

Vacuum Lobby Guide

The Lobby is where you sign in, find or create games, choose seats, and enter as a player or watcher. This guide and the full Rules are available before login.

Accounts and recovery keys

Create Account asks for a username and password. A display name is optional. Vacuum then gives you a recovery key. Save it privately: it is a credential, not an invitation. If you forget the password, use the recovery option with that key. Creating a replacement key invalidates the old one.

A login session lasts 30 minutes without deliberate player activity. The yellow timer below the player name shows the remaining time and turns red below 30 seconds. Clicking it renews the session. Deliberate signed-in player clicks or keyboard actions renew it; passive polling, pointer movement, and watching do not. At zero, Vacuum logs the account out. While the Lobby is hidden or unfocused, its display and ordinary polling pause, but the real deadline continues.

Game list

Each row identifies the game, host, seating, state, current turn number, and available action. The compact **Turn: ###** column shows progress without opening the game. **Your Turn** opens a begun game when one of your colors is active. **Not Your Turn** is yellow. **Waiting Room** opens seating before play. The illustrated Just Looking and Game Over keycaps are buttons.

The five Conditions - Watch Only, Free Seats, Hosted by Me, My Seat, and Begun - cycle through positive, negative, and --- (unused). All active conditions must match. Sorting and seat-count grouping change presentation only.

Use Join Game or Waiting Room for an open game. Use the illustrated **Just Looking** button to watch without taking a seat. A started game opens as a player when you own a seat and as a watcher otherwise.

Creating and seating a game

- Create a game and choose two, three, or four players.
- Seats are ordered **Red, Green, Orange, Yellow**. Two players therefore use diagonal Red and Green corners; three players add Orange.
- Take or leave seats in the Waiting Room. Changes remain local until **Apply**.
- When every required seat is filled and you control Red, Apply becomes the green **Start Game** button. One click applies pending seats, starts the game, and opens the board. Filling the last seat as another color does not start play; Red starts it.
- Every successful Apply, including Start Game's Apply, resets the game's inactivity clock.

Invite copies a direct link in ordinary text and rich-button form where the browser permits. A signed-out invite recipient returns to that Waiting Room after authentication.

Players, watchers, and abandoned games

Players may act only for colors they own. Watchers are read-only and cannot keep a game or login session alive merely by watching. Creation, committed gameplay, metadata changes, and every successful seating Apply reset the 14-day game inactivity clock. Opening, listing, spectating, and polling do not.

Loading, troubleshooting, and returning

The dark loading screen remains while the Lobby or game restores usable state. A brief delay is normal. If a connection genuinely fails, use the displayed retry or return option. If a button appears stuck, wait for loading to finish and try one normal reload. Release-versioned picture addresses prevent an older cached keycap from surviving the next release.

The board's Lobby button returns to the game list. The Rules and this Guide open in a new tab; Back focuses the original Vacuum tab and closes the document tab when the browser permits. A directly opened document falls back to browser history or the Lobby.