BASIC RULES FOR TWO PLAYERS

CAPTURES
Whenever your opponent has two stones (and only two), which are adjacent, those stones are vulnerable to capture. The pair can be captured by bracketing its two ends with your own stones. Example: Green plays on this point indicated by the arrow, bracketing Blue’s pair of stones. The pair is thus captured and removed from the board, leaving the final position as shown.

Captures can be made along diagonal as well as horizontal and vertical lines. All four stones involved must be consecutive and in a straight line. As soon as the capturing play is made, the captured stones are removed from the grid and placed in view along the border so that both players can see how many stones have been taken.

Moving Into A Captured Position: A stone may legally be played onto any empty intersection, even if that point has been previously occupied, and even if it forms a pair between two enemy stones. Thus, Blue’s move in the diagram above is safe and no stones are removed from the board.

ADVANCED VARIATIONS FOR TWO PLAYERS

TOURNAMENT RULE
As players increase their skill, the advantage of moving first in basic Pente becomes more and more significant. Therefore, the following modification has been introduced for use in tournaments or other serious games: The first player’s second move must be at least three spaces from the center point. This neutralizes the advantage of the first player by imposing a slight positional constraint upon him or her. A square can be drawn between the four inner “stars” on the board. The first player’s second move must be on or outside the perimeter of this square. No other restrictions are imposed on either player.

POINTS PENTE FOR TWO PLAYERS
For Two Players
This variation introduces a certain element of risk into the game and provides a new way of keeping score, which more accurately determines the relative strengths of the players. The rules and strategy of Points Pente are the same for basic Pente.

Although each game is still won by getting five-in-a-row or five captures, an additional objective is to win by as many points as possible. This axiom, that you must block an open four-in-a-row, called “tessera,” you have practically won the game. Whichever end your opponent blocks you can play on the other end and achieve the winning five-in-a-row. This axiom, that you must block an open three, applies unless you have a better move (see left)—like a move to make four, or a good capture on this move or the next that will remove stones form the row or pose a superior threat. Even if the three stones are not adjacent, they must still be blocked to stop the win.

The three white circles in the diagram to the left are all possible blocking moves.
Scoring Points: When the game is over, points are counted and scored as follows:

- The player, if any, who got five-in-a-row receives 5 points as a bonus.
- Each player receives 1 point for each capture he or she made.
- Each player receives 1 point for each four-in-a-row he or she has still remaining on the board. Four-in-a-row is 4 stones, consecutively and in a straight line. Any that were wiped out during the game do not count.

Playing with points introduces new strategies into the game by challenging both players to take calculated risks in order to gain as many points as possible. For instance, if one player accumulates an overwhelming advantage, such as an unblocked four, he or she may prefer to delay making the winning move for a while in an attempt to gain even more points.

Handicaps: Playing Points allows for an easy handicapping. For example, in a match to 21, a veteran player may give an intermediate player an edge of 5 or 10 points—thus evening the contest.

RULES FOR THREE OR MORE PLAYERS

MIXED CAPTURES

Since many multi-player variations use stones of more than two colors, a new type of capture is possible: to capture a pair of stones of two different colors. The bracketing stones must be of one color. In the diagram below Green captures a Blue and an Amber stone.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

Object of the Game

One Team wins when:
- One player gets five (or more) of his or her own stones in a row, just as in basic-two player Pente, or
- The team captures 10 (or more) stones from their opponents.

How to Play:

The players split up into two teams, with team members sitting opposite each other. The first player moves onto the center point. Thereafter the players take turns, in a clockwise direction, placing their stones as in basic Pente. Each player controls different colored stones and cooperates with his or her partner for a team win. **During the game it is not legal to discuss specific strategy with your partner.**

Captures:
Normal captures and mixed captures are allowed. It is legal to capture your partner's stones. However, only those stones taken from your opponents count toward the winning total. You may not capture your own stones.

POINTS PENTE FOR THREE OR FOUR PLAYERS

For Three or Four Players

When not playing a team game, each extra player makes it more and more difficult for an individual player to get five-in-a-row, since there are more players to block each threat. Therefore, this variation requires only four-in-a-row to win, giving each player a better chance of success and keeping the games fast-paced.

Stones: One color per player (three or four colors in all)

Object of the Game
To win the match by being the first player to score a designated number of points (usually 21) over a series of games. A game ends when a player makes four-in-a-row or 4 captures.

Captures: Normal captures and mixed captures are allowed.

How to Play: The first player moves onto the center point. Thereafter the players take turns, in a clockwise direction, placing their stones as in basic Pente.