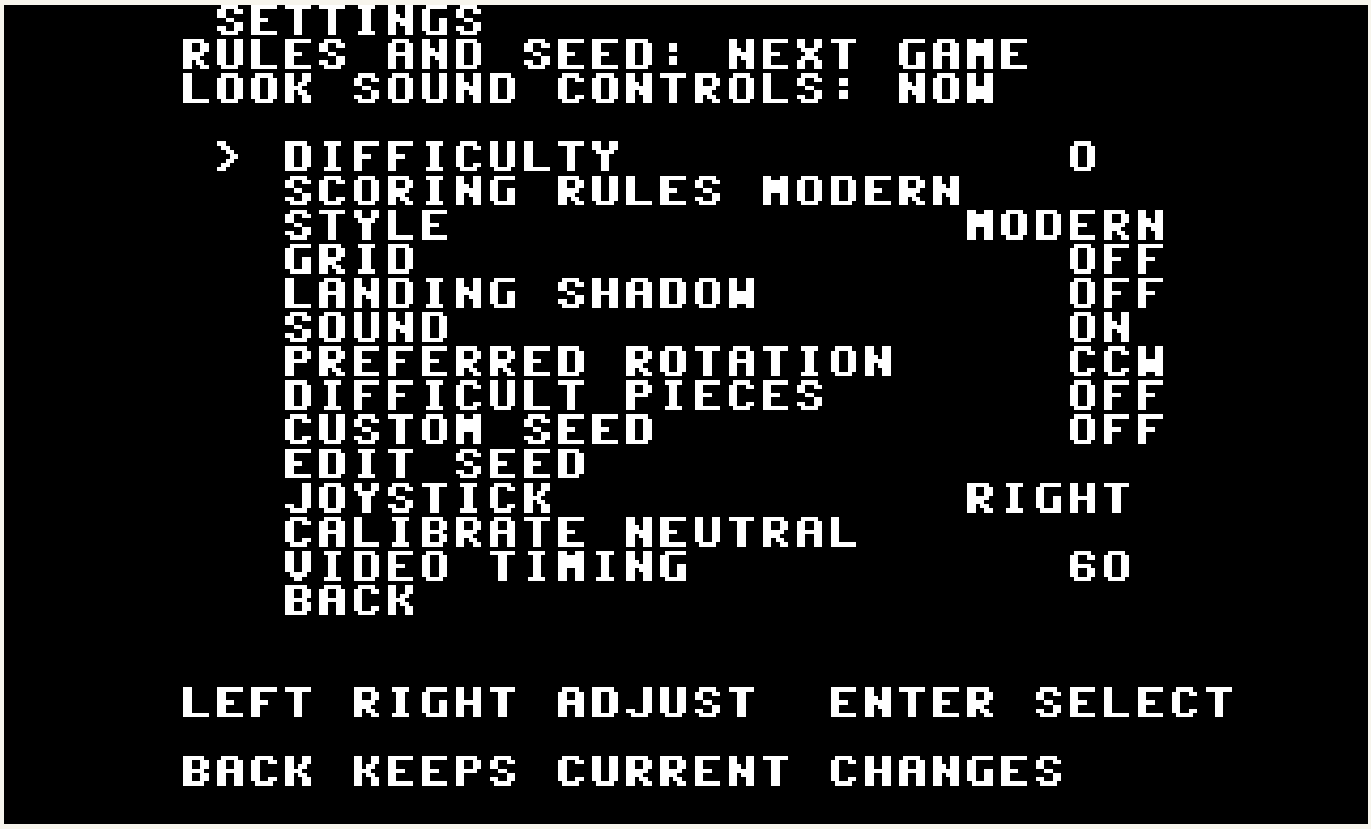


Figure 8: Settings showing all fourteen options and the immediate/next-game reminders

Choose an item with ↑ / ↓ or the stick. Use ← / → to change it; Enter or primary fire also advances/selects the highlighted item. **BACK** keeps the current changes and attempts to save them to disk. BREAK is a convenient way to take that same back path; it is not a "discard all changes" button.

Setting	Values and purpose	When it applies
DIFFICULTY	Relaxed, then 0–15. Sets initial speed, prefilled rows, and the record category.	Next game.
SCORING RULES	Modern or Classic (40.2). Opens the keep/erase/cancel decision.	Next game; current game's rule stays fixed.
STYLE	Plain, Modern, Clean. Changes block edging without changing rules.	Immediately.
GRID	On/Off. Adds visible cell outlines.	Immediately.
LANDING SHADOW	On/Off. Shows the current piece's hard-drop destination.	Immediately.
SOUND	On/Off. Enables short event effects, with silence between actions.	Immediately.
PREFERRED ROTATION	CCW or CW. Sets keyboard Up/W and primary-fire tap direction.	Immediately.

Setting	Values and purpose	When it applies
DIFFICULT PIECES	On/Off. Uses an adversarial, Bastet-inspired selector instead of ordinary weighted balancing.	Next game; also chooses a separate score category.
CUSTOM SEED	On/Off. Uses the stored repeatable CoCo seed instead of a timer-based starting seed.	Next game.
EDIT SEED	Opens the eight-digit hexadecimal editor.	The stored seed is used by the next game with Custom Seed On.
JOYSTICK	Right, Left, Off. Selects the CoCo port.	Immediately.
CALIBRATE NEUTRAL	Captures the four current axis centers. Center the stick first.	Immediately.
VIDEO TIMING	60 or 50. Selects the game's timing conversion for the target video rate.	Immediately; use the value appropriate to the machine.
BACK	Keeps changes, attempts a disk save, and returns to the title or actions menu.	On selection.

Appearance

Plain uses flat pieces. **Modern**, the default, adds subtle dark-gray borders against the black background. **Clean** uses lighter edging. Grid and Landing Shadow are independent options.



Figure 9: Clean style with light piece edging, Hold, and landing shadow



Figure 10: Plain style with flat pieces; the reserved piece and shadow remain available

Changing appearance does not move blocks or change your record category.

Difficulty, starting rows, and level

At difficulty 0, the board starts empty and level starts at 1. At difficulty 1–15, that many bottom rows begin with scattered blocks, and the initial level is difficulty + 1. The prefill is not a wall of full rows: each row has a guaranteed empty column, and the other cells are randomly populated.

For ordinary difficulty, level is:

```
starting difficulty + 1 + whole groups of 10 cleared lines
```

For example, difficulty 3 starts at level 4. Clearing your tenth line raises it to 5. The record remains in the **difficulty 3** category, because the category tracks the starting challenge, not the level reached later.

Relaxed is a separate starting choice. It begins empty at level 1 and stays at level 1 as lines accumulate. Pieces still fall; Relaxed is not a gravity-off construction mode. Its scores have their own Normal and Difficult Pieces categories.

Piece selection and repeatable seeds

Normal selection uses weighted balancing, not a seven-piece bag. Pieces that have appeared less frequently become more likely, but repeats and runs are possible. The preview shows one piece ahead, not a promise that the other six types must appear before another duplicate.

Difficult Pieces evaluates which types offer poor placements on the settled board and usually chooses one of the less helpful results, with a small randomized element. It can also choose a starting rotation. It is intended to be harder, and its records are separated from Normal selection. It does not alter the two scoring formulas.

A Custom Seed reproduces the CoCo initial board and piece-selection stream when the same relevant starting options and actions are used. Use the same difficulty and Difficult Pieces choice when comparing runs. Hold changes when the preview is consumed, and Difficult Pieces depends on the board you build, so identical seed text alone does not promise identical later play after different decisions. Seeds identify repeatable challenges within the CoCo edition.

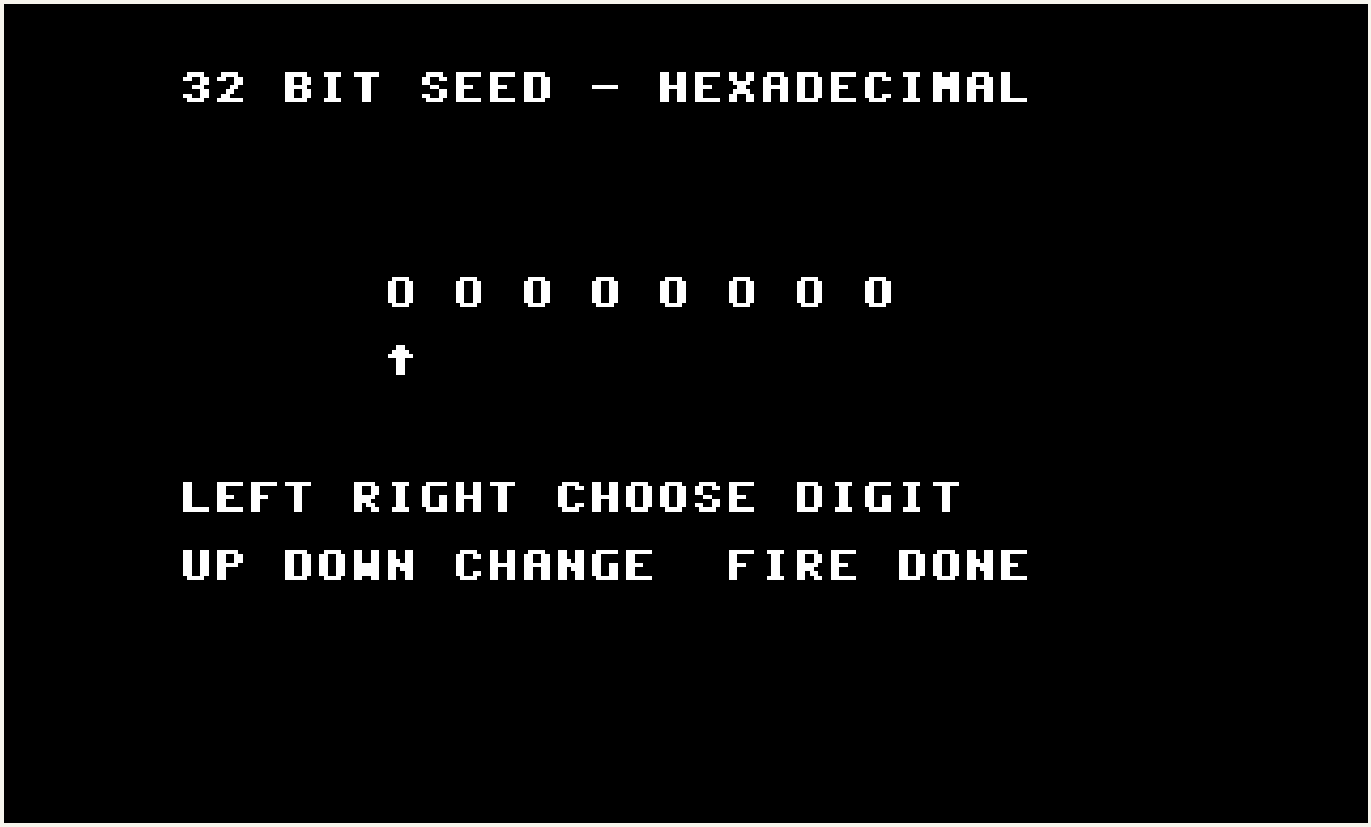


Figure 11: Eight-digit hexadecimal seed editor with the current digit marked

The seed is 32 bits, shown as eight hexadecimal digits, `00000000` through `FFFFFFFF`. Use ← / → to choose a digit and ↑ / ↓ to change it through 0–9 and A–F. Select with Enter or primary fire when done. BREAK returns to Settings as well. Zero is a valid seed; the generator maps it to a fixed nonzero internal starting state. Set **CUSTOM SEED ON** if you want the edited value to be used.

Modern and Classic scoring

Both systems award points for completed horizontal rows. They share the same regular clear values and level multiplier. Their major difference is the bonus when a clear includes the board's **original bottom row**.
The game's **SCORING RULES** setting is exactly **Modern** or **Classic (40.2)**. "Classic" refers to the older scoring behavior retained for this game; it is not a claim to reproduce another manufacturer's console scoring system.

Choose a rule and stay with it

For your regular games, **choose one scoring system and stick with it**. Modern is the default. If you played Quadrapassel in the past and particularly enjoyed the older scoring, Classic (40.2) is available for that familiar experience. Neither choice requires routinely switching back and forth.
The systems award very different bottom-row bonuses. Regularly swapping between them makes your personal progression harder to judge and can mix incomparable numbers in the same high-score category. Choose the rule you want to compete under, keep using it, and compare records with the same M or C marker. The setting remains available if you deliberately decide to change your preferred system later; it is not a mode to alternate merely to obtain larger numbers.

Step 1: count the rows cleared together

A single lock can clear one, two, three, or four rows. The regular values, before multiplying by level, are:

Rows cleared by one lock	Regular value
1	40
2	100
3	300
4	1,200

If no row clears, no points are awarded. A four-row clear uses 1,200 as one event; it is not scored as four separate single-row clears.

Step 2: decide whether the bottom-row bonus applies

The bottom row means the lowest visible row of the 20-row board **before the clear and compaction**. It is not simply the lowest row that happened to clear, and it is not the current bottom of the stack if there are holes beneath it.

If that original bottom row is among the rows removed, add one bonus:

Rule	Bonus before multiplying by level
Modern	100 × the number of rows cleared in that lock.
Classic (40.2)	10,000 once for that lock.

If the bottom row is not removed, neither system adds a bottom-row bonus. Moving another row down into the bottom position after a clear does not itself earn a bonus. Classic's 10,000 is **once per clear event**, not once for every row in a multi-row clear.

Step 3: use the level after adding the cleared lines

Add the new clear to your total Lines, then calculate the new level. Multiply the regular value plus any bonus by **that resulting level**. A clear that crosses a ten-line boundary is already scored at the higher level.

The complete formulas are:

- Modern: **(regular value + bottom bonus of 100 × rows) × resulting level**, when the original bottom row clears.
- Classic (40.2): **(regular value + bottom bonus of 10,000) × resulting level**, when the original bottom row clears.
- Without a bottom-row clear, either rule: **regular value × resulting level**.

Level-one comparison

Rows in one clear	No bottom row, either rule	Bottom row, Modern	Bottom row, Classic (40.2)
1	40	140	10,040
2	100	300	10,100
3	300	600	10,300
4	1,200	1,600	11,200

Worked examples

A Modern single at level 1, including the bottom: regular 40 plus bonus 100 = **140 points**.

A Classic single at level 1, including the bottom: regular 40 plus one bonus 10,000 = **10,040 points**. The unusually large result is intentional.

A Modern double at level 3, including the bottom: (100 + 100 × 2) × 3 = **900 points**.

A Classic double at level 3, including the bottom: (100 + 10,000) × 3 = **30,300 points**. There is only one 10,000 bonus before multiplication.
A level transition: at difficulty 0 with 9 lines already cleared, a single that includes the bottom becomes line 10 and raises the level to 2. Modern awards (40 + 100) × 2 = **280**. Classic awards (40 + 10,000) × 2 = **20,080**.
A clear above the bottom: a single at level 2 that leaves the original bottom row in place is 40 × 2 = **80**, under either rule.
Relaxed: its level remains 1. A bottom-row single is therefore 140 Modern or 10,040 Classic, even after many earlier lines.

What does not score

There are no points merely for sideways movement, rotation, soft drop distance, hard drop distance, placing a piece without a clear, or storing/swapping a piece. This edition adds no combo, spin, back-to-back, or separate all-clear award. Clearing the board can still earn the normal row points and bottom bonus; it simply has no additional "perfect clear" bonus.
Scores use an unsigned 32-bit total. The maximum displayed/stored score is **4,294,967,295**; further awards stop at that limit rather than wrapping to zero or a negative value.

High scores and skill categories



Figure 12: High-score browser for difficulty 0, Normal selection, initially empty

The game keeps a **top ten for each starting difficulty and piece-selection mode**. There are 17 difficulty choices—Relaxed plus 0 through 15—and two piece-selection choices, giving **34 separate boards** and at most **340 saved entries**.
The two selection columns below mean **Normal selection** and **Difficult Pieces**, not Modern and Classic scoring. The word "difficulty" in the browser refers to the starting skill setting; the word "Difficult" beside it refers to the adversarial piece selector.

Starting difficulty	Initial level	Prefilled bottom rows	Saved boards
Relaxed	1, stays 1	0	Relaxed Normal; Relaxed Difficult
0	1	0	0 Normal; 0 Difficult
1	2	1	1 Normal; 1 Difficult
2	3	2	2 Normal; 2 Difficult
3	4	3	3 Normal; 3 Difficult
4	5	4	4 Normal; 4 Difficult
5	6	5	5 Normal; 5 Difficult
6	7	6	6 Normal; 6 Difficult
7	8	7	7 Normal; 7 Difficult
8	9	8	8 Normal; 8 Difficult
9	10	9	9 Normal; 9 Difficult
10	11	10	10 Normal; 10 Difficult
11	12	11	11 Normal; 11 Difficult
12	13	12	12 Normal; 12 Difficult
13	14	13	13 Normal; 13 Difficult
14	15	14	14 Normal; 14 Difficult
15	16	15	15 Normal; 15 Difficult

Which board receives my game?

A game begun at difficulty 2 with Difficult Pieces Off belongs to **difficulty 2 / Normal**, even if you reach level 8. Turn Difficult Pieces On for the next game and that game belongs to **difficulty 2 / Difficult**. A Relaxed game belongs to a Relaxed board rather than difficulty 0, although both begin at level 1 on an empty board.

The game remembers its starting difficulty and piece-selection choice. Changing next-game settings while paused does not move the current result into another category. The browser initially chooses the category appropriate to your configured settings; use ← / → to browse all categories. Categories wrap at the ends. The displayed heading tells you which board you are reading.

Style, sound, rotation direction, grid, shadow, joystick port, and custom seed do **not** create additional scoreboards. There is no separate board for each seed. If you are comparing repeatable challenges with friends, record those choices yourself alongside the score.

Modern and Classic share the category

There are not 68 boards. The scoring rule is stored on each entry, rather than being a third category dimension. An **M** identifies Modern; a **C** identifies Classic (40.2). The browser's footer explains those markers.

Keeping old scores after changing scoring rules can put M and C entries in the same top ten. Ranking is by the raw numeric score; the game does not normalize or convert one rule into the other. Because Classic's bottom bonus is much larger, a Classic score can outrank a much longer Modern game. Compare entries with the same marker for a meaningful like-for-like comparison.

The rules stay fixed within a game. Changing the preference does not recalculate existing entries or relabel an in-progress game's final score.

Earning and entering a record

When a game ends, a positive score qualifies if there is space in that category's top ten or it exceeds the existing tenth-place score. Zero scores are not recorded. With a full board, merely equalling tenth place is not enough to replace it. Existing equal scores keep their order, and a new tied score is inserted after the earlier equal entries if there is room.

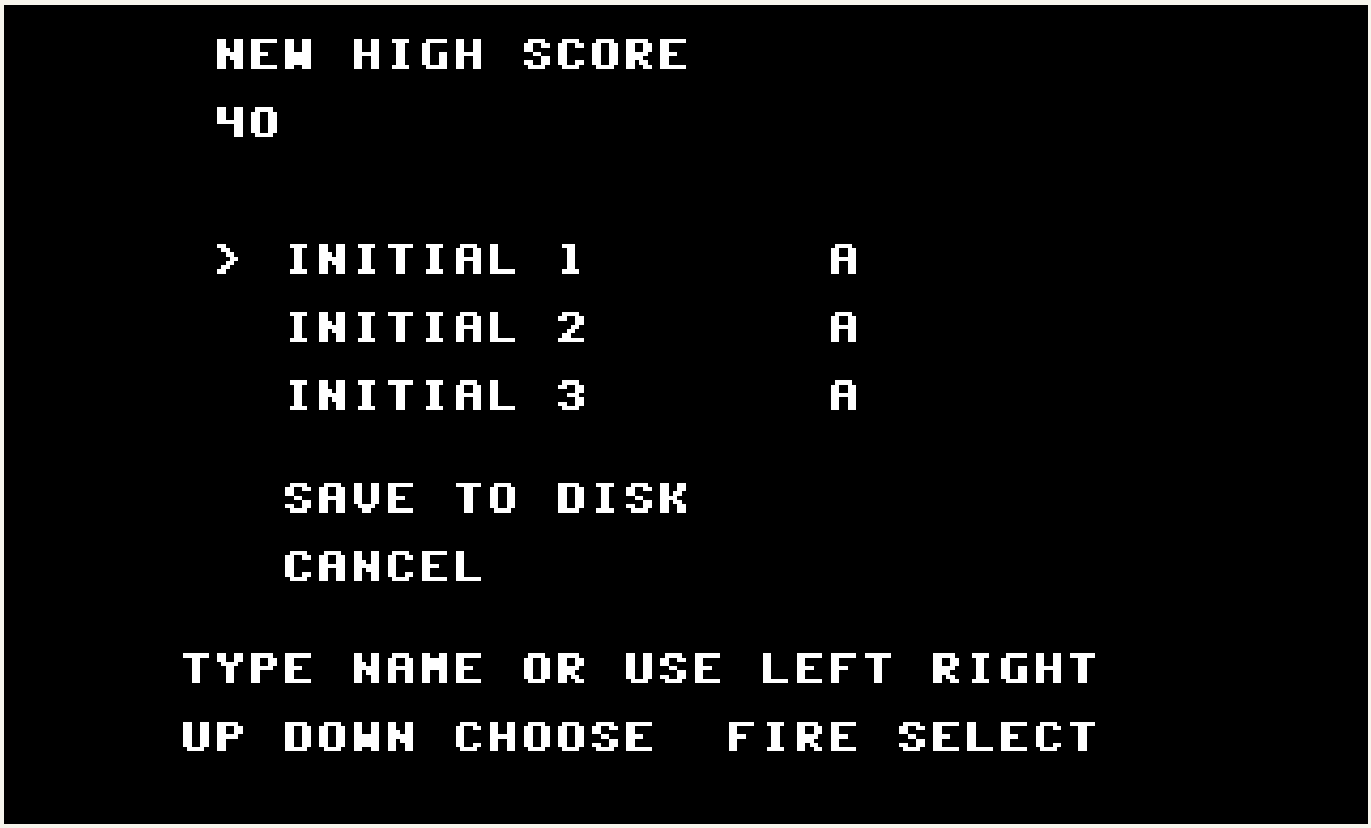


Figure 13: New High Score screen with three initials and Save to Disk

The **NEW HIGH SCORE** screen shows your score, three initial fields, **SAVE TO DISK**, and **CANCEL**. Enter three letters with the keyboard, or use the controls to choose them:

1. ↑ / ↓ selects an initial field or command.
2. ← / → cycles the selected letter backward/forward.
3. Enter or primary fire advances the selected letter when an initial field is selected.
4. Move to **SAVE TO DISK** and select it to commit the result.

Letter entry uses A–Z. Type one letter and let the selected field advance and the screen update before typing the next. After typing, check all three initials before selecting Save. Choose Cancel if you do not want to keep that result; cancellation does not erase earlier records. If a save reports an error, do not assume the new record has reached disk. Correct the media problem and retry when possible, or cancel and continue.

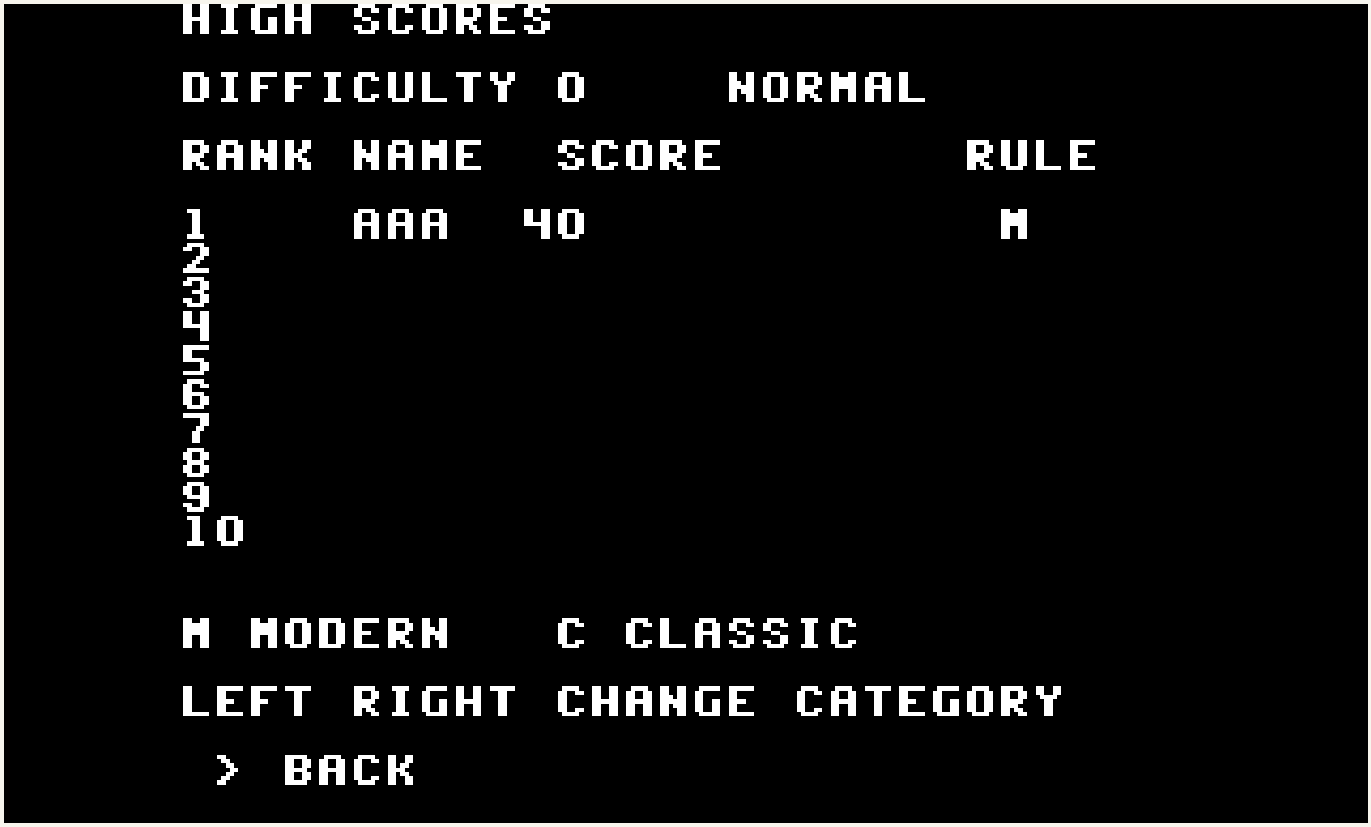


Figure 14: A real earned high score saved in its category, with its scoring-rule marker

A saved entry shows its initials, score, and M/C scoring-rule marker in the chosen category. New game disks begin with empty boards for your own records.

Changing scoring rules safely

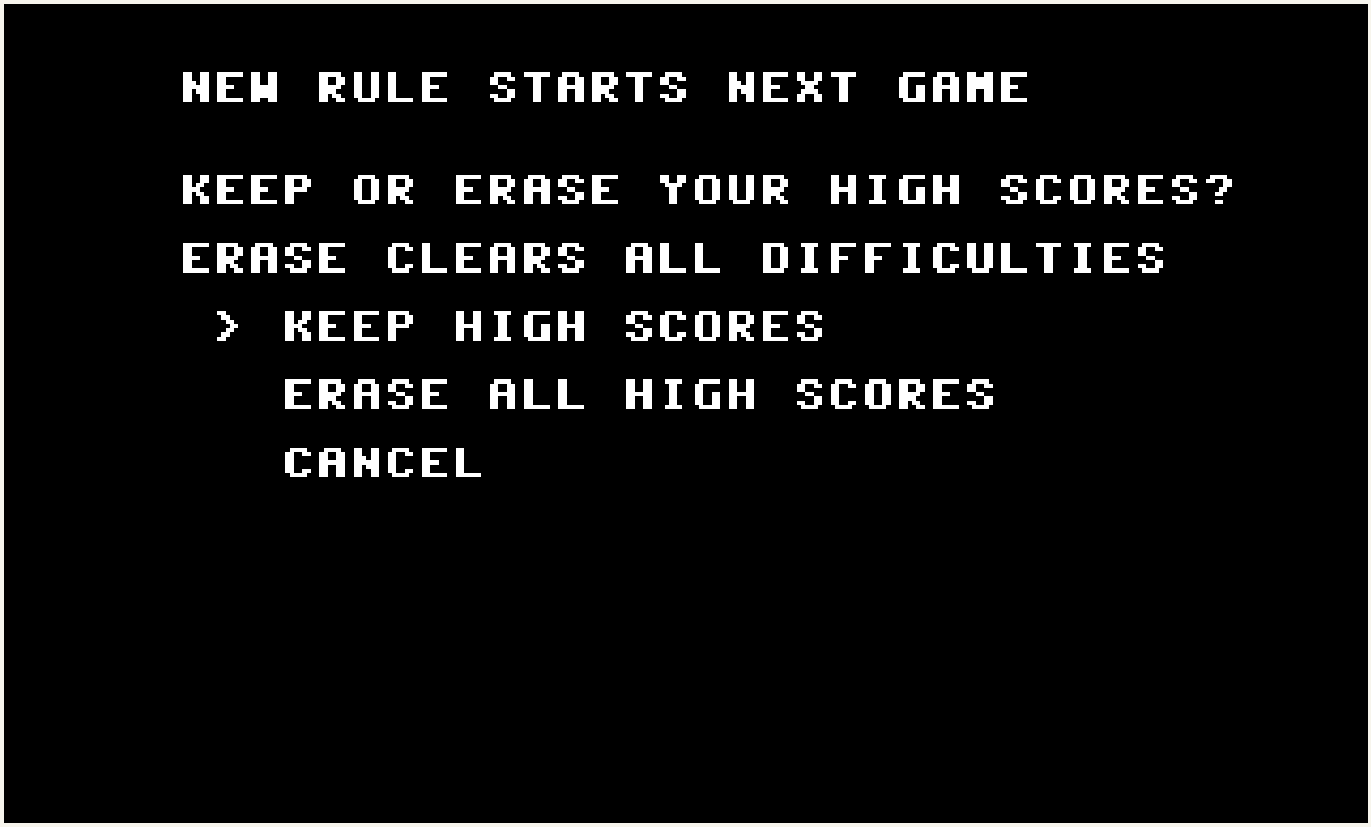


Figure 15: Scoring change offers Keep High Scores, Erase All High Scores, or Cancel

Changing **SCORING RULES** opens a separate decision screen:

Choice	Consequence
KEEP HIGH SCORES	Changes the next game's rule and preserves every existing record. A category can then contain both M and C entries.
ERASE ALL HIGH SCORES	Changes the next game's rule and clears the records for **all difficulties and both piece-selection modes**, not just the board you last viewed.
CANCEL	Cancels this scoring-rule change and leaves the records alone. Other Settings changes already made are not undone.

Erasing scores is a deliberate database action, not a requirement for changing the scoring preference. If you erase while a game is active, that game can continue, but its result is made ineligible for later high-score saving. Start a new game to compete under the new rule. Back up the disk before using Erase if you might want the old boards again.

Each game disk keeps its own CoCo high-score records. Back up that disk to preserve them when moving to another machine or disk-image setup.

Game over and starting again

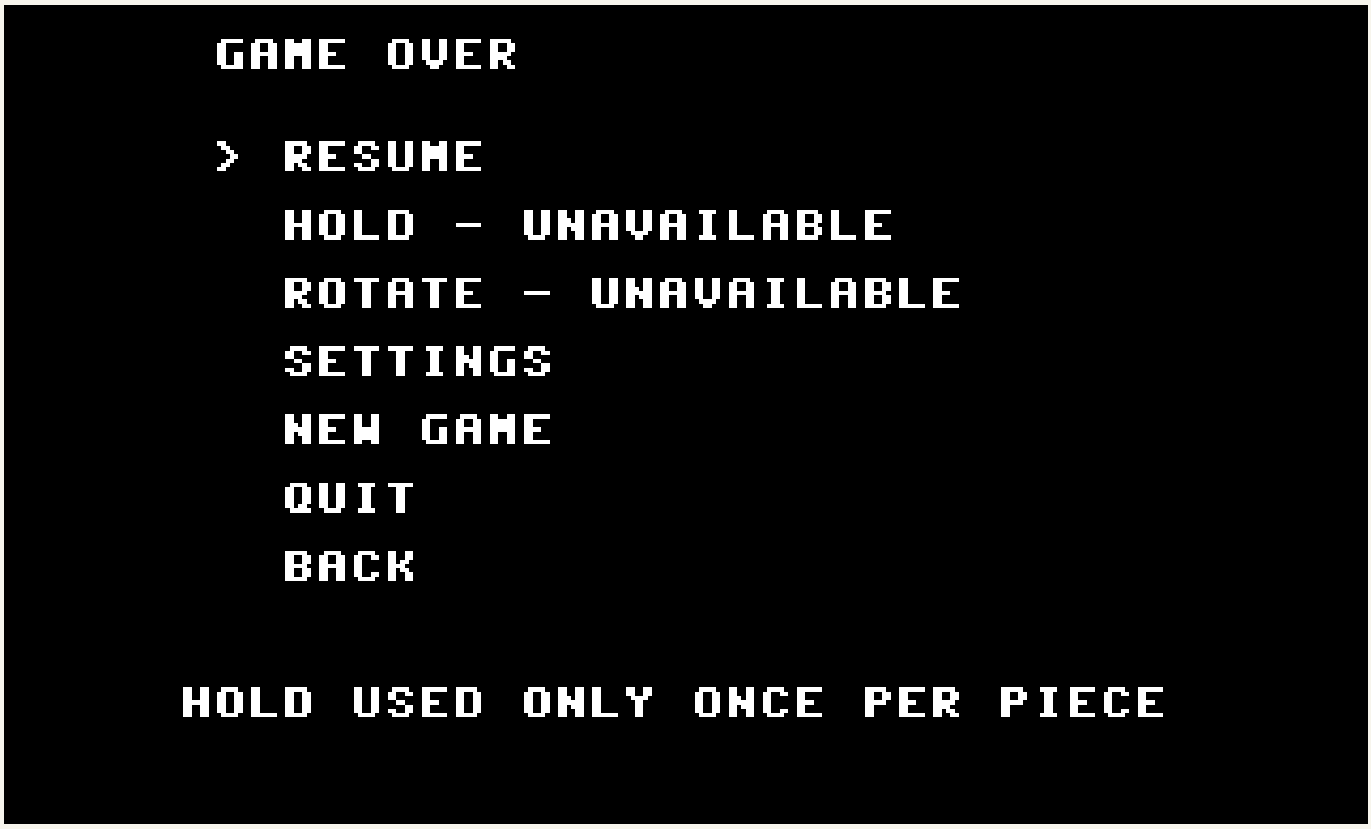


Figure 16: Game Over actions screen with unavailable Hold and Rotate commands

When the spawning area is blocked, the game ends. A qualifying positive score opens the initials screen first. A zero or nonqualifying score goes directly to the **GAME OVER** actions screen. After a successful save, select the score screen's **BACK** command to return to game-over actions. BREAK from the score browser goes directly to the title. Cancelling the initials entry returns to game-over actions.

Hold and Rotate are unavailable after game over. Resume/Back returns to the title rather than restarting the ended piece. Use New Game and confirm Yes when you want another board. Previously saved records remain unless you explicitly erase them.

Saving, backups, and disk messages

The disk stores settings and all score categories in **QPSAVE0.DAT** and **QPSAVE1.DAT**. The game alternates between these two versioned save files, validates their contents, and can use a valid copy when the other one is damaged. The files work as a pair; do not casually delete one while trying to reorganize the disk.

The clean delivered disk has no QPSAVE files yet. Missing save files mean default settings and empty boards. Normal explicit saves create the storage. The other supplied files—**QUAD.BIN**, **WORDS.DAT**, and **QPTEXT.DAT**, together with the DOS launcher—are game resources, not interchangeable score files. QPTEXT.DAT contains the screen text; a text error can therefore be a disk/resource problem rather than a corrupt score.

Saving is not a per-frame activity. Settings are saved through explicit changes/back paths, and a new record is committed when you select Save to Disk. Wait until that operation is finished before resetting, ejecting, powering down, copying, or replacing the image. A complete disk-image backup is the simplest way to retain the pair consistently.

The following status messages can appear along the bottom of menu screens. They are status footers, not additional menu choices:

Message	Meaning and response
RECOVERED PREVIOUS SAVE	A valid save copy was used after the other copy failed validation. Check whether recent progress is missing, then make a fresh backup after a successful save.
BAD SAVE - CHECK DISK	The available save data did not pass validation. Preserve a copy of the disk and check your backup; do not reformat it as a first response.
DISK ERROR - NOT SAVED	The requested operation did not save successfully. Check that the right writable disk is present and that the media is usable.
TEXT ERROR	A menu-text resource could not be read/validated. Check the game disk and QPTEXT.DAT; retain any personal save files when restoring game resources.

A read-only or failing disk can allow play while preventing new settings/records from being saved. An on-screen result is not proof of a successful disk commit. Keep a separate backup, particularly before changing disks or trying a newer build.

Troubleshooting and common questions

Loading the intended game disk

Return to Disk BASIC, mount the intended disk, and enter `DOS`. Keep the same game disk mounted while playing so the program can read its screen text and save settings and scores to the correct place.

Joystick response and drift

Check that the game's Joystick setting matches the physical CoCo port. Center the stick and use Calibrate Neutral if needed. In an emulator, check the host controller assignment, dead zone, and Fire 1/2 mapping too. Release controls after a screen change. You can use the keyboard for menus and continue playing with the selected joystick. Select Joystick Off temporarily to distinguish a controller issue from a keyboard/game issue.

Fire seems to rotate late, or holding it opens a menu

The primary-button short action happens on **release**, so the game can distinguish it from a long press. A hold of about 400 ms opens Actions. For an immediate hard drop, use secondary fire, joystick Up, or `Space`; do not hold primary fire expecting it to repeat rotations.

A piece only has two visible orientations

I, S, and Z are symmetric in two of their four table states, and O remains square. Rotate a T, L, or J to see four visibly different turns. A successful primary tap should leave the piece rotated after release; it should not cancel a preceding turn.

My score seems unexpectedly large

Look for **CLASSIC** in the active HUD or a **C** beside the saved entry. Classic adds 10,000 before level multiplication when the bottom row clears. It is intentionally much larger than Modern's bonus. Also check whether the clear crossed a ten-line level boundary.

Why did a long run not appear on the board I expected?

The destination is the game's starting difficulty plus Normal/Difficult Pieces setting, not its finishing level. Browse to that category. A zero/nonqualifying score, a cancelled initials screen, a failed disk save, or a game made ineligible by erasing scores will not create the expected new record.

Does changing to Classic require erasing scores?

No. Choose Keep High Scores to retain them. Their M/C markers remain intact, and ranking uses their unconverted numbers. Erase All High Scores is optional and affects every category.

There is a continuous buzz

Game audio consists of brief effects for movement, rotation, landing, row clears, and game over, with silence between events. If you hear a continuous buzz, try **SOUND OFF**. If the noise continues, check the emulator or machine's audio output and controller configuration. When asking for help, include the machine or emulator, audio settings, controller assignment, and whether the noise begins at the title or during play.

Screen directory

Screen or state	How to reach it	Main purpose
Title	Finish loading, or quit an active game to title.	Start, settings, help, scores, credits, program exit.
Gameplay	Title → Start; Actions → Resume.	Falling piece, board, HUD, Next and Hold.
Paused / Actions	`P`, `BREAK`, or long primary fire during play.	Pause, Hold, opposite rotation, Settings, New Game, Quit.
Settings	Title or Actions → Settings.	All immediate and next-game preferences.
Controls	Title → Controls.	Control reference and sampled axis/button values.
High Scores	Title → Scores; after a successful score save.	Browse top tens by starting difficulty/ selection mode.
Credits	Title → Credits.	Contributor and component acknowledgements.
New Game confirmation	Actions → New Game.	Cancel or deliberately replace current play.
Quit Game confirmation	Actions → Quit.	Cancel or return to title without erasing records.
Scoring change	Settings → Scoring Rules.	Choose Keep, Erase All, or Cancel.
Seed editor	Settings → Edit Seed.	Edit eight hexadecimal digits.
New High Score	End a game with a qualifying positive result.	Enter initials and explicitly save/cancel.
Game Over actions	End without a qualifying result, or finish the record flow.	Start again or return to title; ended-piece actions unavailable.

Copyright, license, and credits

© Brian K. Holman 2026. Quadrapassel for CoCo and this manual are provided under the **GNU General Public License, version 3 or later**. Third-party copyrights and license notices remain in force for their respective contributions.

The game's title-screen copyright notice is **(c) 2026 Brian Holman**.

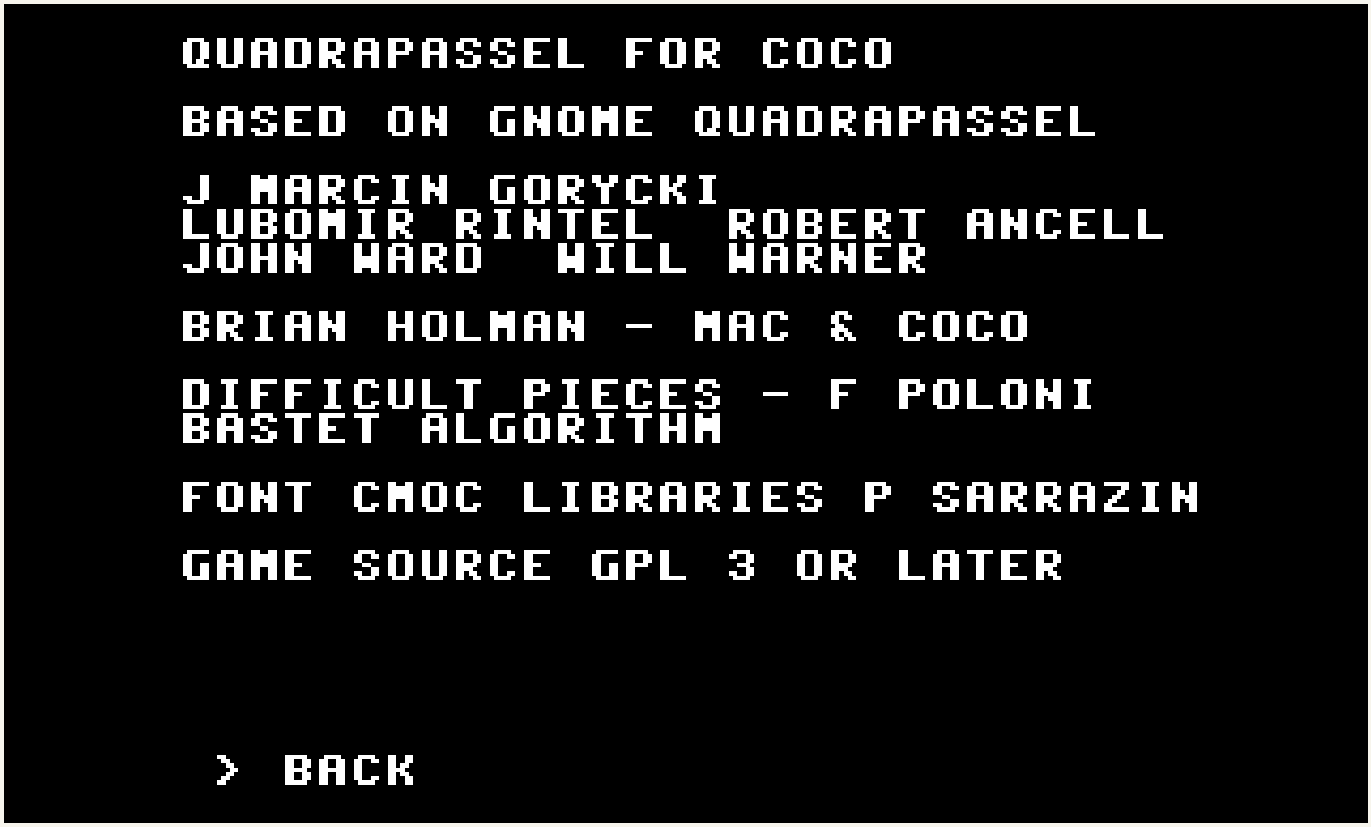


Figure 17: The CoCo Credits screen preserving original and component acknowledgements

The game acknowledges GNOME Quadrapassel and the contributors **J. Marcin Gorycki, Lubomir Rintel, Robert Ancell, John Ward, and Will Warner**, together with **Brian Holman — Mac & CoCo**. The difficult-piece algorithm is inspired by **Federico Poloni's Bastet**. Those credits recognize the behavioral lineage; they do not mean Linux/Mac application code is incorporated into this CoCo implementation.

Pierre Sarrazin is credited for the font, CMOC, and supporting libraries. The menu/HUD font uses an unchanged subset of his public-domain CardGame font, also used by Color8; its original notice and source files are retained in the project. Standard CMOC/CardGame/bsound/decbfile APIs and the supplied DOS-loader template have their own component notices. The project preserves these rather than labelling every component with one blanket license.

The game's GPL license permits redistribution and modification under its stated terms and provides the full warranty disclaimer. Keep the license and relevant notices with source distributions. See the project's **COPYING** file for the complete license and the GNU GPL version 3 text for an online copy. This manual is a user guide, not a replacement for that license text.

Edition

Player's manual for **Quadrapassel for CoCo, game disk build 05** (`QUADPSL05.DSK`). For Color Computer 3 systems with **128 KB or more**, Disk BASIC, and writable game media. Keyboard and standard analog joystick controls are supported.