



COLUMNISTS

ChessBase Cafe

Steve Lopez



The Magic Eye

ChessBase has released *Fritz11* and it includes new training and chess engine-related features. You'll recall that *Fritz10* introduced the "Show plans" feature, which displayed an engine's long-term "thinking." *Fritz11* expands on this with a feature that allows you to see what's going on in the engine's "mind." At this rate, *Fritz* will have no secrets from us before long.

This new feature is the "Magic Eye." It appears in conjunction with the 3D boards (excluding the "Old 3D" view, which dates from *Fritz4*). This feature is curiously named, since there's nothing "magic" about it. It's clearly a technological device:



A mechanical swing arm is suspended over the chessboard like some robotic welder in a Japanese auto manufacturing plant. The ball at the end of the arm contains a camera and a laser. The camera takes a picture of the piece the engine is considering moving and the laser shows the square to which the engine is considering moving the piece.

Thus, the Magic Eye offers a graphic representation of what's going in the "brain" of the program. We can see the Eye display a sequence of moves (usually three) that the engine is currently considering. There are several components to the Magic Eye display. Here's what the Eye looks like in action:



Play through and download the games from
ChessCafe.com in the
[DGT Game Viewer](#).

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In the graphic above, the Magic Eye shows that the engine is considering moving the white bishop from f1 to b5. The first thing you'll notice about this display is the inset camera view. You'll recall that the swing arm camera focuses on the piece the engine is considering moving. The inset displays what the camera sees, in this case the f1-bishop centered in the inset view. If the exact piece isn't immediately apparent, you can use the "plus" button at the bottom of the inset to zoom in until the centered piece becomes more obvious. Conversely, the "minus" button zooms the view back out.

The second component of the Magic Eye view is the laser. There are actually *two* separate laser beams. The red beam shines on the piece the engine is considering moving, while a green beam pinpoints the target square to which the piece would move.

You'll typically see the Magic Eye display a *sequence* of moves: a candidate first move for the side on move, a possible reply from the opponent, and a reply in turn by the first player. This sequence illustrates the start of a variation that the engine is examining. The Magic Eye's swing arm will move back and forth over the board as each move is displayed by a series of laser beams. As this occurs you'll also notice that the camera inset view changes, always centered on the piece illuminated by the red laser beam.

The third component of the Magic Eye display is the lens on the front of the swing arm's ball. This will display which side is ahead in the current position:

- **Green:** the human player is ahead
- **Red:** the computer engine is ahead
- **Blue:** the position is even (see the above illustration)

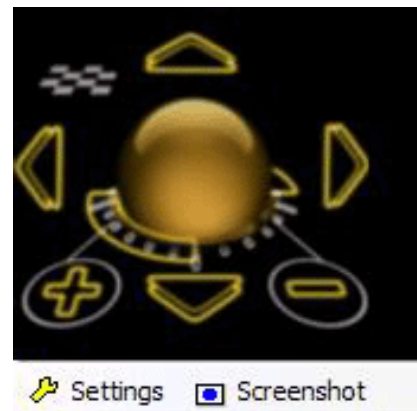
Note that the color red will only appear during a game against the chess engine. If you're replaying a database game, the only colors displayed will be blue (for level positions) or green. The Eye lacks a frame of reference to distinguish between players during a post-mortem.

Also, please note that the Eye *does* function while replaying a database game when you activate the engine's "Infinite analysis" mode (Engine menu/Infinite analysis).

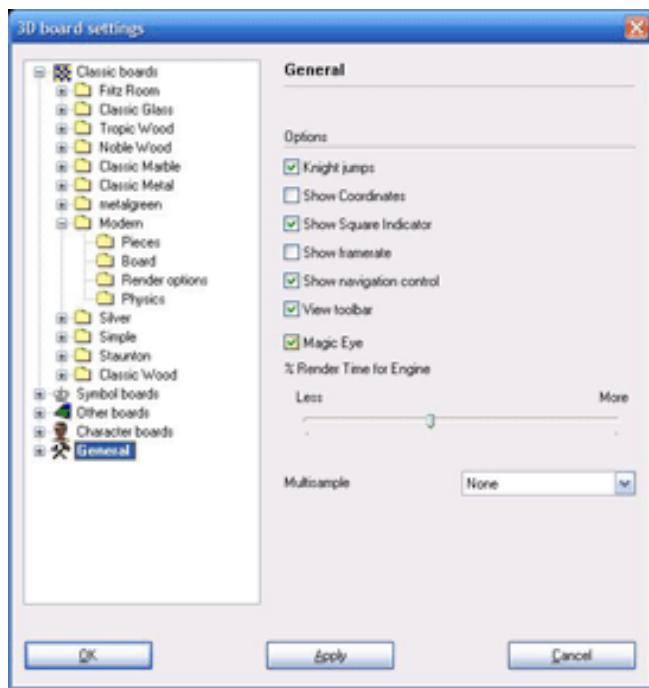
If you're playing a game against a chess engine on the 3D board and find the Magic Eye's arm distracting, there are a few things you can do to alleviate the situation. You can use the 3D board's track ball (in the display's lower left hand corner; see last month's [column](#)) to change the tilt and angle of the chessboard (visually this will "push" the Eye out of the way). Another option is to use the "Control Board 2D" pane, activated in the Window menu by going to the "Panes" submenu and selecting "Control Board 2D" (again see last month's [column](#)) to allow you to see on a 2D board what might be obscured on the 3D view:



Perhaps the easiest way to ease the distraction is to turn the Magic Eye off altogether. First click the "Settings" button (located in the lower left hand corner of the 3D display, directly below the trackball):



Next click the "General" category in the left hand pane of the "Settings" display:



In the right hand pane you'll see the entry "Magic Eye" with a checkbox next to it. This box allows you to toggle the Magic Eye off and on by unchecking or checking it. After you've checked or unchecked this box, just click the "Apply" button to complete the change, then click "OK" to close the "Settings" dialogue.

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 [USCFSales Online Catalog](#).

Steve wants your questions!! Send one along and perhaps it will be answered in an upcoming column. Please include your name and country of residence.

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