Welcome to Senet Deluxe

Legend
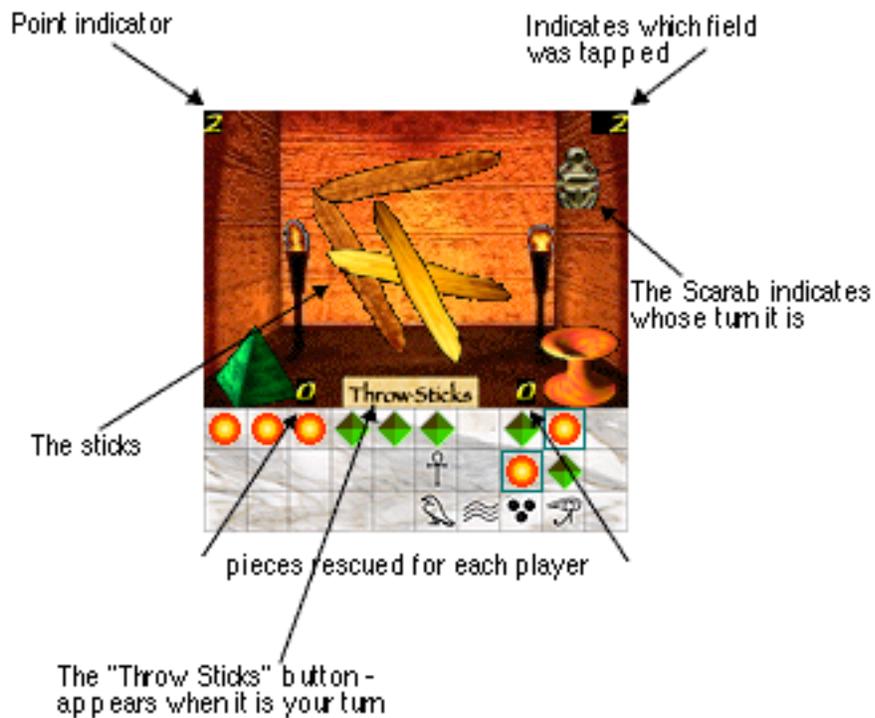
Point indicator

Indicates which field was tapped

The Scarab indicates whose turn it is

The sticks

pieces rescued for each player

The "Throw Sticks" button - appears when it is your turn

Operation

How to Play

After starting the program one has to select the "New Game" menu item from the File menu, if a game is not already in progress.
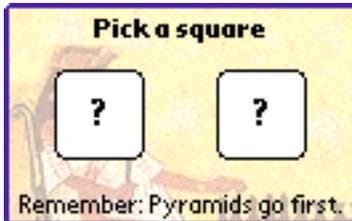
One will then be presented with a small dialog where the beginning party is selected. Simply tap one of the question marks.

 Pyramids   Spools

Once the game starts there are two possibilities. If the computer (handheld device) received Pyramids, it will start by itself.

Otherwise the "Throw Sticks" button will be displayed and the player needs to tap it. Once the sticks are cast a pawn (Pyramid or Spool) can be selected and will move into its new location if the selection was valid.


The Scarab will always point to the player whose turn it currently is.

Rules

History
Senet is an ancient Egyptian race game and probably the ancestor of our modern backgammon. The oldest known form of the game is shown in a painting from the tomb of Hesy (circa 2686-2613 BCE).

The Sticks

Bright Stick   Dark Stick
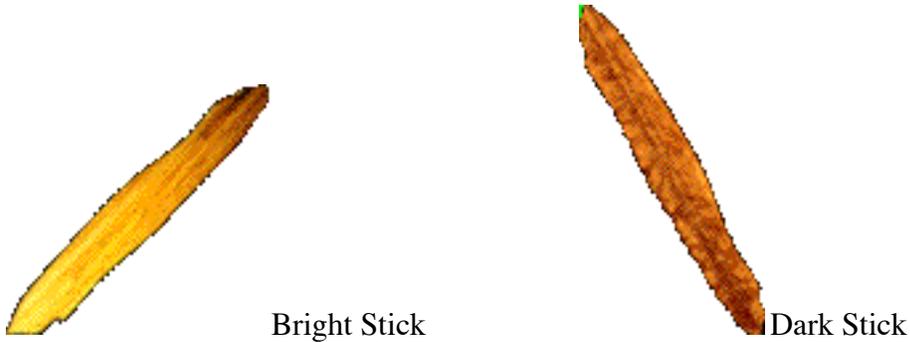
Instead of dice Senet uses 4 sticks. Each stick has a bright side and a dark side. Every bright side is a point (i.e. 2 x dark and 2 x bright = 2 points). If only dark sides are showing the player is awarded 5 points. When a 1, 4, or 5 is thrown the player gets another turn. This can happen multiple times and needs to be considered when forming a strategy.

The Basic Board
The board is composed of 30 squares arranged in form of a mirrored 'S' like this:

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1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11
21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
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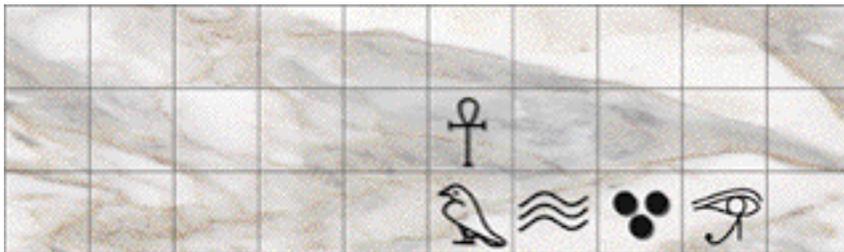

Pawns follow this path from their start positions to the House of Horus. The player moving all of his pawns off the board first wins.

Moving and Blocking

When moving into a field occupied by an opponent, the pieces switch places. If, however, the opponent's pawn is part of a row of two or more, it cannot be beaten.
It is possible to "jump" over an opponent if it isn't part of a row of 3 pieces or more. 3 pieces are considered a block and are an important strategic tool.

The House of Rebirth

This is the 16th square and shows the Ankh symbol. If a pawn enters the House of Water or is beaten on one of the last three fields of the board, it must be moved back to this field. Should the field be occupied by any other game piece the pawn moves to the first free field preceeding it.
Note: A player has to move when possible!

The House of Happiness

This is the 26th square and shows the the picture of a bird. From here on pieces can be moved off the board if the first row is cleared completely. Pawns can move off
the board if the number thrown is one higher than the last field (i.e. from the House of Horus a 1 is needed or a 5 from the House of Happiness).

Other Houses

Pawns landing on the House of Water go back to the House of Rebirth as do pawns beaten on the Houses of Three Truths, Re Atoun and Horus (fld.28-30). There are no blocks on these last 3 fields and pawns can only move off the board from here. They are thus easy prey and you want to move them quickly.

Options

The classic form of Senet enforces one additional rule of movement. That is the rule to move backwards if no other options exist. This can be enabled in the Preferences dialog if desired. Placing hilites on fields with a valid move is also a preference and should be disabled once the player has gained some proficiency.

Concluding

There are many different sets of rules to play Senet - notably the Kendall and Bell variants. This program currently only uses another fairly modern set of rules based on both. Enjoy!