HOW TO IMPROVE AT CHESS USING PROFESSIONAL SOFTWARE "CHESS KING™"

Using chess software will help you win more games.

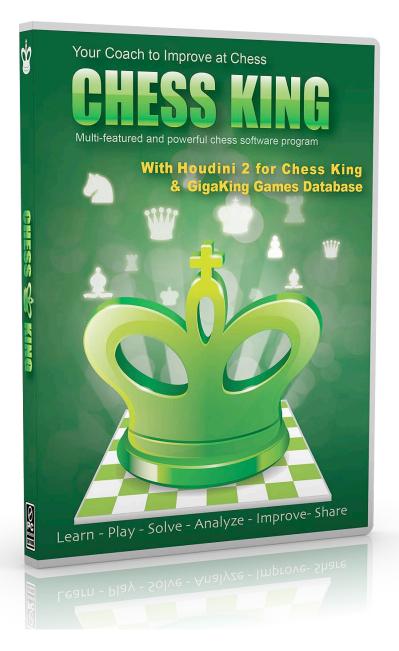
You play chess. You love it. You've played seriously for a few years and have improved a little. Your scoresheet folder is getting thicker, and you're starting to forget the exact moves of each game. You've read a few chess books and watched some chess DVD's. But you're not improving so much anymore. Could it help to use a professional chess software package?

Definitely! Actually nowadays if you don't use modern chess software, you will be at a big disadvantage versus your friends who do.

In this article we will go over the chess tools available with professional chess software, and we will use as example the new, powerful and affordable software package Chess King[™] from www.chess-king.com.

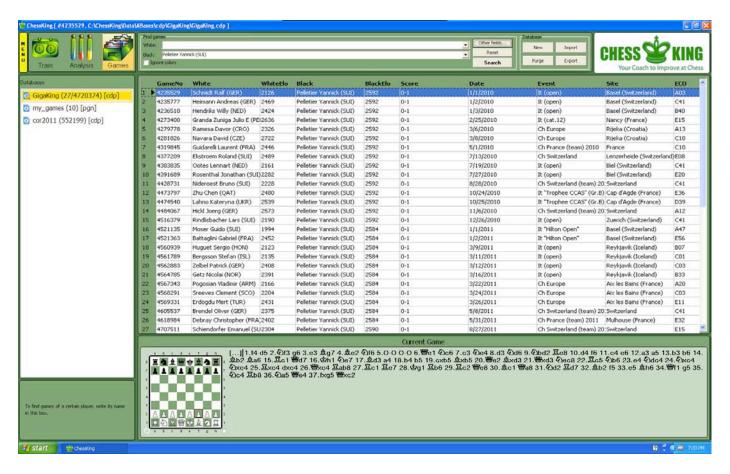
Working with a computer-based analysis, game storage and training tool will improve your chess skills and make it easier to learn.

What can you do with Chess software? In what does chess software help you progress? What does chess software contain?



An enormous database of master chess games.

The Chess King software contains over 5 million games. That's almost all the relevant master games that have been played since the birth of professional chess until today. Games are continuously being played and added to the database every month. With powerful search functions, you cannot miss a game that was played in the opening line you are studying. The software even takes into consideration opening transpositions, where one player deliberately uses a transposition to avoid variations he or she dislikes.

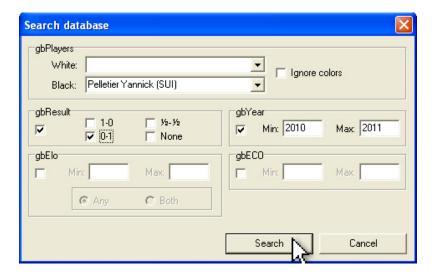


A screenshot of Chess King's Database Module Search showing Pelletier's games won with black in 2010-2011

If you're preparing to play somebody in an upcoming tournament, chances are great that you'll have at your fingertips every one of the serious games he or she has ever played. You'll immediately be able to see his or her full opening repertoire, the weaknesses and opening deficiencies, so you can decide which opening choice will give you the better chances. Then you can prepare in depth for that specific opening you have chosen, using as guide Grandmaster games on that theme.

To progress you need to know the right ideas in the openings you play. Don't try to memorize a series of moves, because inevitably you will forget something, and when your opponent will branch out of your preparation you will have a hard time to switch to your own thinking from the memorization stage. Of course you can study an opening in great detail with a book, or study a master game or two at the board with your coach. But with Chess King's large database of games, it will be much faster and easier to search through the games in the opening you wish to study, select only the best grandmaster games from the list, and run through the games, paying attention not to the exact

moves, but to the plans and strategies chosen by the masters. Seeing the result of the game and the engine's evaluation while you look over the games on the screen, you will be forming your "chess intuition", and you will be able in relatively little time to understand which plans have a good chance to work, and which will likely fail. This is the way many masters train, and the computer with its power and enormous number of games is an invaluable help. Nowadays one can study whole openings in days when it took months or years before chess software was created.



The search box uses to restrict the search to only games won by Pelletier playing black and only in 2010-2011.

From the close to 5 million games in the GigaKing database you will instantly find the 27 games that fit the criteria

An incredibly strong chess analysis engine.

The days of Deep Blue are gone. Now chess engines are considerably stronger than they used to be, even just a few years ago. It has now become clear to everybody that it does not make any sense to have humans play chess with computers, it would be like having a runner racing an automobile. Nowadays, it is only interesting to watch the result of computer programs playing other computer programs, in order to determine which one of the engines is strongest. While it may look like one

could not improve further the already phenomenal strength of chess engines, some programmers have shown great talent, uniting their programming passion with their love and mastery of chess, and have achieved jumps in engine strength that have surprised everybody. That was the case with Vasik Railich, author of the strong chess engine Rybka. Recently, to everybody's amazement, Rybka has been surpassed by the engine named Houdini, created by the talented programmer from Belgium, Bernard Houdart. In a recent, fortygame match between Rybka and Houdini, Houdini won with a score of 23.5-16.5. Even more interesting perhaps was that Houdini showed almost frightening human chess, by playing positional pawn sacrifices in many games. Houdini is now firmly at the top of computer chess engines.

Having a strong chess engine to assist you in analyzing your games is key for you to quickly get a grasp of the position and get instant evaluations of different candidate moves. The world of chess has drastically changed since the last century, where Soviet World Champions had teams of Grandmasters who were working full-time for weeks or months to come up with evaluations and plans for positions that could arise in the champion's games. Nowadays, chess engines can do this work in minutes or even seconds. The more powerful the computer, the larger the number of

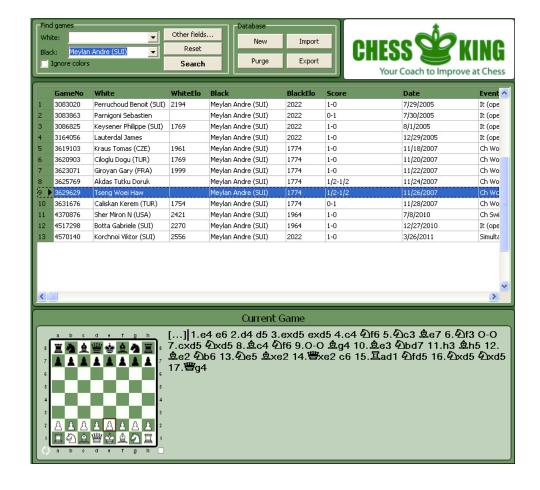


cores, the faster and the deeper will the engine give its verdict with detailed variations.

It is most useful to analyze one's chess games with a powerful engine
In the screenshot above, a strong chess engine was used in the home preparation of GM A. Kosteniuk in her game
against IM A. Huss. The surprising winning move 18...Nc5! was found at home during the preparation. Huss resigned 2
moves later.

A way to prepare for your next opponents

At chess tournaments, it is quite stressful to start a game and not have any idea of what your opponent will be playing. You might think that your opponent knows the opening better than you do, and that might indeed be the case if you have not revised that specific opening in a long time. It is useful to know the likelihood of which openings may show up on the board, and for that Chess King is invaluable. Just go to the Database mode, search for the player you will be playing, and you will be shown all the openings he or she plays. It's like being shown a choice of 3 questions for the next school examination, instead of the possible hundreds. Of course it's possible that he will play yet another opening, but then he will be in an unfamiliar situation, having never played that opening before, and that will give you, if anything, a psychological advantage.



A quick search for the games with Black of Andre Meylan will show that he always plays the French defense against 1.e4

A way to store all your games in one safe place

There is nothing worse than trying to remember a game you played and you know you found the best move... 2 years ago. Now you've forgotten it. If you have all your games in Chess King you have it all with you at all times and all doubts will be dissipated instantly.

To enter your games into Chess King it's easy, there are many ways to do so. The way most people do is right after their serious games, they come home with their scoresheet, and play the moves on the board. If you just played a national tournament where they have electronic boards, chances are that the games are online and you can download them in PGN format, then import them to Chess

King for analysis. You can also play games against the computer, and Chess King will automatically save all your games into your personal games database. If you like to play chess on the internet, make sure to pick a playing site that offers the feature of saving your games so you can access them in a PGN file. That's very useful, you can them import all your online games to Chess King.

In Chess King you can manage several databases, for example:

- 1) GigaKing Database with millions of games
- 2) Your personal tournament games database
- 3) Your games played against the computer
- 4) Your online blitz games
- 5) Your training games or special analysis
- 6) New games from 2012 that you have downloaded from the web

You can have as many or as few databases as you wish, Chess King allows you to combine them, import and export databases at will.



An example of the database list You can have as many chess databases as you wish

You need to analyze your games after you play them!

If you don't review your game in detail after playing it, chances are that you will play the same mistakes the next time, you can't allow that to happen. To improve at chess, you should consider each game a lesson, and it should turn into a building block towards playing better the next time.

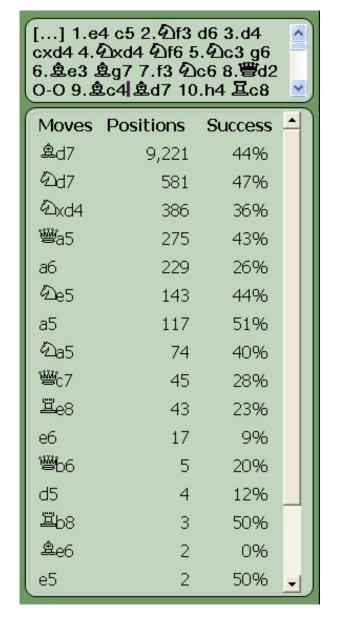
Analyzing your game allows you to see if you missed something in the opening, i.e. if the "theory" recommends something else, or if you missed something later on in the game.

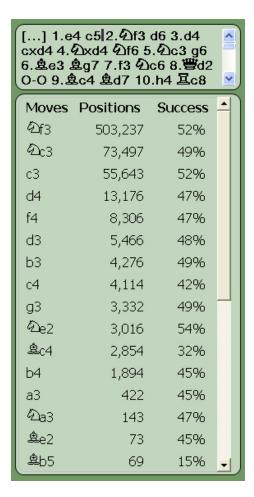
The key analysis features of Chess King are:

1) The Tree

Α

When you enter a move, you immediately see in the tree how many games were played with that particular move, and as advance in the variation, you continuously see how the numbers go down. At a glance you can see where you went "off theory". That's very useful in studying opening theory, you can select a move and then analyze it with the engine.



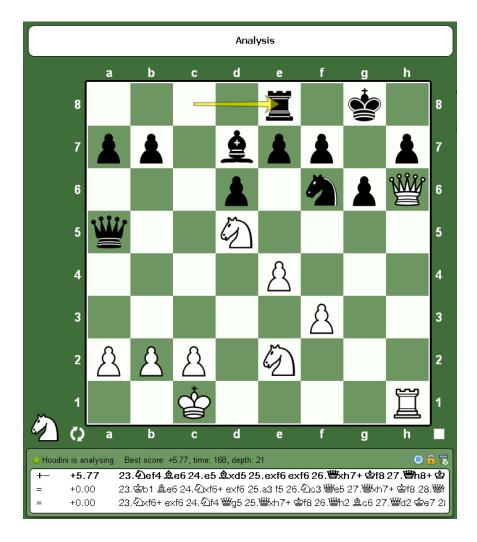


"Sicilian tree", i.e. after 1.e4 c5

tree after the 9. Bc4 in the Dragon Sicilian

2) The Engine

You can have at all times (except when you're playing, of course) your engine running. Chess King includes the currently most powerful engine available, Houdini 2. Houdini is a state-of-the-art chess engine combining outstanding positional evaluation with the most sophisticated search algorithm. The name Houdini was chosen because of the engine's positional style, its tenacity in difficult positions and its ability to defend stubbornly. Houdini will often use razor-sharp tactics to deny its opponents escape routes when it has the better position. At the time of writing Houdini leads all the major Computer Chess rating lists and is widely considered to be the strongest chess engine on the planet. From numerous interviews it appears that many top Grand Masters including the current chess World Champion Viswanathan Anand use and appreciate Houdini.



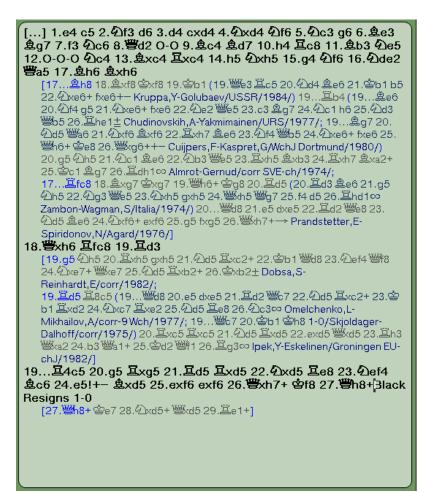
Houdini 2 has no trouble finding the winning move 23. Nef4! played by Anatoly Karpov against Viktor Korchnoi in their famous 1974 game.

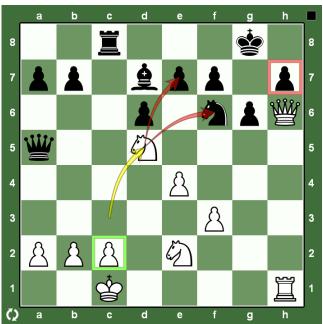
Houdini 2 is included in Chess King and is the strongest engine currently available. For very powerful computers up to 32 cores, and for getting the maximum engine analysis power in Chess960, an upgrade to Chess King Pro is recommended.

3) The ability to enter variations, comments, arrows and more

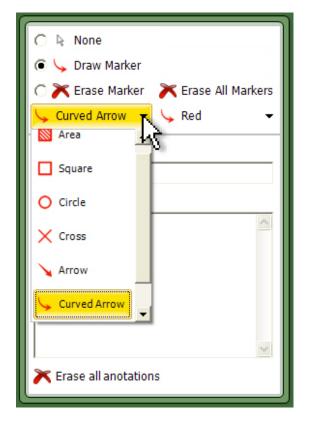
When you analyze a chess game, undoubtedly you will have comments and variations, you may want to point out blunders, you most likely will find better moves, and maybe whole variations you should have considered. In Chess King you can enter all of those easily.

You can even add arrows, and markers of all kinds, shapes or colors.





Images of an analysis window, a diagram with markers, and the easy-to-use marker window



Fun playing the computer

There is nothing worse than playing a computer and losing. If you search for the hash tag "#chess" on Twitter, you will find countless tweets of people, depressed because they played chess with their computer (or phone), and lost miserably. They can play 100 times and they will lose every game. That's not fun. I may add that it's not much more fun "tweaking" the engine strength and forcing the computer to play in the lowest of levels, so you can comfortably beat it. That's not so much fun either. Besides the "Pick Your Level Classical Chess", Chess King has a "Random Playing Mode" which has literally thousands of possible starting positions, which guarantees a new situation each game.



One of the hundreds of possible starting positions in the "Random Chess" mode. Variables you can tweak: Total Material, Pawn percent, Advantage

A way to train your mind by solving chess puzzles

Chess King includes more than 1500 puzzles, from extremely easy to Grandmaster level (25 subcategories), that will keep you or your child busy for hours. Working through those puzzles is sure to raise one's chess level.



Screenshots of chess puzzles mode.

In the puzzle below white checkmates in two moves, can you find the solution?





A way to learn to play chess in Quest style

You like to go up levels and conquer trophies? The Quest mode is for you. You start from very easy starting positions, and keep unlocking levels, until you meet your match. More than 100 types of games will keep you challenged and entertained. While at the start you get a very large advantage, your opponent is no one else than the extremely strong Houdini, who is unforgiving for any mistake, so you really have to give it your best!



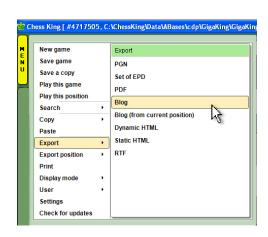
Example of Quest Mode starting position

Share your wins with the world

Chess King has several export modes, so you can easily share your games with your friends on the web. Just select the kind of export you'd like to do, for example to your blog, and you get the code to be copied and pasted in a post, resulting in an instant beautiful playable chess applet.









From now on, you can publish in just a minute all your games as soon as they are played. Chess960 is supported!

exd5 11. £f4 O-O 12. £d3 Wd8 13. £c7 Wd7 14.a3 £a5

15.≜xa5 ᡚxa5 16.ᡚe5 d8 17.ቯe1 ᡚac6 18.ᡚf3 ᡚg6

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19. wa4 点d7 20. wb3 公f4 21. 点f1 wb6 22. wa4 公g6

31. Qd5 If6 32. We7 We2

You can use the standard green board color or even create a board color that fits your design. There is no more beautiful and functional pgn applet on the web.

Create YouTube videos!

Now that your games are well organized in your Chess King database, and you've analyzed them with the strongest engine Houdini, and shared them on your blog, why don't you do the ultimate and publish your games on YouTube?

For that all you need to do is record the screen of your PC or Mac, and use any microphone to run through some audio comments as you advance. On the PC, we recommend CamStudio, and for the Mac ScreenFlow.

Have a look at these two channels which use Chess King:

www.YouTube.com/ChessKing The official YouTube channel of Chess King™

www.YouTube.com/ChessQueen

The official YouTube channel of Chess Queen™ Alexandra Kosteniuk

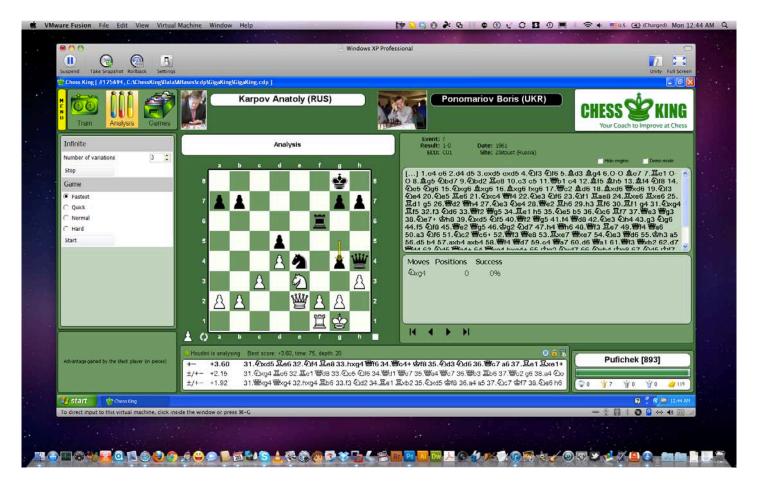




Can Chess King work on the Mac?

You know by now that Chess King is a program for the PC, that is, for Windows PC's. But that does not mean that it does not work with the Mac, it certainly does!

For that, you just need to use any emulator, for example VMWare Fusion, which we have tested and verified it works fine. VMware Fusion is recommended for home users, students and business professionals who are looking for the easiest, fastest and most reliable way to run Windows programs on their Macs without rebooting. On your Mac, you'll need to buy a copy of VMWare Fusion and of course any version of Windows you'd like to run. Once you've installed them, you can install Chess King as if you were on a Windows PC.



Screenshot of Chess King running on a Mac

For any questions relating to Chess King support, feel free to write the author to support@chess-king.com

Article by Pufichek