



COLUMNISTS

*ChessBase
Cafe*

Steve Lopez



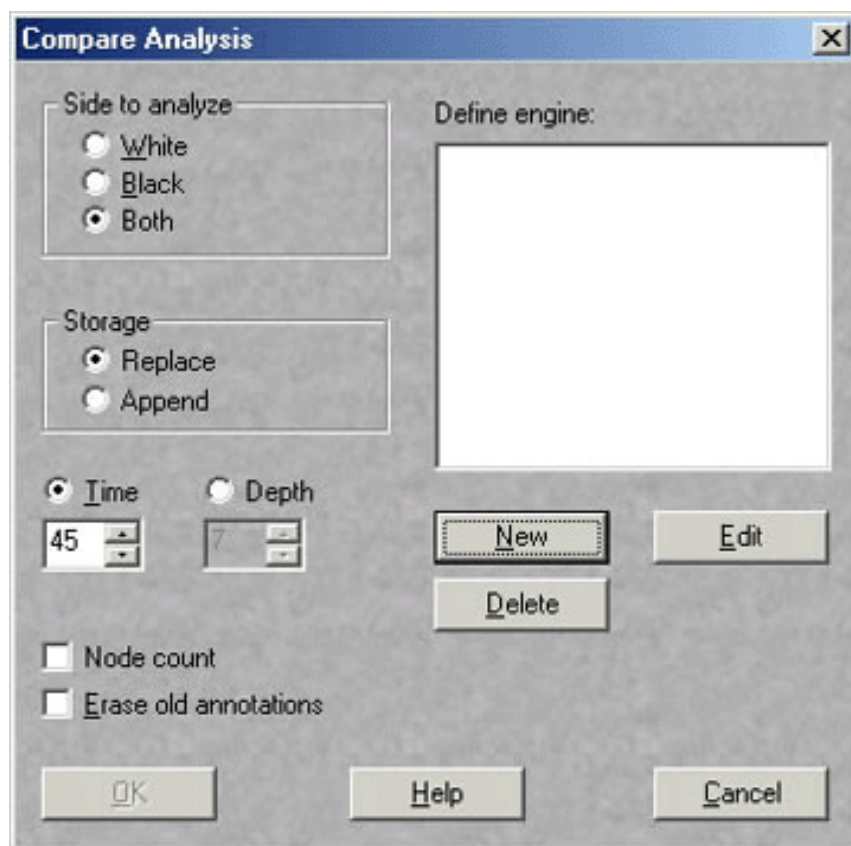
"Compare Analysis" in Fritz10

In the days before personal computers and chess software, the only way to get analysis and advice about your games was to find another player to critique your play. Of course, you can still do this today and it's often an interesting exercise, because two different players can look at the same gamescore and provide completely different advice as to where your weaknesses lie.

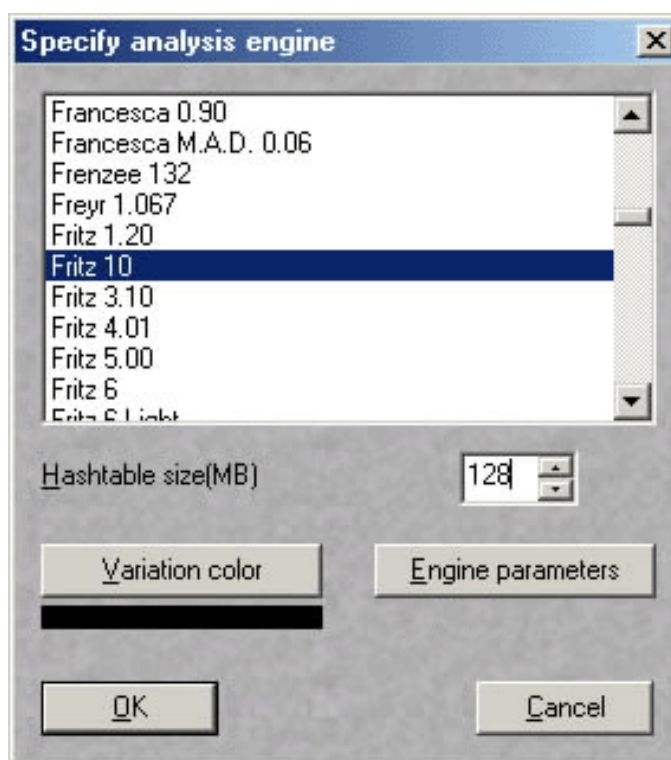
The case is really no different with chess software. Since different chess engines are programmed by different people, you'll often find yourself receiving varying suggestions from separate programs. While it's certainly possible to have multiple chess engines analyze the same game using the "Full analysis" or "Blundercheck" modes in *Fritz10*, by running the game through multiple analysis processes, this can be a bit of a bother – you'll need to go through the steps of selecting an engine, setting the analysis parameters, and starting the process separately for each engine that you wish to have analyze your game.

However, there *is* a less laborious way of achieving the same end: the "Compare analysis" function. By using "Compare analysis" you can have two or more chess engines analyze the same game sequentially: after one engine finishes analyzing a game, another engine then steps through the moves and provides its insight. You can even receive each engine's output in a different color to help you differentiate between them.

The first step, of course, is to launch *Fritz10* and select "Play Fritz" from the initial splash screen. Press F12 to go to the game list view and select the proper database (File menu, "Open," "Open database"). Highlight the game you wish to analyze by single-clicking on it in the game list, then go to the Tools menu, select "Analysis," and then "Compare analysis" from the submenu:

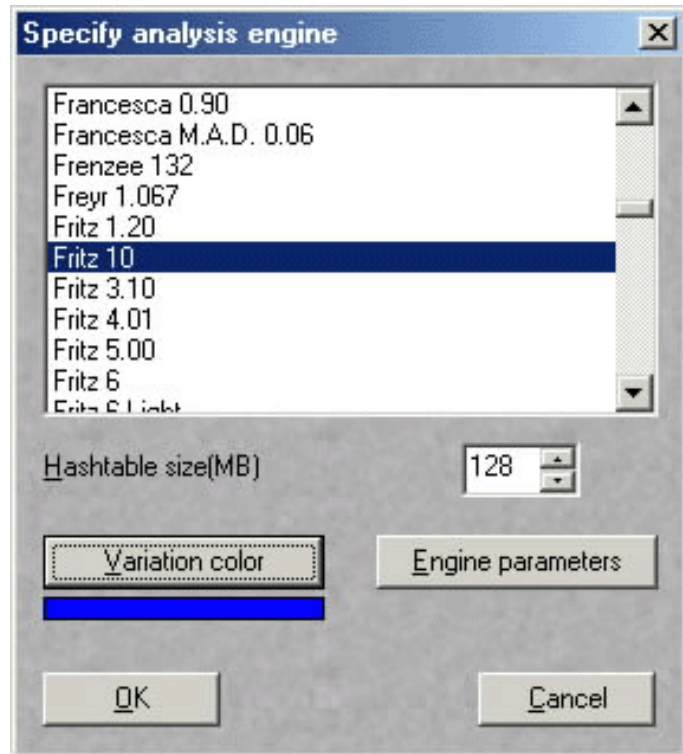


Next you'll select the first chess engine that you wish to analyze your game. Click the "New" button to get to the following dialogue:

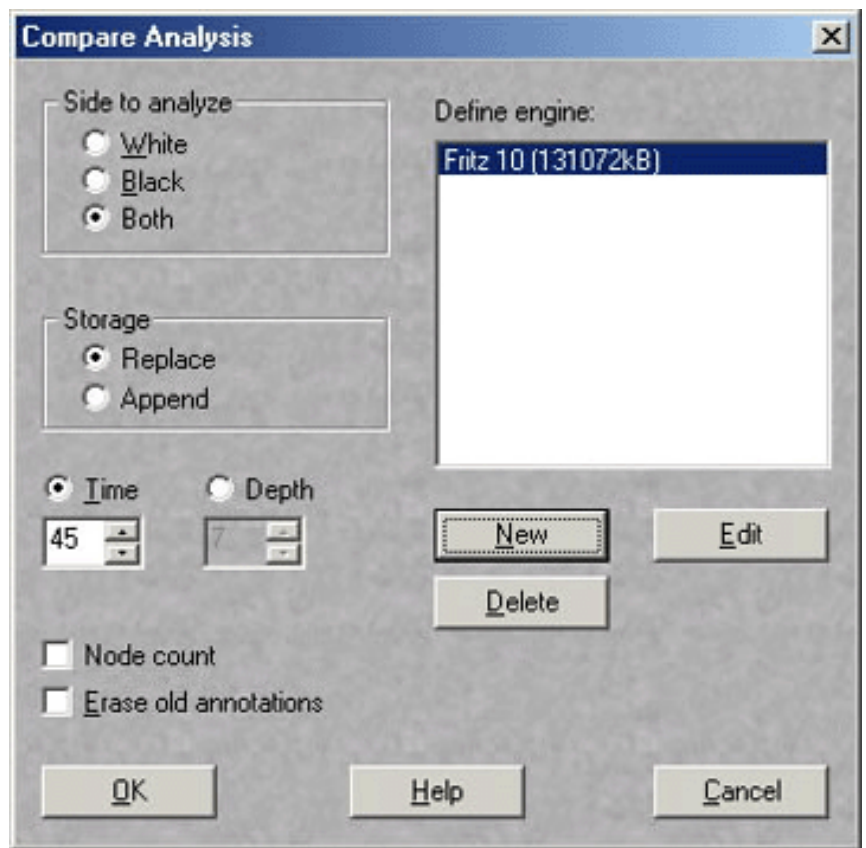


You can select the chess engine from your suite of available engines, set the hashtable size in RAM (for the engine's transposition tables; a good rule of thumb is to set a high value, but not so high as to cause a lot of hard drive activity), engine parameters (I leave these set at the programmer's defaults unless I have a *very* compelling reason to change them), and the color used to display the engine's analysis in the game's notation

window. Clicking the “Variation color” button will display the standard *Windows* color palette, which you can use to select the color you desire. After picking a color and clicking “OK,” you’ll see that color displayed in the bar below the “Variation color” button. In the following illustration, you’ll see that I’ve selected blue as the color for *Fritz10’s* annotations:



After you’ve finished setting the various parameters in this dialogue, click “OK” and you’ll see the chess engine’s name listed in the “Define engine” box:

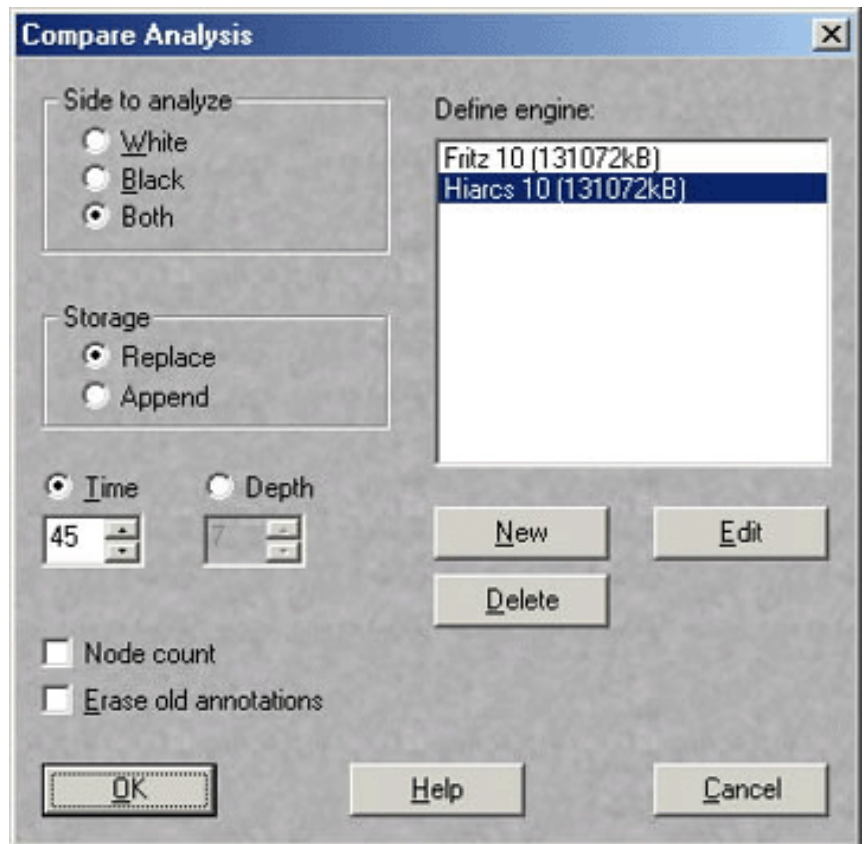


Then just repeat the process for each engine. If you change your mind about a particular engine and wish to remove it from the list, highlight it (by single-clicking on it) and click the “Delete” button. Note that this does *not* delete the engine from your hard drive – it merely removes it from the list. Highlighting an engine and choosing “Edit” merely displays the previously discussed dialogue in which you can set the variation colors, etc.

After you’ve finished selecting engines, you can set the other parameters for the engines analysis:

- **Side to analyze** – you can choose to have the engines analyze just one player’s moves or those of both players.
- **Storage** – this determines whether the program will overwrite the old game with the newly-analyzed version (“Replace”) or will add a second copy of the game (containing the engines’ analysis) to the end of the database (“Append”).
- **Time/Depth** – these parameters are mutually exclusive; you can set one or the other, but not both. “Time” is a value given in seconds, while “Depth” is a value given in plies. Please refer to my previous *ChessBase Café* columns on *Fritz’s* analysis modes for an extended discussion of both settings (see the [ChessCafe.com Archives](#)).
- **Node count** – checking this box will cause the engine to provide the total number of positions analyzed for each move as a separate numerical entry within each variation. This setting will be of particular interest to those who wish to see a comparison of how quickly each engine analyzes compared to other engines.
- **Erase old annotations** – if you’ve loaded a previously-annotated game, selecting this box will erase those prior annotations. *Use this setting with care*, especially when selecting “Replace” as the “Storage” option!

After you’ve selected your engines and various parameters, your display will look something like this:



I've selected *Fritz10* and *Hiarcs10* as my analysis engines (since I know from long prior experience that these two engines have quite different styles of play and are most likely to offer me different suggestions). Each engine will analyze with a "Time" setting of forty-five seconds. When that number of seconds is reached, the engine will complete the ply it's currently on and then proceed to the next move. The moves of both players will be analyzed. When I'm ready to start the process, I'll just click "OK" to begin.

When you start the "Compare analysis" function, the first engine on your list (*Fritz10* in the above example) will analyze the complete game starting with the final position and working backwards through the gamescore (see previous *ChessBase Café* columns in the [ChessCafe.com Archives](#) for an explanation of why this is so); when the first engine completes the game, the cursor will jump to the final move, the second engine will be loaded, and then it will analyze the game (again starting with the final move). The process will be repeated for each engine you've added to the list. Assuming a reasonable "Time" setting of forty-five to ninety seconds (not something ridiculously and superficially short like ten seconds a move), you can expect to have three or four engines analyze a forty to fifty move game overnight.

When the process is complete, you'll notice a difference between the output of "Compare analysis" and the regular analysis modes of "Full analysis" and "Blundercheck" – the engines in "Compare analysis" don't stop when they reach a position from the opening book. Instead, they continue to analyze and will provide suggestions for *all* moves in the game (including the very first move). This is intentional as a tool for programmers and other hardcore computer chess aficionados, but don't put too much stock in suggestions given for the first few moves of the game – these tend to be repetitions of Petroff Defenses and Four Knights' Games.

When the process is complete, your gamescore will look something like this:


```
17.xf6
[Fritz 10: 17.xf6 b6 18.c1 e6 19.xg7 xg7 20.f4 e4
21.dxe4 dxe4 22.xe4 c4 23.0-0 bxc5 24.bxc5 xe2
0.69/15 ;
Hiarcs 10: 17.xf6 b6 18.c1 b7 19.0-0 fe8 20.xg7 xg7
21.cxb6 h5 22.c5 xb6 23.xd5 xd5 0.83/13 ]

17...e6
[Fritz 10: 17...b6 18.c1 e6 19.xg7 xg7 20.f4 e4 21.dxe4
dxe4 22.xe4 c4 23.0-0 bxc5 24.bxc5 xe2 0.69/14 ;
Hiarcs 10: 17...e6 18.c1 c6 19.0-0 f5 20.xg7 xg7
21.g4 d7 22.g5 0.83/13 ]

18.g5
[Fritz 10: 18.0-0 b6 19.g5 xf6 20.xf6 bxc5 0.70/14 ;
Hiarcs 10: 18.c1 c6 19.0-0 d7 20.xg7 xg7 21.f4 e6
22.fxe5 xe5 23.f4 0.81/12 ]
```

Note that the moves from the actual game are in black, while the engines' analyses are in the colors we selected while setting up the "Compare analysis" function (blue for *Fritz10* and red for *Hiarcs10*). Each variation ends with two numbers separated by a slash (which you'll recognize from previous *ChessBase Café* columns on *Fritz's* analysis functions). The number to the left of the slash is the numerical evaluation of the variation's final position, provided to 1/100th of a pawn and with positive numbers denoting a White advantage and negative values meaning that Black has the advantage. The number to the right of the slash is the search depth the engine reached (given in half-moves or *plies*).

You'll notice, too, that the engines analysis is often different from each other. In many positions you'll find that there is more than one way to skin a cat and that there is often no single objectively "best" move. In chess there is usually more than one path to victory (especially in "quiescent" positions, those quiet positions with no checks or obvious beneficial captures). And therein lies the main benefit to using the "Compare analysis" feature of *Fritz10*: to give you the advice of *multiple* electronic players and show you their varying ideas in action.

Until next month, have fun!

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

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