

BAL

The Game for Smart People

by Fred Bolder

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Foreword

The first Bal game was programmed by Fred Bolder in Turbo Pascal. Later it was converted by Fred Bolder to C# and many levels and new objects were added. During a webdevelopment course, Fred Bolder made together with Michał Kotkiewicz, Donnie Avant and Diana Sahlean the web site Games From Scratch including the game Bal. Bal was totally rewritten for JavaScript. The series 1 levels were copied from the C# bal game, but the series 2 levels and the series Small levels were made during the course. The C# bal game has more level series, but they were not copied. Later Fred Bolder decided to make a separate Bal web site based on the Bal code from Games From Scratch, but most of the code had to change a lot, because of the many new objects. There were also a lot of levels added to the existing series.

This documents gives perhaps more information than you want to know. Decide for yourself if you prefer to discover new objects while playing or if you want to be prepared.

Keep in mind that this manual is for the online Bal game.

Playing the game

In every level you control the blue ball with the happy face. You have to eat all the little green balls. You can push the white balls and the light blue balls, but not more than 2 at the same time. The light blue balls are floating balls and they will always stay at the same height. Red balls and red fish are very dangerous. If you push a yellow ball, it will continue as far as possible. You cannot push more yellow balls at the same time or push a yellow ball together with another ball. You can push a yellow ball in the directions left, right, up and down. A purple ball is almost the same as a yellow ball, but when you push a purple ball, it will go only one position further. You cannot push a ball through a one direction, a teleport, a game rotator or a door with a lock. You can control the blue ball with the letter keys, the arrow keys, the number keys or the arrow buttons. In the water you can swim in every direction.

If you see for example a level number 750, it doesn't mean that there are 750 or even more levels. The number depends also on the series and on the original Bal game.

When you solve a level, you will get a code that gives you access to the next level whenever you want by pressing the Code button, so it is important to write down the code. Some levels are very difficult. If you can't solve a certain level, you can press the ? button and choose Hint, start with another series or load a random level. You can not get all existing levels by loading a random level.

Tips

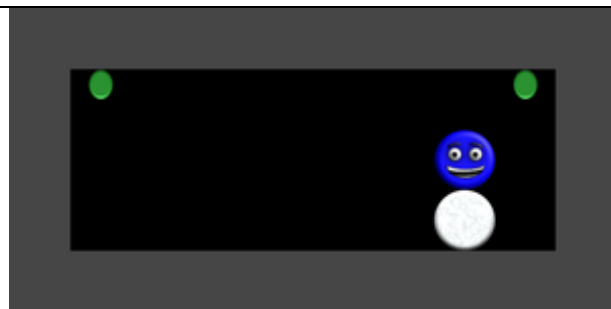
When you use a white ball, keep in mind that you might also need it for something else.



The blue ball has to eat two green balls, but they are both too high to reach, so it has to use the white ball.



The blue ball moved the white ball totally to the right and jumped on top of it. Now the blue ball can eat the green ball, but it is impossible to eat the other green ball, since the white ball can not be used anymore.



In this example, the blue ball moved the white ball as far as needed to the right and jumped on top of it.



The blue ball ate the green ball by jumping to the right. Now the white ball can be moved to the left to eat the other green ball.

Make sure that you can get all the white balls you need.



The blue ball needs to throw two white balls in the deep hole, otherwise it can not jump out.



The blue ball moved to the left and pushed one white ball in the hole, but now it can push the white ball only to the right.



In this example, the blue ball moved only two steps to the left.



After that, the blue ball moved one step back and now it can push two white balls in the hole, jump to the right, move to the right and eat the green ball.

Actions

You can control the blue ball with the happy face by pressing keys. There are also arrow buttons available for tablets and phones, but playing the game is much easier with a PC.

| Action | Letter key | Arrow key | Number key |
|----------------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|
| Walk left / Swim left | A | Arrow left | 4 |
| Walk right / Swim right | D | Arrow right | 6 |
| Jump / Push up / Swim up | W | Arrow up | 8 |
| Jump left / Swim up left | Q | Shift + Arrow left | 7 |
| Jump right / Swim up right | E | Shift + Arrow right | 9 |
| Push down / Swim down | S | Arrow down | 2 |
| Swim down left | Y | - | 1 |
| Swim down right | C | - | 3 |

When you press first the letter K followed by another key or key combination, you can execute the following actions. It doesn't matter if you hold the Shift key while pressing the K.

| Key(s) after K | Action |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| H | Show the objects the blue ball has |
| L | Move a 2-step stairs to the left |
| R | Move a 2-step stairs to the right |
| Shift + L | Move a 3-step stairs to the left |
| Shift + R | Move a 3-step stairs to the right |

If you are familiar with this game, you know that it is often needed to make stairs and to move them. This requires many keystrokes with the chance of pressing the wrong key. Here's an example of how you can easily move a 3-step staircase to the right using a built-in macro. Please note that if there are objects in the way, the results may be different. In that case, it is not a good idea to use the macro. Let a macro always finish, before pressing again a key.

| | | |
|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |
| Correct start positions | Positions after pressing K followed by Shift + R | Positions after again pressing K followed by Shift + R |

Creating levels

It is possible to create your own levels. It would be great if you send them to me, so I can add them (if they are suitable). Of course you can also create levels just for you and your friends.

A level is saved in a text file. To be able to test a level in Bal with Import level, the file needs to have the extension txt. Here is an example of an almost empty level that is handy for creating a new level. In the chapter “Overview of objects” you can see what the codes mean (1 = stone, 2 = blue ball, 3 = green ball, 4 = white ball). You can copy this super easy level and solve it. Change the data and learn how to create your own levels. Obviously, it is not possible to place diamonds in your level. Since the code of Bal is public, you can discover things, but please be honest and don't reveal it to other players.

[illegible]

Every line (row) must have the same number of characters (columns). It is important that you use a monospaced font in your text editor. A monospaced font is a font where every character takes up the same amount of horizontal space. In Windows you can for example use Notepad as a text editor. Often it is handy to enable the overtype (or overwrite) mode. With the Insert (or Ins) key, you can mostly switch that mode on and off.

Level settings

The text file can also contain lines with settings. They have to start with the character \$. It is best to put them before the game raster.

| Setting | Description | Example |
|--|---|---|
| \$background: x, y, width, height, object (code 2) | Puts a new object on the background | \$background: 5, 3, 1, 1, 25 |
| \$bgcolor: x, y, width, height, color | Sets the background color of the specified area | \$bgcolor: 0, 0, 32, 10, lightblue |
| \$fgcolor: x, y, width, height, color | Sets the foreground color of the specified area | \$fgcolor: 0, 0, 16, 20, #FFFF00 |
| \$hint: text | Sets the text that is shown when the player asks for a hint | \$hint: Don't give up! |
| \$startlevelmessage: text | Message that is shown at the start of a level | \$startlevelmessage: Good luck, you will need it! |





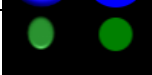








Overview of objects







Code 1 is used in the data files and is converted to Code 2 for further use. Code 1 has always a length of one character.












Normally the background color is black, unless otherwise defined in a level data file.













Also the foreground color can be defined in a level data file, but it does not affect all objects.

















Stones can be used to represent ice, sand, leaves etc.





















| Image | Name | Code 1 | Code 2 | Description |
|---|----------------------------------|--------|--------|--|
|  | Blue bal | 2 | 2 | The blue ball is the player. |
|  | Blue ball with sad face | 2 | 2 | When the blue ball is dying, it has a sad face. |
|  | Blue ball wearing diving glasses | 2 | 2 | The blue ball can only swim when it is wearing diving glasses. |
|  | Blue ball with propeller | 2 | 2 | When the blue ball has a propeller, it can fly. |
|  | Green ball | 3 | 3 | A green ball is food for the blue ball. The goal of the game is to eat all the green balls. |
|  | Silver ball | ° | 140 | When the blue ball takes a silver ball, it has telekinetic power. By pressing the ! key or the ! button it can move the following objects that are close to it (one at the time): white ball, light blue ball, yellow ball, purple ball, moveable gray ball, orange ball, direction changer, time bomb |
|  | White ball | 4 | 4 | White balls can be pushed to the left and to the right, but not more than two at the same time. |
|  | Light blue ball | 5 | 5 | Light blue balls float and do not fall. They can be pushed to the left and to the right, but not more than two at the same time. |
|  | Light blue bar left | é | 126 | Light blue bars float and do not fall. A horizontal light blue bar consists of a left part, a right part and possibly one or more middle parts. It can be pushed to the left or to the right by the blue ball when there is no weight on top, but not at the same time with other objects. A vertical light blue bar consists of a top part, a bottom part and possibly one or more middle parts. It can be pushed up (when there is no weight on top) or down by the blue ball, but not at the same time with other objects. Light blue bar parts are also useful as decoration to make a level look nicer. In that case, it doesn't have to be a valid light blue bar. Code 1 for the middle part is an e without two dots, since the e with two dots can be difficult to type on a keyboard. |
|  | Light blue bar right | è | 127 | |
|  | Light blue bar middle | e | 128 | |
|  | Light blue bar top | É | 129 | |
|  | Light blue bar bottom | È | 130 | |



















| | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|-----|---|
|  | Yellow ball | 9 | 9 | Yellow balls float and do not fall. They can be pushed to the left, to the right, up and down, but only one at the time. When a yellow ball is pushed, it continues until it can not go further. The direction can be changed with a direction changer. |
|  | Direction changer 1 | C | 84 | Direction changer 1 changes the direction of yellow balls as follows: Right to Up Left to Down Up to Right Down to Left The blue ball can move a direction changer to the left, to the right, up and down, but only one at the time. |
|  | Direction changer 2 | c | 85 | Direction changer 2 changes the direction of yellow balls as follows: Right to Down Left to Up Up to Left Down to Right The blue ball can move a direction changer to the left, to the right, up and down, but only one at the time. |
|  | Direction changer 3 | + | 86 | Direction changer 3 changes the direction of yellow balls as follows: Right to Left Left to Right Up to Down Down to Up A direction changer 3 can also change the direction of horizontal yellow bars from right to left or from left to right and it can change the direction of vertical yellow bars from up to down or from down to up. The blue ball can move a direction changer to the left, to the right, up and down, but only one at the time. |
|  | Direction changer 4 | Â | 138 | Direction changer 4 works as a direction changer 1, but after it is used it changes into a direction changer 5 that works as a direction changer 2. The blue ball can move a direction changer to the left, to the right, up and down, but only one at the time. |
|  | Direction changer 5 | â | 139 | Direction changer 5 works as a direction changer 2, but after it is used it changes into a direction changer 4 that works as a direction changer 1. |














| | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------|-----|---|
| | | | | The blue ball can move a direction changer to the left, to the right, up and down, but only one at the time. |
|  | Yellow ball synchroniser | & | 155 | When there are more yellow ball synchronisers connected, yellow balls pause until there is a yellow ball at every synchroniser of the connected synchronisers, the balls were all going in the same direction and there is place for all balls to continue after the synchroniser. You can see it like the yellow balls are waiting for each other and when they are complete they will continue. The blue ball can move a yellow ball synchroniser to the left, to the right, up and down, but only one at the time. |
|  | Yellow pusher | Ψ | 115 | A yellow pusher can push one or more yellow balls or bars, but only one per direction. All yellow pushers are activated at the same time by the yellow pushers trigger which can be used multiple times. The blue ball can move a yellow pusher to the left, to the right, up and down, but only one at the time. |
|  | Yellow pushers trigger | ψ | 116 | The yellow pushers trigger activates all yellow pushers at the same time when there is weight on it. If the blue ball has a propeller, it stands on a ladder or it hangs in a rope, pushing down is needed to activate. |
|  | Yellow stopper | Σ | 131 | The yellow stopper stops all moving yellow balls and yellow bars when there is weight on it. If the blue ball has a propeller, it stands on a ladder or it hangs in a rope, pushing down is needed to stop. |
|  | Yellow pauser | ρ | 136 | The yellowpauser pauses or unpauses all yellow balls and yellow bars when there is weight on it. If the blue ball has a propeller, it stands on a ladder or it hangs in a rope, pushing down is needed to pause. |
|  | Yellow slowdowner | \sim | 156 | When the blue ball takes a yellow slowdowner, all yellow balls and yellow bars will move slower for some time. |
|  | Yellow bar left | \acute{o} | 121 | A horizontal yellow bar consists of a left part, a right part and possibly one or more middle parts. A vertical yellow bar consists of a top part, a bottom part and possibly one or more middle parts. Yellow bars float and do not fall. They can be pushed by the blue ball or a yellow pusher, but not at the same time with other objects. It is not possible to push a yellow bar left, right or up when there is weight on top, but pushing down is possible. When a yellow bar is pushed, it continues until it can not go further. |
|  | Yellow bar right | \grave{o} | 122 | |
|  | Yellow bar middle | \ddot{o} | 123 | |
|  | Yellow bar top | \acute{O} | 124 | |
|  | Yellow bar bottom | \grave{O} | 125 | |






| | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------|-----------|--|
| | | | | Yellow bar parts are also useful as decoration to make a level look nicer. In that case, it doesn't have to be a valid yellow bar. |
|  | Red ball | 8, s, S | 8, 93, 94 | Red balls are very dangerous. A red ball will shoot the blue ball with a laser if it is in the same vertical position and nothing blocks the view. If the blue ball is hit, it dies. With the help of mirrors, red balls can also see and shoot the blue ball in other positions. How smart a red ball is, depends on the code. Code 8 (8) is not smart. It will not move. Code s (93) is a little smart. It can move, jump and use elevators, but it will not try to find the blue ball. It will not move objects. Code S (94) is smart. It will try to find the blue ball. It will not move objects. Red balls can multiply themselves by using a copier. They can <u>not</u> be electrocuted. A red ball can swim without wearing diving glasses. |
|  | Mirror 1 | α | 95 | Red balls can see more by using mirrors. When the red ball is at the left of mirror 1, it can also view up. When the red ball is at the right of mirror 1, it can also view down. Mirrors can also be combined. |
|  | Mirror 2 | β | 96 | Red balls can see more by using mirrors. When the red ball is at the left of mirror 2, it can also view down. When the red ball is at the right of mirror 2, it can also view up. Mirrors can also be combined. |
|  | Light bulb | λ | 105 | If a red ball that is a little smart eats a light bulb, it becomes a smart red ball. |
|  | Purple ball | p | 28 | Purple balls float and do not fall. They can be pushed to the left, to the right, up and down, but only one at the time. |
|  | Purple bar left | \acute{a} | 100 | A horizontal purple bar consists of a left part, a right part and possibly one or more middle parts. A vertical purple bar consists of a top part, a bottom part and possibly one or more middle parts. Purple bars float and do not fall. They can be pushed by the blue ball, but not at the same time with other objects. It is not possible to push a purple bar left, right or up when there is weight on top, but pushing down is possible. Purple bar parts are also useful as decoration to make a level look nicer. In that case, it doesn't have to be a valid purple bar. |
|  | Purple bar right | \grave{a} | 101 | |
|  | Purple bar middle | \grave{a} | 102 | |
|  | Purple bar top | \acute{A} | 103 | |
|  | Purple bar bottom | \grave{A} | 104 | |
|  | Gray ball | . | 83 | Gray balls float and do not fall. Normal gray balls can not be pushed. |
|  | Gray ball one move | o | 82 | Gray balls one move float and do not fall. They can be pushed to the left, to the right, up or down, but only onces. After pushing a gray ball one move, it will turn into a normal gray ball. |

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----|---|
|  | Gray ball two moves | δ | 98 | Gray balls two moves float and do not fall. They can be pushed to the left, to the right, up and down, but only twice. After pushing a gray ball two moves, it will turn into a gray ball one move. |
|  | Orange ball | O | 40 | Orange balls can be pushed to the left and to the right, but only one at the time. When an orange ball is pushed, it continues until it can not go further. When it falls on a Triangle stone bottom left, it continues to the right. When it falls on a Triangle stone bottom right, it continues to the left. |
|  | Empty space | (Space), 0 | 0 | An empty space has not object inside. |
|  | Stone | 1 | 1 | A stone blocks everything. |
|  | Triangle stone bottom left | G | 15 | A triangle stone is often used to make the graphics look nicer. Bottom left means that the 90-degree corner is at the bottom left. This object can be used as a glide for the blue ball and the red, white and orange balls. |
|  | Triangle stone bottom right | H | 16 | A triangle stone is often used to make the graphics look nicer. Bottom right means that the 90-degree corner is at the bottom right. This object can be used as a glide for the blue ball and the red, white and orange balls. |
|  | Triangle stone top left | I | 17 | A triangle stone is often used to make the graphics look nicer. Top left means that the 90-degree corner is at the top left. |
|  | Triangle stone top right | J | 18 | A triangle stone is often used to make the graphics look nicer. Top right means that the 90-degree corner is at the top right. |
|  | Quarter circle stone bottom left | i | 141 | A quarter circle stone is used to make the graphics look nicer. Bottom left means that the 90-degree corner is at the bottom left. |
|  | Quarter circle stone bottom right | î | 142 | A quarter circle stone is used to make the graphics look nicer. Bottom right means that the 90-degree corner is at the bottom right. |
|  | Quarter circle stone top left | ï | 143 | A quarter circle stone is used to make the graphics look nicer. Top left means that the 90-degree corner is at the top left. |
|  | Quarter circle stone top right | î | 144 | A quarter circle stone is used to make the graphics look nicer. Top right means that the 90-degree corner is at the top right. |
|  | Half stone left | ü | 145 | A half stone is used to make the graphics look nicer. |
|  | Half stone right | ú | 146 | |
|  | Half stone top | ù | 147 | |
|  | Half stone bottom | û | 148 | |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|------|--------|--|
|  | Quarter stone bottom left | á | 149 | A quarter stone is used to make the graphics look nicer. |
|  | Quarter stone bottom right | é | 150 | |
|  | Quarter stone top left | í | 151 | |
|  | Quarter stone top right | ó | 152 | |
|  | Stone pattern 1 | ň | 153 | A stone pattern is used to make the graphics look nicer. These patterns must not be used in levels with a game rotator. |
|  | Stone pattern 2 | ó | 154 | |
|  | Weak stone | y | 35 | Weak stones can be mined with a pickaxe. |
|  | Damaged stone | F | 12 | When there is for too long a weight on top of a damaged stone, it will break. |
|  | Pickaxe | Y | 34 | With a pickaxe you can mine weak and damaged stones. |
|  | Small weak stone | π | 99 | If the blue ball has taken a small weak stone, there is a weak stone created at every previous position of the blue ball. This can be very handy, but the blue ball can also block itself. |
|  | Lava | V | 22 | When the blue ball or a red ball falls into the lava it dies. Lava can be used to get rid of balls. |
|  | Water | w | 23 | When the blue ball is wearing diving glasses, it can swim in the water, but red fish are dangerous. |
|  | Water surface | W | 20 | The water surface contains waves. |
|  | Water surface right | ς | 113 | This is a triangle stone with water surface on the right side. |
|  | Water surface left | σ | 114 | This is a triangle stone with water surface on the left side. |
|  | Diving glasses | d | 26 | The blue ball needs diving glasses for swimming. Without diving glasses it will die. |
|  | Red fish | f | 27 | Red fish are very dangerous for the blue ball. They are chasing the blue ball when it is in the water. A red fish can be electrocuted. |
|  | Propeller | X | 81 | If the blue ball takes a propeller, it can fly. |
|  | Palm tree trunk part | P | 21 | A palm tree can be made with palm tree trunk parts and green triangle stones. This object must not be used in levels with a game rotator. |
|  | Elevator | D, U | 6, 106 | Elevators can be used to move the blue ball and white, red and orange balls up or down. The code D (6) means that the elevator goes |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|------|--------|--|
| | | | | first down after the level is loaded. |
|  | Horizontal elevator | L, R | 7, 107 | Horizontal elevators can be used to move the blue ball and the white, red and orange balls to the left or to the right. The code L (7) means that the elevator goes first to the left after the level is loaded. |
|  | Elevator entrance and exit | E | 39 | If the blue ball, a red, white or orange ball is waiting on top of this object, the ball will be automatically taken into the elevator. If there is a ball inside the elevator, it will be pushed out when there is place. |
|  | Ladder | = | 25 | The blue ball can use a ladder to move up or down. A ladder doesn't block the view. |
|  | Horizontal ladder | h | 90 | The blue ball can use a horizontal ladder to move to the left or to the right. A ladder doesn't block the view. |
|  | Small ladder | Λ | 108 | If the blue ball has taken a small ladder, a ladder part will be created under the blue ball when the blue ball jumps straight up in an empty space. When a blue ball has taken also a small weak stone, it can not create ladders. |
|  | Horizontal rope | — | 80 | The blue ball can walk on top or hang under a horizontal rope. |
|  | Vertical rope | ι | 137 | The blue ball can climb in a vertical rope. |
|  | Coil spring | j | 118 | If the blue ball has taken a coil spring, it can jump higher. When there is not enough space for a high jump, it will do a normal jump. |
|  | Force up | Ω | 109 | A force object moves the blue ball and the white, red and orange balls as far as possible in the indicated position. The blue ball can push a force object, but not against the force direction. Force down seems perhaps not useful, because of the gravity, but it works also in the water. A moving yellow ball will continue against a force. |
|  | Force down | ω | 110 | |
|  | Force right | Φ | 111 | |
|  | Force left | φ | 112 | |
|  | Teleport | T | 31 | Only the blue ball can travel with a teleport. |
|  | Self-destructing teleport | τ | 92 | Only the blue ball can travel with a self-destructing teleport. The teleport self-destructs after use. |
|  | Travel gate | g | 132 | The blue ball can travel to a different world by using a travel gate. |
|  | Locked door | l | 30 | Only a blue ball that has a key can open a locked door. The blue ball can not push balls or other objects through the door. |
|  | Key | k | 29 | The blue ball can open locked doors with a key. |
|  | One direction right port | > | 10 | Only the blue ball and smart red balls can go through a one direction port and only in the |

| | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|-----|--|
|  | One direction left port | < | 11 | indicated direction. |
|  | One direction up port | ^ | 87 | |
|  | One direction down port | v | 88 | |
|  | Bomb | B | 36 | When a bomb explodes, it destroys the stone in which it is. Use the detonator to detonate all bombs at the same time. |
|  | Detonator | b | 37 | The detonator detonates all bombs at the same time when there is weight on it. If the blue ball has a propeller, it stands on a ladder or it hangs in a rope, pushing down is needed to detonate. |
|  | Explosion | * | 38 | This image is used as an animation for an exploding bomb. |
|  | Time bomb | Ξ | 117 | A time bomb is activated by moving it. Some time after it is activated, it explodes and it destroys the objects that are around it, including the blue ball, red balls and red fish. The timer resets every time the bomb is moved, but once the bomb is activated, it can not be deactivated. If the bomb destroys a green ball (food), the blue ball will die. A time bomb floats and does not fall. It can be moved alone to the left, to the right, up and down. |
|  | Trap door | - | 13 | The blue ball can walk over a trap door, but when it stays too long on top, it will open. White balls and red balls can also fall through a trap door. |
|  | Trap door half open | | 14 | This image is used as an animation for an opening trap door. |
|  | Electricity | ! | 91 | When a blue ball walks under this object, there is a chance that it will be electrocuted. |
|  | Magnet | μ | 119 | When the blue ball comes near a magnet, it loses metal objects, such as a coil spring, a key and a pickaxe. |
|  | Copier | Δ | 97 | A copier copies a white or red ball that is on top of it, if there is place for the copies that come out from the sides. |
|  | Time freezer | u | 120 | When the blue ball takes a time freezer, the time stands still for a moment for several objects. Elevators, red balls and fish will stop moving, red balls will not shoot and red fish will not attack. Electricity will not be activated, but if it was on, it will remain activated. The elapsed time for time bombs will be paused. By defining a foreground color, you can change the color of the clock. |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|-----|--|
|  | Yellow diamant | γ | 133 | When the blue ball takes a yellow diamant, the first part of the code for the secret series will be shown. Make sure to write the code part down and keep it in a safe place. |
|  | Blue diamant | Γ | 134 | When the blue ball takes a blue diamant, the second part of the code for the secret series will be shown. Make sure to write the code part down and keep it in a safe place. |
|  | Red diamant | ξ | 135 | When the blue ball takes a red diamant, the third and last part of the code for the secret series will be shown. Make sure to write the code part down and keep it in a safe place. |
|  | Game rotator | t | 89 | When the blue ball walks through a game rotator, the whole game rotates 90 degrees clockwise. A game rotator can only be used for levels in which the number of columns is the same as the number of rows. |
|  | Panagiotis | @ | 24 | The greek letter Π (pi) indicates that the level is made by Παναγιώτης (Panagiotis). |