

Ultimate Brain Games FAQ

by Lisanne

Updated to v1.0 on Jul 31, 2003

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U L T I M A T E B R A I N G A M E S

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Version 1.0
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For GameBoy Advance

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Thankyou.

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Contents List

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1. Version Information
 2. Introduction
 3. Main Menu
 4. The Games
 - a. Sink Ships
 - b. Mahjong
 - c. Backgammon
 - d. Chess
 - e. Checkers
 - f. Reversi
 - g. Dominoes
 - h. Four in a Row
 5. Credits
 6. Things I learnt while writing this guide
- =====

1. Version Information

1.00 Begun writing this guide 07/29/03. This guide was written over three very long days with barely any sleep involved. VERY long days. The guide is in a complete state, with as much detail as I intend to include. However, if you do find any mistakes, please e-mail me and let me know.

2. Introduction

Ultimate Brain Games is basically a compendium of traditional puzzle and board games. Released in Europe in March 2003, it is certainly the only game of its kind available that I personally am aware of, being as it is a collection of eight different games all playable either in single player or multi player form. What makes it unique is the calibre of games on offer - all are very traditional; the kind of board games that have been around for centuries. Unfortunately it's not so easy to get hold of. Perhaps due to its niche qualities, it was a small scale release, which is a shame because I think that the game holds more appeal than the publishers gave it credit for. Still, if you're reading this, I guess that means that you did get hold of it, so I will stop ranting and just get on with the FAQ!

3. Main Menu

One of the most noticeable features of this game is the sheer wealth of options featured throughout. Here, I will quickly run down the different choices you have available on the game's main start up screen. All options should be selected by using the D-pad to highlight your choice, then pressing the A button to confirm it.

Single Player

Fairly self-explanatory really. Selecting this option will take you to the single player mode game selection screen, to choose a game to play alone. For Mahjong, you will play alone, whereas for the rest you will face an artificial intelligence opponent.

Multi Player

Again, self-explanatory. Selecting this option will take you to the multi player mode game selection screen. The games will be the same as the single player ones, the difference being that for all games you will play against a human opponent. This works in either turn-based format (with both players taking it in turns to make their moves on the same GBA), or you can link up two GBAs to play against each other this way. You can select which way to play at the start screen for each game when accessed from this multi player game selection screen. In all cases, to play on the same machine select "Hotseat", or to link two machines together select "Single Game Pak".

Face Creator

This allows you to create a model of yourself (or alternatively a model of your own design) to be your "face" when playing the games. If you do not create one, you will see that a silhouette appears as your icon when playing against

an opponent (including the AI). Here, you can eliminate this silhouette by making your own face. There are a huge variety of choices available here to fully personalize your look. The best thing to do is just to play around with it until you find a look that suits you best.

Options

These are the in-game options that allow you to customize your game. The choices are:

a. Audio

Playlist - shows the list of music tracks that are played.

Shuffle Tracks - change the order in which the tracks are played.

Volume - alter the volume of the music and sound effects.

Save Settings - save your customized audio settings for future use.

Default Settings - return to the default audio settings.

b. Memory

You have the option to reset your scores, saves, faces, options or all of those things. Self-explanatory.

c. Opponent

Here you can either select a regular AI opponent, or use randomly selected opponents for all your games. The default setting is to use random.

d. Credits

Find out who is responsible for making this game!

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4. The Games

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The games available will be the same whether you are playing in single player or multi player mode. From the game selection screen, navigate by using the D-pad to highlight your preferred game. You can continue a saved game by pressing the Select button when the game is highlighted. To return to the main menu, press the B button. To confirm that you wish to play a highlighted game, press the A button.

You can see your success rate for each game as you scroll through them in single player mode. There will be three statistics displayed - wins, losses and your success percentage. You can reset these statistics at any time by using the Options choice from the main menu, then selecting Memory, then choosing Reset Scores.

For each game, the in-game options menu can be accessed by pausing the game. Do this by pressing the Start button. Use the D-pad to navigate the menus, and press A to select a highlighted option. Press B or Start to return to the game.

a. Sink Ships

In single player mode, you will be playing against an AI opponent.

In multi player mode, you will be faced with two options - Hotseat and Single Game Pak. The Hotseat option works with both players taking it in turns on the same GBA to place their ships and take their turns. Single Game Pak allows you to link two GBAs together to play against a friend. This guide works for whichever option you choose, as game play is basically the same.

Sink Ships works as a grid-based strategic guessing-game. Before the game commences, you will have to place several battle ships on a grid, and your

opponent will do the same on their grid. Then players take it in turns to hit different squares on their opponent's grid, the object being to destroy all of your opponent's battle ships. You have five ships each of different sizes. When the ships are placed, you will have the ability to shoot one square for each battle ship you have left, and your opponent will do the same to your grid. If you hit a ship, you will see smoke rise from that square. A good tactic in that case is to use your next turn to shoot the squares around it to see which direction the ship is facing and to try to sink it. A ship sinks when every square it occupies has been hit.

At the start, you will need to place your ships. Use the D-pad to move each ship to your desired location on the grid. Use the B button to rotate the ship and use the A button to confirm its position. Toggle between your different ships by using the L and R buttons. When all your ships are placed, the game will commence.

You will see your opponent's grid on the left of your screen. A round target will appear - this is the cursor which you should move around to select which square you wish to shoot. Use the D-pad to move it, and use the A button to select a square for shooting. You will need to select all the squares you have available before your turn will commence. If playing in multi player Hotseat mode, your opponent will also need to select the squares they wish to shoot before the turn will commence. Turns continue in this form until one player has destroyed all of the other player's battle ships.

Square Color Key

The grid is initially made up of light blue squares. When partway through taking your turn, any squares which you have selected to be shot will be shown in white. If you hit a ship, you will see a plume of smoke rise from that square. If you sink a ship, it will appear as a block of black squares. A dark blue square is one which you have previously hit but which is hiding no ships.

In-Game Options

Pressing the Start button at any stage during play will pause the game and lead you to the in-game menu, where you will find various options. Navigate the menus by using the D-pad and select an option by pressing A. Return to the game by pressing the Start button or the B button.

1. Preferences - contains options to adjust music volume, change music tracks or alter the difficulty level (this ranges from Very Easy to Extreme. The default level is Easy).
2. Game - contains the following options: Restart (restart current game), Start Game (if you don't wish to move your ships' locations), Demo (view demo of game), Load, Save, Quit (return to game selection screen).
3. Help - contains the following options: Switch Sides (cheating!), Back One Move (and again!), Redo One Move (cheating, cheating!!), Animate (this is default and is basically a graphics option - doesn't affect game play) and How To Play (for a clear explanation of the rules).

b. Mahjong

In Mahjong, if you play in single player mode, you will find a solitaire form of this game, so that you play completely alone. In multi player mode, you have the usual choice of Hotseat or Single Game Pak. Since in this case Single Player and Multi Player are quite different, I will explain both separately. The basic principle of the game though, whichever mode you play in, is to match

pairs of tiles (identifiable by checking the patterns and numbers on the tiles) to clear them from the table, with the ultimate aim being to clear the table completely.

The number of different types of tile that will appear varies depending on which difficulty level you are using. What does not vary is that for each style of tile, there are always two pairs on the board. You should be careful when matching pairs off to ensure that you don't end up blocking your remaining tiles in. A good strategy is to only match off pairs of tiles when you can see where all four are located on the board, or at least ensure that you have a tile remaining at the lowest level so you know there isn't a matching one lurking beneath it. If you run out of available moves, it's game over, so make sure you plan ahead to stay alive for the longest time possible. Note that tiles can only be selected when they are free on either their right or left side. If you play using the Rivers layout, the rules become more complex. Check the in-game help option for the rules for Rivers.

Single Player

The single player version of Mahjong plays like a solitaire version of the game. The object is to match pairs of tiles and clear the table. Playing alone, the best way to get a good game (and the default settings, incidentally) is to use the most difficult setting for the maximum number of tiles and work on the different tile formations. In this circumstance, clearing the table becomes a real challenge - it's far more difficult than it looks.

The game can be controlled as a point and click game. Use the D-pad to move the cursor around the table, and press A to highlight a tile. When a tile is highlighted, either press A on a matching tile to clear them from the table, or cancel your selection by pressing B. If you need a hint, you can press the Select button to show one available move.

Multi Player

To play Mahjong against an opponent, you basically play the same way as with the single player version, but each player takes it in turns to match as many tiles as they can against the clock. You can alter the amount of time you have available to match tiles by accessing the pause menu and selecting Turn Time from the Preferences sub-menu. The main aim here is to clear more tiles from the table than your opponent, so take care not to inadvertently leave them plenty of openings! Playing with strategy is the best move here - try not to leave obvious pairs remaining at the end of your turn, but remember that they may not see the same pairs you do.

In-Game Options

Pressing Start will bring up the pause menu. Available options are:

1. Preferences - change the Music Volume, change Music Tracks, Background (a list of available styles of background image will appear if you select this and the only function of this option is aesthetic), Turn Time (multi player mode only. Alter the length of time available to match off tiles in each turn), Layout (this brings up a sub-menu of difficulty levels. Select one to access the list of available layouts for that level), Tileset (an aesthetic option. Change the style of tiles used) and Show Information (toggle the on-screen information that appears during game play on or off).
2. Game - Start New, Load, Save, Quit (takes you back to game selection menu).
3. Help - Hint (show an available move), Back one move, Redo one move, How to Play (for the in-game help).

c. Backgammon

If you choose to play in single player mode, you will face an AI opponent. If in multi player mode, the usual choice between Hotseat and Single Game Pak applies.

The rules of Backgammon are reasonably complex, but it is an easy game to pick up once you know the basics. Each player has 15 stones. One player uses black stones whilst the other uses white. The stones are arranged on a board of triangles known as points, as you will see if you start a game. There is a dividing ridge in the centre of the board, the section on the left being the outer board and the section on your right being the inner board. The aim of the game is to move your stones across and off the table - the first player to achieve this is the winner. There are 24 points altogether - 6 on each outer and inner board.

At the start of the game, both players roll a dice. The player with the highest number takes the first turn, and uses the number on the dice as the first move. From then on, each player takes it in turns to roll the dice and move their stones around the board. As there are two dice used in this game, you can either move one stone for each different number (therefore two stones get moved), or you can apply both numbers to just one stone and move that. If both dice show the same number when you roll, then you get a total of four moves of the number shown on the dice. So, to recap, if you rolled for example a 5 and a 3, you could either move one stone 5 points and another stone 3 points, or move one stone 8 points. If you rolled a 5 and a 5, you would be able to move four stones by 20 points, or each of four stones by 5 points, or any mixture that adds up to this amount. Moving is compulsory if you can do so, but if you can only move one piece then you must move that. If you can't move any stones, then you lose the turn.

You cannot move one of your stones onto a point occupied by two or more of the other player's stones. There is no maximum to the number of stones of the same colour that can be on the same point.

If there is a single stone occupying a point, this is called a "blot". If the opposing player moves a piece onto your blot (and vice versa), it must be placed onto the ridge in the centre of the board. In this case, you will not be able to move any other pieces until this piece is back in play, which you must achieve by placing it onto the section of board on your upper right. To do this you will need to roll both dice on your turn. You will then have to place your stone on the numbered point that matches the number on either of your dice, so long as it is available to do so. For this purpose, the point on the far right is number one, through to number six which is the point nearest the ridge. Use one of the numbers you rolled to put the piece back in play, and the other number you rolled to move it. If neither of the points you rolled are free, then you lose the turn.

For the sake of making this easier to remember, think of the board as being divided into quarters. The section on the top right is the furthest away. You should always move your pieces in an anti-clockwise direction, towards the quarter on your near-right. Once all your pieces arrive at the near-right section, this is where you can move them off the board, but you can ONLY move your stones off the board when they are all in this quarter and available to move. Once all your stones are off the board, you have won the game. That's it!

Controls

So, if that explanation didn't completely put you off, here are the controls. Pressing Start at any time pauses the game. Press start again to un-pause it. Use the D-pad to move the cursor, to select the point which you wish to move your stones from when taking a turn. Use the A button to move using the value on the right hand dice, and the B button to move using the value on the left hand dice. During play, you will see the outcome of moving the selected piece using the A or B buttons in the form of icons at the outer edges of the board.

In-Game Options

The pause menu (press Start) for Backgammon contains the following available options:

1. Preferences - contains options to adjust the music volume, change the music tracks you hear, change the Difficulty level (ranges from Very Easy to Extreme), alter the view of the game, change the side of the board you are playing from via the Human on Top option, or Alternate Colours (play using alternating colours each game).
2. Game - allows you to Start New (start a new game), Demo (show a demo game), Load, Save or Quit (return to game selection screen).
3. Help - choose to Switch Sides or select How to Play for a brief run-down of the rules.

d. Chess

Usual choice of single player = AI opponent or multi player = Hotseat or Single Game Pak applies here.

Chess is a very old strategy board game. If you have never played it before, you may find the learning curve quite steep initially, but it is very much worth persevering, as it is really an excellent game and a great skill to have. The chess board is an eight-by-eight checkered grid. The player with the white pieces always takes the first turn. Both players take one move each, the aim being to capture your opponent's King. You achieve this by moving your pieces into such positions that the opponent's King can not take a move without being captured by any piece - this scenario is known as "Checkmate". When a King can be taken by a piece but can take defence to prevent being captured, it is referred to as "Check". If you are under Check, you will only be able to move either the King (to move it out of the way) or another piece (to directly block the opponent from taking the King). If both players are in a position whereby it would be impossible to cause a Checkmate scenario (usually when there are no pieces left on the board other than the two Kings), this is Stalemate, meaning that no player can win - basically, a tie. Each different piece can move in its own unique way. To take one of your opponent's pieces, you must move your piece into the square that the opponent's piece is currently occupying. Pieces may only move when there is a clear path - they can not jump over other pieces, the only exception to this rule being Knights. I will describe the movement range of the different pieces here, based on the starting positions of the pieces in the standard chess formation (pieces always begin play in the same locations).

Each player has 16 pieces arranged in two rows. Your front row is comprised of eight identical pieces known as pawns. Pawns are very limited in their capacity for movement. You can move a pawn forward one or two spaces on its first move only, then only one space forward for each move it makes after the first. To take an opponent's piece using a pawn, you must move diagonally left or right one space - you cannot take pieces by moving forwards, and you cannot move diagonally unless you are taking a piece. Pawns can never move backwards on the grid - only forwards. They are generally considered to be low-value

- playing pieces), Human On Top (put your icon above the opponent's icon in single player mode), Alternate Colours (select this to play alternating games with black and white), Opening Book (not sure what this is).
2. Game - Restart, Start New, Set Up Board (allows you to create a scenario by placing pieces in the locations you want them on the board. You could use this to, for example, replay famous chess matches or create your own chess problems), Demo (view demo game), Solve Problem (allows you to get the AI to solve the current situation for you during play, by assigning a set number of moves in which you would like to achieve Checkmate and having the computer work out for you how to achieve it), Select Task (play an assigned chess problem), Load, Save, Quit (return to game selection screen).
 3. Help - Switch Sides, Back one move, redo one move, Tutor (access the built in chess tutor), Animate (graphical option), Keep Arrows (leave the arrows showing movements on the screen), How to play (access rules).

e. Checkers

Again, if you choose to play this in single player mode, you will face an AI opponent. Otherwise, you have the usual multi player options of Hotseat or Single Game Pak.

The game of Checkers is a very simple one. The two colors in this version are white and red, and red always plays first. The game board is an eight by eight checkered grid. Only the dark squares of the grid are used. Each player has twelve circular pieces which all have the same movement capabilities and the same rules - much simpler than chess! The aim is to remove all of your opponent's pieces from the board. The last player standing when this has happened is the winner. The twelve pieces of each player start the game by occupying the four dark squares on the three rows nearest their respective player.

To remove your opponent's pieces, you will need to skip over them to the square beyond. You can only jump over an adjacent piece, and you can only move up the grid diagonally. You can not move in straight lines and you cannot move back. You can only jump when the square past the piece is empty. When you are not taking a piece, you can only move one square at a time. Example:

```

|_O_|_O_|_O_|_O_| This example shows a game in progress. Squares marked
|_|_|_|_O_|_O_|_| with O signify your opponent's pieces. Squares marked
|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| with * signify your pieces. If you look towards the
|_|_|_|_O_|_|_|_| middle of the grid, you will see that one of your
|_|_|_|_*_|_|_|_|_| pieces is in a position to remove your opponent's
|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| piece. Upon doing this you would move to the square
|_|_|_|_*_|_|_|_|_| marked with ^. However, once you move there you will
|*_|_|_*_|_|_*_|_|_| find that your opponent can take your piece on their
                        next turn, since it will be in a square adjacent to
their pieces and with no pieces blocking the path behind it. This is something
that you should watch out for during play. Also note that you can only jump
over one piece at once, unless you form a chain of jumps, illustrated below:

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|_O_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| In this example, the squares marked with * show your
|_|_|_|_|_O_|_|_|_|_| pieces, and the squares marked with O signify your
|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| opponent's pieces. It is your turn to move. Your
|_|_|_|_|_O_|_|_|_|_| piece nearest the centre can jump over the piece next
|_|_|_|_|_*_|_|_|_|_| to it as in the example above. However, the square it
|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| will land on has another available jump which can be
|_|_*_|_|_*_|_|_*_|_|_| performed from it, so rather than just moving once

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|*|_|_|*|_|_|*|_|_|*|_|_| as usual, you can actually perform both jumps at once in order to take both your opponent's pieces in one simple move. You'll also notice that once this move has been performed, you will also have arrived at the back of the grid. Your pieces change when they reach this location and can now move both backwards and forwards. You should also be aware that if you're in a position to take one of your opponent's pieces, you won't be able to move your other pieces normally. If you can take it, you must take it. Also, you can't jump over your own pieces to move. Once one player has no pieces left, the game is over.

Controls

Use the D-pad to navigate around the screen. Press A once the cursor is over a piece to select it, use the D-pad to move to the square you wish to move the piece to, and press A again to confirm the movement. If the piece cannot be moved there, the move simply won't register.

In-Game Options

Press the Start button to access the in-game menus. The options available are:

1. Preferences - adjust the Music Volume, change Music Tracks, change the Difficulty level (from Very Easy through to Extreme), change the view of the game (Perspective view is the default), Figures (use White and Red or White and Black pieces), Mode (Normal or Giveaway. Normal is a regular game, but Giveaway mode is when you win by losing your pieces to the other player). Human On Top (play from the opposite end of the board) and Alternate Colours (play alternating colours each game) are also available.
2. Game - Start New Game, Demo (show demo game), Load, Save, Quit (return to game selection screen).
3. Help - Switch Sides, Back One Move, Redo One Move (all as before), Keep Arrows (make the arrows that show where you have moved stay on screen), Animate (graphical option) and How to Play (show rules of game).

----- f. Reversi -----

As with the other games, if you choose single player you will face an AI opponent, or with multi player you will have the choice of Hotseat (take it in turns on the same machine), or Single Game Pak (play via linking up two GBAs).

The principle of Reversi is very simple. Play takes place on an eight by eight checkered board. Players use coloured discs - black and white. At the start of the game, the central four squares of the board are occupied by two white and two black discs. Players then take turns placing one disc per turn of their own colour on the board. Any of the opponent's discs trapped between the new disc and a disc already on the table are flipped over and become the colour of the player who flipped them. Discs can be flipped in any line - horizontal, diagonal or vertical. Example:

|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| In this example, squares marked with O symbolize
 |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| squares containing a white disc, and squares marked
 |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| with * symbolize squares containing a black disc. If
 |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| another white piece is added to the square marked
 |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| with ^, then the black disc in between the two white
 |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| discs will be flipped over to become a white disc.
 |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| Each turn, you have to flip at least one disc to make
 |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| a legal move. If there are no moves available then
 you will forfeit the turn.

Whilst playing the game, if you take a look at the right hand side of the screen, you will see that a number is visible below your name. This is your current score, and is equal to the number of discs you have on the board. The game ends when every square on the board is occupied by a disc, and the player with the most discs on the board is the winner.

Controls

Use the D-pad to navigate around the board. When you place the cursor over a square that has an available move, the discs that will be flipped to your colour will show up as grey. Press A to confirm a move.

In-Game Options

Press Start at any time to pause the game and access the in-game menu screen. Available options are:

1. Preferences - Music Volume, Music Tracks, Difficulty (ranges from Very Easy to Extreme. Default for this game is Easy), Perspective View (alters the angle from which you see the board), Human on Top (puts your icon above that of the AI in single player mode), Alternate Colours (play each game in turn using alternating colours).
2. Game - Start New, Demo, Load, Save, Quit (returns you to the game selection screen).
3. Help - Switch Sides, Back One Move, Redo One Move (all as before). Animate (graphical option), How to Play (explains the rules briefly).

g. Dominoes

In single player mode, you will face an AI opponent. In multi player mode, you have the choice of Hotseat (two players use one machine in turn) or Single Game Pak (play via link-up).

Dominoes is a remarkably simple game. There are a number of tiles (known as bones) which have numbers ranging from 0 to 6 marked on them, with two numbers on each bone. Certain of the bones are called doubles - these are bones with the same number marked on them twice. In this version, each player starts off with seven bones, with a reserve pool being left to the side. The player with the highest double bone plays first, and places that bone on the table. Then each player must take turns to place a bone on the table, which must have a matching number with one free end number currently on the table. If the player cannot achieve this, then you must draw another bone from the reserve, and keep doing so until you are able to make a move. If there are no reserve bones left then you will have to pass. The game ends when a player scores the amount of points required to win (which you can set via the pause menu). Each hand ends when either a player plays the last domino, or when no-one is able to move. The player who played the last domino wins points equal to the values of the other player's remaining dominoes and then a new hand is played, continuing until one player passes the required score to win.

Controls

Use the D-Pad to navigate your bones, and press A to select one and place it. You will see where you are able to move as an icon will appear to show you. If you can't make a move, then pressing A will draw a new bone from the reserve for you. If you can make a move but wish to draw a bone anyway, then press B. The L and R buttons allow you to choose where to place the bone if multiple

locations are available, and pressing Select will make the AI move for you.

In-Game Options

Press Start at any time to access the pause menu. Available options are:

1. Preferences - Music Volume control, Music Tracks, change the Difficulty level, and Human To The Left (choose which side of the screen your hand is on).
2. Game - Start New, Restart, Demo, Load, Save, Quit (returns to game selection screen).
3. Help - Switch Sides, Back One Move, Redo One Move, Manual Deal, How To Play.

h. Four in a Row

As with the other games, if you opt to play in single player mode, you will face an AI opponent, whereas in multi player mode you have the option of Hotseat or Single Game Pak to play on the same machines or via link-up.

The premise of Four in a Row is very simple. Both players are assigned either red or yellow tiles. On the screen you'll see what appears to be a vertical grid. Each player takes it in turns to drop tiles down the columns, using gravity to determine their placement. Just take it in turns to drop the tiles and the first player to create a row of four tiles of their colour running in any direction including diagonally wins the game. You will need to be strategic in order to block your opponent's efforts, by carefully watching where they place their tiles.

Controls

Use the D-pad to choose which column you wish to put your tile down, and press A to confirm the placement. You will see a flashing icon showing you where the tile will land before you drop it.

In-Game Options

Press Start to pause the game and access the menu. Press Start again to return to the game. Available options are:

1. Preferences - Music Volume, Music Tracks, Difficulty (default Difficulty setting is Average), Perspective View (alters the way you see the grid), Human On Top (just makes your face show above the AI instead of below it), Alternate Colours (play each game using alternating colours).
2. Game - Start New, Demo, Load, Save, Quit (takes you back to the game selection screen).
3. Help - Switch Sides, Back One Move, Redo One Move, How to Play (for a brief explanation of the rules).

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5. Credits

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- o GameFAQs for hosting this guide, and for the legal notice.
- o Telegames, for making Ultimate Brain Games.
- o Me, for foregoing sleep for three days to write this damn thing!

o An unknown Yahoo user, for teaching me to play backgammon.

o August, for teaching me to play Reversi.

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6. Things I learnt while writing this guide
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o Backgammon is estimated to be some 5000 years old.

o There is such a thing as "Chess Archaeology".

o Cat should not listen to Fear Factory when he has a headache.

o Mahjong evolved from Dominoes.

o Dominoes is deceptively difficult.

o At this time of year, the sun rises at approximately 4.30am.

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