KOOLAH

Version 1.0, Nov 27 1991, (c) Copyright Marko Teittinen 1991

1. HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS

KOOLAH requires a PC-compatible computer running MS-DOS or PC-DOS.
There must be an MCGA or VGA graphics adapter (or compatible)
installed in the computer. KOOLAH does not make any requirements
for the microprocessor, but I'm not sure if it runs fast enough
with an 8086. I just don't have access to any computer with such
a processor. KOOLAH checks the speed of the computer and adjusts
its speed on fast computers so that it is convenient to play.

2. INSTALLING KOOLAH

Installing KOOLAH is very easy. Just copy all the files of this
package (KOOLAH.EXE, KOOLAH.PIC, KOOLAH.LVL and KOOLAH.DOC) in one
directory. Then you can start KOOLAH from any directory, because
KOOLAH always tries to find its datafiles in the directory it
resides itself. KOOLAH creates file KOOLAH.TOP in the directory
that was your current directory when you started it.

3. QUICK START

This is for you that don't want to read long explanations of the
game, but want to get into the game as soon as possible. Shortly,
the idea of KOOLAH is to guide the ball through the maze to the
red goal area. If the ball gets too close to a hole, it falls into
the hole and you lose it. You can also lose a ball if the time
runs out. The yellow pillar on the right of the maze show you the
remaining time. When you lose a ball, you have to start from the
starting point of the maze with a new ball. At the beginning of
the game you have three balls.

You control the ball with the arrow keys or with A, Z, M and N
keys. A and Z change the speed of your ball up and down
respectively, and N and M change it left and right respectively.
Notice that you don't have as direct control of the ball as you
probably expect, but after a while you get used to it. That is the

idea behind KOOLAH. Now you you know enough to start the game.
Just type KOOLAH at your DOS prompt.

If you want to learn more details about how the controls affect
the movement of the ball, or how KOOLAH got its name, read on.


4. THE IDEA OF KOOLAH

Now that the hasty ones have gone playing I'll explain this game
in bit more detail. I got the idea for this game from a children's
game where one tries to guide a metal ball through a wooden maze
without touching the ball. The ball is controlled with two knobs
on the side of the maze. One of the knobs leans the maze
horizontally and the other vertically. The route through the maze
is drawn on it, but there are holes along the route that easily
swallow the ball. I played it myself when I was a kid and I liked
it very much. So I got this idea of taking that game to computer
age.

The idea of KOOLAH is the same as in that children's game I
explained, to move the ball through the maze without direct
control of its movement. The children's version used knobs, this
computer version uses arrow keys. But to take advantage of
computer technology and to make things a bit more interesting I
added different mazes, scoring (what is a computer game without a
high score list?) and time limits for the mazes. So in this game
you try to guide the ball through the maze before the time runs
out.

5. HOW TO USE KOOLAH

When you start KOOLAH, the startup screen is displayed. During
that time the speed of the computer is tested, so that the game
is not run too fast on fast computers. You get to game screen by
pressing any key on the keyboard.

The game screen looks roughly as follows:
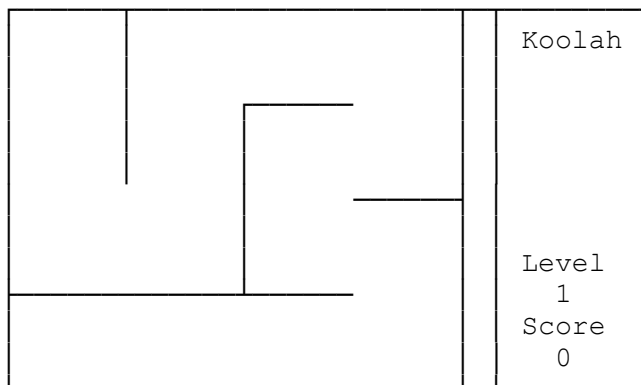
The leftmost part of the screen is the maze area where the ball is
moved. The narrow column is for the indicator of remaining time
and the rightmost area is the informational area that displays
the menu choices available for you and the scores of the players.

When you are not playing a game, the menu in the informational area

shows the following choices: Help, Play, Resume, Sound, Top-10 and
Quit. The choice to resume is displayed only if you have played at
least one game and you cleared the first maze but not the last in
the previous game. You can select an action by pressing the first
letter of the menu item. Below I list the keys and their
alternatives and explain what they do.

```
H, ?          Displays the help screen. Gives you a short
              overview what the game is about.
P, space      Starts a new game.
R             (Only if displayed on the screen) Starts a new
              game at the level where you lost your last ball in
              the previous game.
S             Toggles the sound on/off. When the sound is on, a
              small note is displayed in the informational area.
T             Shows you the top ten high score list.
Q, X, esc     Exits the program.
```

During a game you control the ball with arrow keys or with A, Z, N
and M. A is equivalent to up arrow, Z with down arrow, N with left
arrow and M with right arrow. Because Y and Z are swapped in
German keyboards, Y can also be used to replace down arrow. And
now the effects of the controls. When you press a key once, the
speed of the ball is increased to that direction a little bit.
It means that if your koolah is not moving and you press down
arrow, it starts to move down slowly. If you press down arrow
repeatedly, the speed is increased every time you press the down
arrow. If you then start pressing up arrow repeatedly, the speed
is decreased with each keypress until the koolah stops. If you
continue pressing the up arrow, the ball starts to move up. It
sounds quite simple, but when you combine both vertical and
horizontal movements and let the ball bounce off the walls, it
becomes quite difficult.

When you start a game, the menu in the informational area changes
and displays choices for pausing the game and toggling the sound
effects on and off. In addition to that, you can abort the game if
you need to. Here's the list of choices during the game.

```
S             Toggles the sound on/off. Again a small note
              indicates whether the sound is on or off.
P             Pauses the game. The movement of the koolah is
              suspended until a key is pressed. Also the timing
              is interrupted during the pause. When you press a
              key to continue the game, the koolah continues with
              the same speed and direction as it had when you
              paused the game.
esc           Aborts the game and displays the 'game over' text.
```

6. SCORING

If the ball falls into a hole, you get one point for each hole
you have successfully left behind. It means that if your koolah
falls into the first hole, you get no points, the second hole
gives you one point, the third hole three points and so on. If the
time runs out before you reach the goal, you get as many points as
there are holes in that maze. But if you manage to clear the maze
in the given time, you get 150 points plus the remaining time is
turned into points. The more time you have left, the more points

you gain.

7. THE NAME OF THE GAME

It was difficult for me to find a good name for this game. The
idea of the game suggests names like Maze, Labyrinth, Ballmaze
etc. However, world is full of games named like that and I wanted
to have something different. Then it came to my mind that in
Finnish we have two different words for a ball. One is 'pallo'
that can be used when one is talking about balls that are used in
sports. Balls that are soft so that they can be squeezed a little
bit. 'Pallo' is also used in mathematics when talking about
spheres. The other word is 'kuula' and it is used when one is
talking about metal balls that can't be squeezed and are used e.g.
in ball-bearings. That's exactly the kind of ball that was used
in the children's game. So 'kuula' would be something different,
but then again almost nobody who can't speak Finnish would be able
to pronounce it right. And then I decided to make pronouncing the
name easier for you. I decided to spell the word 'kuula' so that
you would get it at least almost right the first time you see it.
I spelled it KOOLAH. Now if you pronounce it the way most English
speaking people do, it sounds very much like the Finnish word
'kuula'.

8. DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

This program was developed on IBM PS/2 model 50 and on Alfaskop
Desktop m346 (MM4 m346), using DOS versions 4.0 and 5.0. The
program is written in C++ (using TC++ 1.01). The MCGA graphics
functions are my own.

I hope you enjoy this program!

        Marko Teittinen, graduate student of computer science

P.S. If you have any questions or comments on the game, I'd be
     pleased to hear from you. Contact me through the addresses
     below.

NOTICE: The address below is valid until the end of August 1992.
        After that I don't know where I'll be living. The E-Mail
        address is valid longer. Though I can't tell you how long
        exactly.

Address: Marko Teittinen
          Porvoonkatu 39 B 30
          00520 Helsinki
          FINLAND

E-Mail: teittine@cs.helsinki.fi
          teittinen@cc.helsinki.fi