

ChessBase Cafe

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ChessBase Meets Britannica

All men by nature desire knowledge. – Aristotle

The latest of ChessBase's annual releases just hit the virtual shelves – the Opening Encyclopedia 2005. We know that man has sought to collect and codify knowledge at least since Pliny the Elder collected everything he could find about natural history two thousand years ago. That one was a best-seller for fifteen hundred years, so even though PtE cribbed much of his material from Aristotle, his publisher wasn't going to complain. (The Romans had lousy copyright laws anyway.)

These annual ChessBase products follow that time-honored tradition of adding a year's worth of new information to last year's edition and sprucing up the indexes. One very handy improvement is the inclusion of the new ChessBase Reader software, which is based on ChessBase 9. This replaces the ancient viewer which had too many limitations to deal with these large databases. That means you don't have to already have ChessBase or a Fritz program to access the Encyclopedia data.

My test-drive was marred by an annoying bug in the index of theory databases on the DVD. (If you are one of the last people on Earth without a DVD drive, you won't be able to use many of the products coming from ChessBase these days.) In an error I'm familiar with from website design, all the links are broken in the main list of databases. So you have to open them manually. You can do this by finding the individual databases in the "Theory" directory on the DVD. The good news is that they are clearly named. I expect this will be fixed in later impressions of the Encyclopedia.

As with most of these products, I strongly recommend installing all the data to your hard drive. Running searches on a large database on DVD is terribly slow, so installing it will speed up access many times over and you can use your DVD drive for other things. You can do this yourself by dragging and dropping the contents of the DVD in Windows Explorer (fastest) or you can open a database in ChessBase, right-click its icon, and choose "install database."

Now to the important stuff: the content and what you can do with it. There are 3,600 of what ChessBase refers to as opening surveys. These are games that have been merged with anywhere from four or five to four or five dozen relevant games in a specific variation. These vary dramatically in size and the

amount of work put into them. Most are nicely annotated, with evaluation marks at the end of each line by the GM annotators. It's hard to judge how much new analysis there is since almost all of the lines are from merged games.

Petroff Defence	Huzman	11.bxc3 Re1 12.♖e1	Line
Petroff Defence	Jussupow	11.c5 ♙c7	=
Petroff Defence	Jussupow	11.♖h3	±
Petroff Defence	Jussupow	11.♟bd2	=
Petroff Defence	Jussupow	11.♟bd2 ♟a5 12.♖..	•
Petroff Defence	Jussupow	11.♟bd2 ♟a5 12.♖..	•
Petroff Defence	Huzman	11.♟c3 ♟c7 12.b4	Line
Petroff Defence	Jussupow	11.♟e5	•
Petroff Defence	Jussupow	11.♟fd7	+

To test this I sampled the surveys using the games from the Mtel Masters tournament. The hot opening there is the Petroff, and unfortunately there isn't a new theory database on the main Petroff lines in the Encyclopedia. But there were quite a few surveys in the main database, including two recent ones by the man most responsible for making the Petroff so unbearably popular in the past decades, Russo-German GM Artur Jussupow. (I know, I know, I still write "Yusupov" first, too.)

The second thing you should do, after copying all the files to your hard drive, is make it easier to find your favorite lines. The material is organized somewhat annoyingly, since the material that's in the separate theory databases is not always included in the giant main database. So if you want all there is to know about 6...Bb4+ in the Catalan, you'll have to search both the main base and look for it in a Catalan database in the "Theory" folder.

Those separate databases, 160 of them, are handy for browsing and researching specific openings, but if you work with many things at one time it's worth dumping all those theory databases into the main base or combining them into one separate base so you can find things quickly with position searches and avoid game redundancies. Browsing by ECO code is relatively slow.

Of course, you can do much more with all this content if you have ChessBase instead of using the included Reader. Then you can quickly combine databases and use advanced features like the repertoire scan function to pull out all the games and surveys of your favorite lines.

You don't have a repertoire database!? In CB9, create a new empty database, go to its properties, and check "repertoire database." Now you do. Add games to it that are in the lines you are interested in. Then whenever you get new games downloaded from the Internet, go to File – New – Generate Repertoire. That will create a report with all the games in that database that match your repertoire games. We'll get into more detail on this and discuss a few tricks in a future column.

Merging hundreds or thousands of games will produce a nice book, but you'll

want more specifics. A good way to get the cream to the top is to first pull out the relevant surveys, which are at the very start of the main database, and drop these into a separate database along with games from the related individual theory database, if there is one.

Then you can pull out the latest games from the top-rated practitioners and, for example, search the main base for games from 2004-05 with one player over 2700. There might be some redundancy with the games in the surveys, but I found that's not usually the case. Even the surveys labeled 2005 usually don't include such recent games for some reason.

Note that these drag and drop functions are in ChessBase. If you are using a Fritz program you can do this by using the copy-paste function. Select the games you want to move, ctrl+c, open or create the new database, then ctrl+v. If you only have the included reader, you can't work with multiple databases in this way.

The DVD also comes with a giant book of all the games, which is also good and bad. Getting to the relevant positions you want to look at can be annoying compared to creating separate book files (trees) for each opening you want to study. Take the specialized repertoire database you created above from the surveys and recent games and make those into a book with the name of the opening and you're ready to study with one click.

As a training tip I recommend that you not get too fixated on narrow repertoire preparation and game selection. You can't expect your opponents to play like 2700s (we hope) and or be as prepared as you are and equally willing to follow the main lines (or your preparation). So including some lower-rated games is a good idea, although it's worth noting which ones are the latest and those played by the highest rated players. You don't have to use text comments for this. Just make them the main lines.

Filtering by rating also misses out on all the games played before 1971, when the Elo system came into use. While it's true that theory marches on, unless you are playing in Linares next year, what was good enough for Botvinnik and Fischer is probably good enough for you! In fact, you find many interesting and provocative opening lines from the 20th and even the 19th century that aren't being played today, but that are still quite effective and sharp at the non-GM level. These days you are more likely to surprise an opponent on move seven of the Evans Gambit than you are on move seventeen of the Najdorf.

What I'd really like to see is a DVD of a real chess encyclopedia, something like the Oxford Companion to Chess but with all the games, photos, video, and other great things you can do with multimedia. That would be a great reference tool and a sure-fire best seller. Maybe the boys in Hamburg don't want to move up into another tax bracket?

The E-mailbag

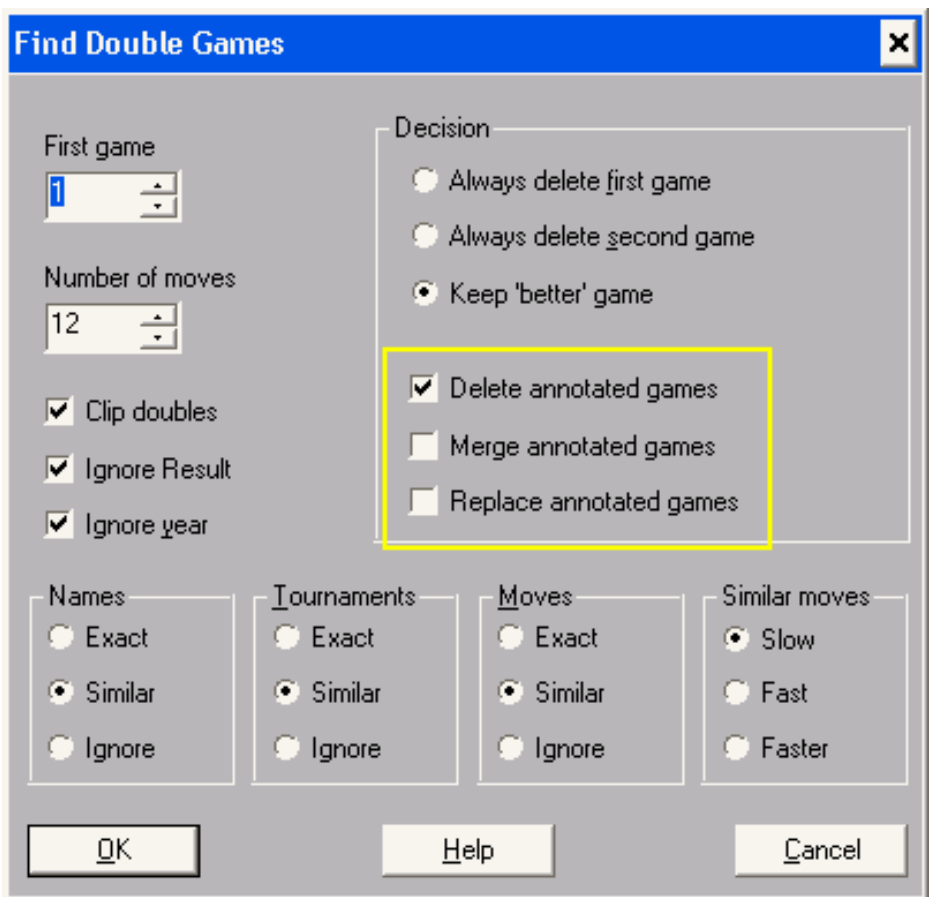
Question How can I copy (or save) a game from the ChessBase Online Database? **Carmen Rojas (USA)**

Answer You cannot copy games from the chesslive.de java database directly. But you can select a game and then press the “View * as PGN” button in the middle. That will pop up a window with the game in PGN (text) format and you can copy it (ctrl+c) to the clipboard. Then you can paste it into a document or directly into a ChessBase or Fritz board window (ctrl+v). If the PGN window doesn’t appear you may have to turn off pop-up blocking software or that option in your browser.

If you have ChessBase, you have access to this massive database and can move games as you like. Drag-and-drop or select and copy-paste or clip (move game/s to the clip database). Ctrl+a in the game list will select all the games. If you are trying to copy very many games this can take a while. The online database is a great resource. In a board window, click Edit – Find Position In – www.chessbase-online.com.

Question Which database programs allows a user to delete *identical annotated* games without problems? I often work with very messy databases, where some portion of annotated games is taken from the same initial sources and I do not know how to remove these doubles other than to do it manually, one game after another. – Best Regards, **Mikhail Golubev (Ukraine)**

Answer ChessBase 9 (and 8) can handle annotated doubles in several special ways. By default, games with annotations are not deleted, to avoid losing valuable work. There are three checkboxes in the “Find Doubles” dialogue box.



If you check “delete” they will be removed along with the rest of the doubles. Just in case, CB doesn’t actually wipe them out immediately. You can undelete later, or even have doubles sent to the clipboard. Or you can check “merge” and the annotated doubles will be combined into one game, older into newer with the new version replacing the old version. If you use “replace” it will replace an unannotated game with the annotated version.

All the ChessBase software described by Mig in this column, as well as many more ChessBase programs, are available in the [ChessCafe Online Catalog](#).

Mig wants your questions!! Send it along and perhaps it will be answered in an upcoming column. Please include your name and country of residence. [Yes, I have a question for Mig!](#)



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