

Score Four

Score Four is a delightful and challenging combination of Connect Four and Qubic. The game has been around since the 1960s and, unlike the others discussed in this chapter, does not seem to have been subjected to complete analysis. Of course, it may have been analyzed without success by many individuals who chose not to publish their lack of success. In any case, you're not likely to find much information about the game although the game itself is readily available.

It's a three-dimensional game played on a 4x4 square with 16 vertical posts. Two players take turns placing pieces on the posts. The pieces, of course, slide down the posts. The object of the game is to get four of your pieces in a row horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. Sound familiar? A game published in 1968 by Funtastic is pictured to the left. The cups in the picture might be misleading because they have no roll in the game. They're only used to store the pieces not being used.



As has been the case with the other games discussed in this chapter, Score Four is often available online at a very reasonable price. The game is more fun to play if you're playing with a published version or if you take a little time to make your own.

The picture to the right shows a homemade game of Score Four. It looks like it was made with a small piece of wood, 16 nails or dowels, and 64 beads—all of which are readily available. I think it makes an attractive display as well as being a challenging game.



Given the popularity of Score Four, I'm surprised at the lack of readily available information about it. This might be a publishing opportunity for you. Learn the game, analyze it fully, and publish your results.

You already know a good deal about Score Four. Because the game is similar to Qubic and Connect Four, you should be able to quickly do the following problems.

- P24.** There are 64 different positions in the Score Four playing space. How many different ways are there to place your markers in four consecutive positions when playing Score Four?
- P25.** As in the other games in this section, playing in certain positions is more helpful than playing in other positions. Rank each of the 64 possible positions of Score Four in order of importance.