

SeaHaven Towers Instruction Manual

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SeaHaven Towers Instruction Manual

Introduction

Thank you for purchasing SeaHaven Towers; it is a decision you won't regret. If you have already seen the SeaHaven Demo, you're probably familiar with the game. But even so, take the time to glance at **Getting Started** and **The Advice Column**. If you haven't seen the demo, read the whole manual; a few minutes of reading might save you a lot of frustration. But most of all, don't be afraid to learn by trial and error. SeaHaven is a well designed game that won't go berserk; if it does, we want to hear about it. (The first person to report each reproducible bug gets two Unsane Creations products free.) SeaHaven Towers is more than just another solitaire game; it's solitaire like you always wished it could be.

Getting Started

The SeaHaven Towers Key Disk is a bootable disk with key disk protection. This means that if you make backup copies or if you copy SeaHaven to your hard disk, you will be prompted to put in the SeaHaven Key Disk before you can play.

When you open SeaHaven you will see two versions, SeaHaven Towers and SeaHaven Strip. The Strip version is a 33K version that lacks a few options. It is designed to take up less memory so you can easily multitask, but is essentially the same. You will also see demos of other UnSane Creations products. Take the time to look at them and pass them on to your friends.

SeaHaven stores its scores and other information in a file called **SeaHaven Scores** in your s: directory. Among the other information stored in this file is the seed for the random number generator. SeaHaven changes this seed every time you quit. If you leave a game without quitting, you will play that same game the next time you start SeaHaven. If you use another disk to boot from, copy the scores to the s: directory of that disk or assign S: to the SeaHaven disk. If you don't, you'll find that you're playing the same games over.

Standard Rules

For those of you experienced at playing different solitaire games, here is a quick summary of the rules: The object of the game is to separate the deck into its four suits, each in an ordered stack from

ace to king. The cards are dealt face up into ten piles, five cards per pile, with the remaining two cards on two of the four towers. Only the cards on the towers and the top card on each of the ten piles can be moved. Cards of the same suit can be stacked in descending order. Any card can be placed on a tower, and only kings can be placed on empty piles. For a more detailed explanation, read on.

The playing field is divided into three different parts. The stacks, one for each suit, where the cards are stacked from ace to king, the towers, temporary holding places for cards, and the piles, where most of the cards are at the beginning of a game. See figure 1, below.

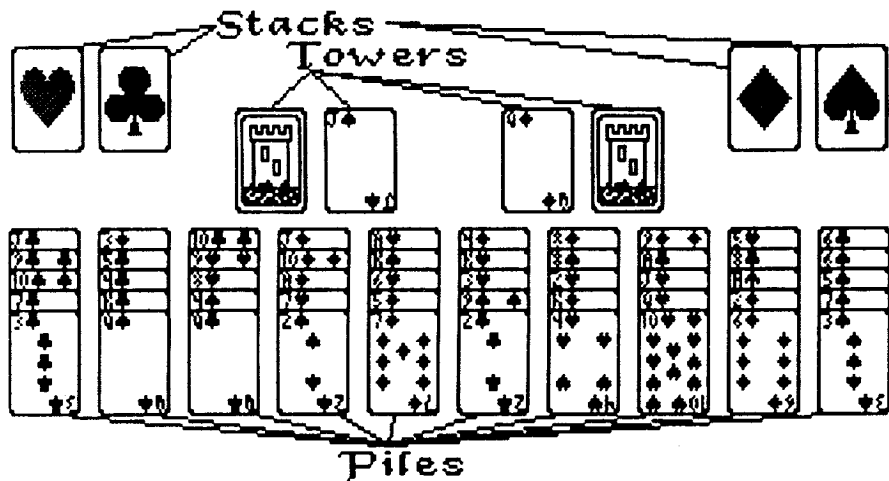


Figure 1

SeaHaven automatically moves cards to the appropriate stack as they are freed. For example, if the ace of spades were on one of the towers in the beginning of the game, the ace would automatically move up to begin the spade stack. Then the two of spades could move up and cover the ace, assuming it were on a tower or the top of pile. This would continue until one of the cards wasn't free; for instance if the three of spades were at the bottom of a pile. This means that it is theoretically possible for you to begin a new game and find that you've won without making a single move, even if winning the lottery is fourteen times more likely.

Now it is obvious that you are incredibly lucky, witnessed by the fact that you have just purchased SeaHaven Towers, but even with

your luck you couldn't win more than one game with luck alone. And where luck doesn't suffice, skill and strategy must. To win you must free the cards of each suit sequentially, aces, then twos, threes, etc... There are two operations that help you succeed in this task. First, cards of the same suit can be placed on one another in

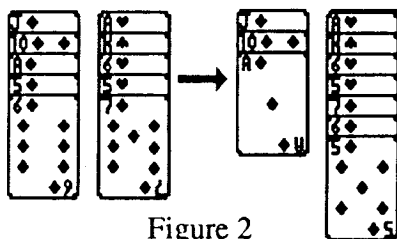


Figure 2

descending order. For example, the six of diamonds can be placed on the seven of diamonds, and the five of diamonds on the six. If either the five or six of diamonds were previously over an ace, as in figure 2, that card is now free and will be moved to begin a stack by the computer. Second, any card

can be placed on a tower. Now consider figure 3, the six of diamonds could still go on the seven, but the five of hearts would remain on the ace. The only way to free the ace, since the six of hearts is covered by the five, seven, and six of diamonds, would be to put the five on an empty tower. The ace would then be free to begin a stack as before.

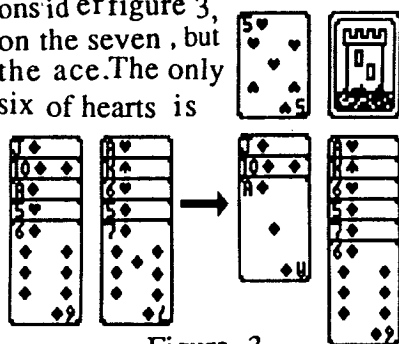


Figure 3

Sometimes you will want to move a series of cards. The only way to do this is by using the towers. For example, if you wanted to place both the six and five of diamonds onto the seven, you would first have to put the five onto an empty tower, move the six onto the seven, and then move the five back onto the six as in figure 4. This becomes tedious very quickly. Therefore SeaHaven gives you a shortcut; it allows you to move both the five and the

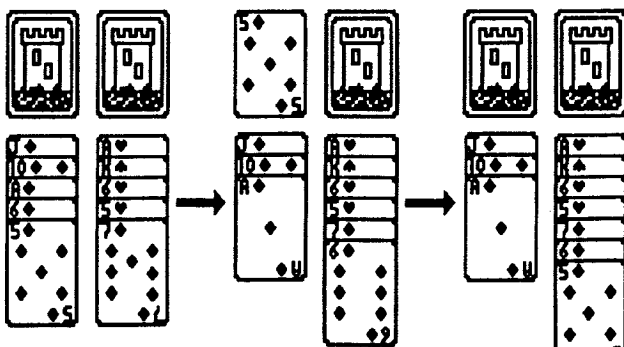


Figure 4

six together, skipping the middle step in figure 4. This means that you can only move at most one card more than the number of empty towers. With all four towers empty

you can move a maximum of five cards, with three empty towers you can move four, etc...

And finally, if during the course of a game you empty a pile, you can start a new one with a king. Because kings are the last cards to go up to the stacks, they often get in the way, filling towers and covering cards you need. By putting them on empty stacks, you start a new pile and put them where they can do no harm.

Variations

SeaHaven Towers allows you to change its rules, giving you a total of forty-eight different variations. You can change SeaHaven's rules by selecting **Change Rules** under the **Edit** menu. When you do, you see the following options:

Cards only go on same suit

Cards go on same color

Cards go on any suit

Move one card at a time

Move multiple cards together

Cards count down only

Cards count up or down

Only Kings may be put on an empty pile

Any card may be put on an empty pile

Game starts with 8 piles

Game starts with 10 piles

The italicized options are the rules used in standard play. You can vary the game's difficulty by changing these options, making SeaHaven challenging for anyone, from the youngest novice to the oldest master.

The first set of options affect how cards are stacked in piles. The standard rules only let you stack cards of the same suit. Alternately, with the second option you can stack cards of the same color together, clubs with spades and diamonds with hearts. Or with the third option you can stack cards of any suit on cards of any other; in other words, cards are stacked by numerical order only.

The second set controls card movement. Normally you can only move one card at a time, meaning the only way to move a group of

cards is by using one or more of the towers. Changing this option enables you to move a group of cards without using the towers, making it possible for you to move any size group of cards even if all four towers are filled.

The third set determines the numerical order in which cards are stacked. Standard rules only allow you to stack cards in descending order, but by changing this option, you can stack cards in both descending and ascending order. This means that both a king and a jack can be placed on a queen, both a queen and a ten on a jack, etc...

The fourth set only influences empty piles. Under standard rules you can only place kings on empty piles, but by changing this option you can place any card on an empty pile.

And finally, the last set of options varies the number of piles the game starts with. Normally you start with ten piles of five cards each and two full towers, but you can start with eight piles of six cards each and four full towers.

Menus

The **Project** menu contains four possible selections. **About** contains important information about SeaHaven Towers. Take the time to look at this at least once. **New Game**, or the right Amiga-N key combination, starts a new game. **Same Game**, or right Amiga-S, permits those interested in tournament play to compete with the same game. It clears the Undo/Redo and Cheat buffers just as if it was a new game. And finally **Quit**, or right Amiga-Q, allows you to leave SeaHaven Towers. When you quit, SeaHaven automatically saves your current position so when you play SeaHaven again, you will be exactly where you left off, even if you were in the middle of a game.

Under the **Edit** menu there are four more selections. **Undo**, or right Amiga-X, undoes a move. You can undo all the moves from the very end of a game to the very beginning. **Redo**, or right Amiga-R, redoes an undone move. Undo and Redo compliment each other and provide you with a powerful tool for solving SeaHaven Towers. **Reset Scores** resets SeaHaven's scores. For more information on how SeaHaven keeps score, see the Scoring section of this manual. The final option, **Change Rules**, permits the user to change SeaHaven's rules. For more information on this option, see the **Variations** section.

The final menu, the **Options** menu, contains five options. The first, **Help!**, provides you with an online summary of the standard rules for SeaHaven Towers. You can also get this summary by

hitting the 'Help' key or the right Amiga-H key combination. This option is not included in the Strip version. The next, **Slow Cards/Quick Cards** controls how cards are moved by the computer to the stacks. The cards can either move with blinding speed or stately decorum depending on your preference. The option in use is the opposite of what shows in the menu, which means that when the cards move with blinding speed, **Slow Cards** shows in the menu, and when the cards move with stately decorum, **Quick Cards** is visible. The next option, **Cheat** or right Amiga-C, offers you computer aid. Further information on this option is covered in the **Cheating** section. **Background On/Off** enables you to turn the background picture on or off. Like the **Slow Cards/Quick Cards** option, the menu shows the option not in effect. This is another option not included in the Strip version. And finally, **Sound On/Off** allows you to switch the sound on or off. Normally SeaHaven tells you when you pick up a card, when you make a good move, and when you make a bad move with sound. If this becomes annoying, turn it off with this option.

Cheating

There are two ways to cheat. One is to change the rules to make the game easier. The other is to use **Cheat** from the Options menu. For information on how cheating affects scoring, see the Scoring section.

Changing the rules is the easiest way to cheat. It is very easy to get into a situation where you think to yourself, "If I could only do this, I could win the game." SeaHaven permits you to do just that and win the game with **Change Rules** under the **Edit** menu. For more information on this option, see the **Variations** section.

But if changing the rules doesn't appeal to you, there is always **Cheat** in the **Options** menu. If you select this option, the computer begins to examine every possible move from your present position. It will determine, given the time, whether or not it is possible to win from that position. If it finds a way to win, it will make one move toward that win. Selecting **Cheat** again will cause it to make another move toward that win. **Cheat** only makes you wait when it needs to think, which means that after its finished thinking, it will be spontaneous unless you've changed things significantly. If it isn't possible to win from you current position it will warn you that you're wasting your time. You can then **Undo** a few moves and try **Cheat** again.

Cheat was not designed to solve games from the beginning. The sheer number of possible moves involved prohibits it. What it

does is help you out of tight situations. If you get the point where you're stuck and can't decide what to do, run Cheat. Close to the end of a game it usually gives you an answer relatively quickly. Take a break for a few minutes and Cheat will probably have an answer for you. If you find you can't wait any longer, press the left mouse button. You will see a requestor with three options: Quit Cheating, Keep Working, and Save Work. Quit Cheating stops the computer and Keep Working restarts it. Save Work saves the information from the cheat buffer and quits the game. When you start SeaHaven again, you will begin cheating where you left off.

While the computer cheats you will see an illuminating new pointer. This pointer gives you information on how the cheat is progressing. The search progresses in a tree of all the possible moves from your current position. The light rays on the pointer change when the search moves down another branch. If the light rays don't change, it means that the search is progressing down the same branch and that means that you are probably close to a solution. It's up to you to decide how long to wait. Some solutions occur almost immediately while others can take days or weeks or years.

Scoring

The computer keeps a number of statistics: how many games you've won or lost in a row, how many games you've won, how many you've lost, the percentage of games you've won, your longest winning streak, and your longest losing streak. And it keeps track of these statistics for each of the forty-eight variations of the game. The computer counts as a loss any unfinished game and any game in which you've cheated. When you use Cheat you will get a message, warning you that if you continue your current game will be counted as a loss. Likewise if you Change Rules in the middle of a game you will also get a warning; the computer assumes that if you change the rules in the middle of a game you're making them easier. In both cases, it will record a loss for the game you're playing to the rules you started with. The only time you won't receive these messages when you begin to cheat is if you are replaying a game you've already won or lost; you've already been accorded a win or a loss, so it doesn't matter. And finally, you can reset these scores by using the Reset Scores option under the **Edit** menu.

The Advice Column

1. If you've never played SeaHaven Towers before, start with simpler rules. It takes a few games to get used to SeaHaven; it is quite likely that you will lose your first twenty games with the standard rules. Two good rules to change are 'move multiple cards together' and 'any card may be put on an empty pile.' If the game is still too hard, change a few more rules. The point is to learn to play SeaHaven without getting frustrated. After all, aren't games supposed to be fun?
2. Keep as many towers free as you can. A large part of the game is emptying towers so you can make the moves you need to win the game. Cards like kings, queens, and other high cards tend to remain on the towers for a long time. Before you place a card on a tower, find its mate. Don't put the two of spades on a tower if the ace of spades is at the bottom of a pile of kings. This doesn't mean that you can't or even shouldn't do it, just be aware that you're sacrificing a tower when you do. Plan your use of the towers.
3. Free the aces and other low cards you can. When the computer moves cards up to the stacks, it moves them out of play. If you can even start one suit, you'll find the game becomes easier.
4. Large sequences of cards can't be moved easily. At the very most sequences shouldn't be larger than three or four cards. Since the only way to move sequences is with the towers and there are only four towers, any sequence larger than five cards can't be moved at all. Consider this example. The ace of clubs is covered by the five and four of diamonds. This would mean that the four of diamonds couldn't go anywhere other than a tower, since it is already on the five. Even if the six of diamonds were at the top of a pile you couldn't use it, because in moving the five you must first move the four. The solution in this instance is to empty a tower. But for large sequences there is no solution, the cards covered are out of play for the rest of the game.
5. Piles with only one card are good starting points for large sequences. When a sequence doesn't cover anything, you don't need to move it and its size doesn't matter. So before you remove the last card from a pile, try to start a sequence. Also see #6.
6. Put your kings on empty piles. Before you empty a pile, decide whether it is better for you to start a sequence with the last card of that pile or a king. But if you do decide to empty the pile, put a king there.
7. Use Undo. Use it when you're in trouble. Use it when you make a mistake. But use it, even if you have to Undo to the start of a game. Undoing is not cheating. You can always Redo an undone move.
8. If, in time, SeaHaven becomes too easy, make it harder. You

can start with eight piles instead of ten. If you use eight piles, change a couple of the other options as well, otherwise you may find winning impossible.

9. And finally, take the preceding with a grain of salt. Like many other prominent psychologists, astrologists, and Advice Columnists, I may not have the slightest idea what I am talking about. Use your own judgement.

Rumors

Steve, SeaHaven's programmer, refuses to admit seeing Elvis recently. Yet confirmed sources reported seeing Elvis in his vicinity and his horoscope said he would meet Elvis in person. Steve wouldn't reveal what was said in that meeting, but sources close to him say it's only a matter of time. If you wish to speak to Steve, about SeaHaven, Elvis, or anything else for that matter, feel free to contact him at (314) 892-5367 or write to him c/o:

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Credits

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