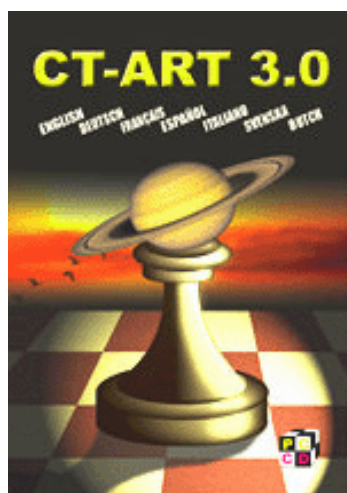




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Dadi Jonsson



Opening Study with Rybka & Chess Openings 2006 Part 1

The clearest indication that [*Rybka 2.2 UCI & Chess Openings 2006*](#) is much more than a regular one-volume reference work on the chess openings is in the title itself. For this program includes *Rybka 2.2*, by far the strongest chess engine available. This month I will discuss the different tools that the program offers for viewing and studying the theoretical material, and next month I will take a look at some additional features, including using *Rybka* for analysis.



The program is based on material prepared by the Russian grandmaster and opening expert Alexander Kalinin. He provides a general introduction to most openings as well as Informator-style annotations and plenty of verbal commentary on specific positions. The reference database contains one million games played by grandmasters and masters and the *2006 Chess Openings Encyclopedia* has more than a half million evaluations with 8,000 text comments. (Note that the downloadable version of the program only has games by grandmasters.)

ChessCafe.com is pleased to invite readers to a game of chess at Convekta's ChessOK Playing Zone!



Click here for the [Flash](#) version or here to download and install the [Full](#) version.



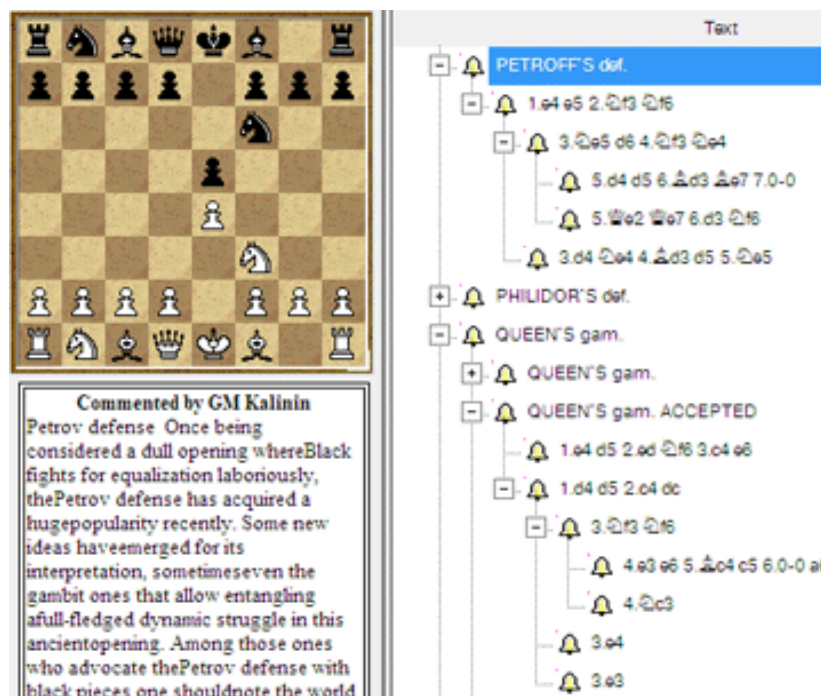
Alexander Kalinin

In addition to *Rybka* 2.2, four other chess engines come bundled with the program, offering you the opportunity to test your openings against opponents of different strength. It also comes with the ability to connect to two playing servers: Convekta's own [ChessOK Playing Zone](#), which is free for everyone; and the ICC, one of the oldest and most popular chess servers. Any game that you play, either against the chess engines or on the chess servers, is automatically stored in a database. Afterwards you can analyze the games using *Rybka*, and any deviations from opening theory will be highlighted as will any improvements that *Rybka* finds.

The user interface is based on [Chess Assistant 9](#), with some functionality disabled. For example, it's not possible to create or open databases other than those mentioned above. So everything in this article also applies to *Chess Assistant 9*, except that it does not come with *Rybka*, thus *Chess Assistant 9* users would have to buy it separately.

Overview of Openings and Variations

The variations covered by *Chess Openings 2006* are accessible through a Windows Explorer style user interface.




In the above image, the Petroff Defense (also known as the Russian Defense) folder is highlighted. The diagram shows the position corresponding to the selected variation and below that GM Kalinin gives some general comments about the opening, its history, and some of its most famous proponents, etc. To the right, branches can be expanded and collapsed by clicking on the “+” and “-” icons. This is an example of what Convekta calls a classifier, a powerful method for organizing chess knowledge, where each folder can contain diagrams, text and multimedia comments, opening trees, chess games, other folders, etc. Classifiers are used in many of Convekta’s products.

If you want to study a particular variation, just double click on its folder in the classifier. You will then be presented with a screen that puts all the information needed for opening study right at your fingertips. The best way to explain this excellent tool is to look at each component separately.

Tree Display

Rybka 2.2 UCI & Chess Openings 2006 also uses position databases, which has several advantages over traditional game databases. I’ll be working with the variation ending with 7.O-O from the classifier screenshot above. If you click once on that variation and then click on the tree icon on the toolbar, the image below will be shown. This shows how move trees are displayed. Whenever you want to generate a tree display for a position, just click on the tree icon.



Move	Q-ty	%	Year	ELO	CAP
7...c6	87	44%	2005	2780	+0.29
7...f5	4	62%	2005	2675	+0.48
7...O-O	3	33%	1994	2620	+0.37
7...g4	1	100%	1993	2580	+0.37
7...d6	1	0%	1972	2585	+0.89
Other moves					
7...c6	0				+0.80
7...f5	0				+0.56
7...d6	0				+0.60
7...d7	0				+0.85
7...e6	0				+0.68
Total	96	44%			

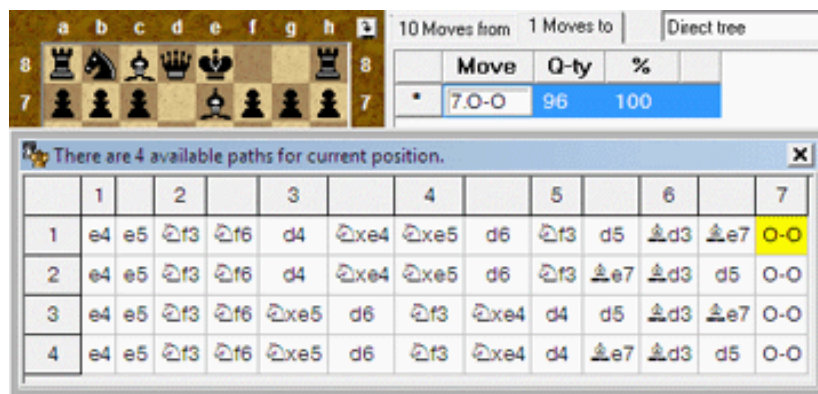
[-...] 7...O-O 8.c4 d6 9.h3 dxc4 10.xc4 d6 11.c3 d6 12.b3 c6 13.e1 d6 14.g5 e6

The chessboard shows the position that is being studied. The highlighted line to the right of the diagram shows information about the move 7...O-O. Immediately to the right of the move notation you see that, according to Kalinin, it leads to a position that is equal or perhaps slightly better for White. The reference database contains three games from this position and Black scored 33%. The latest game in the database is from 1994 and the rating of the highest rated player who used 7...O-O was 2620. The last column (CAP) shows a computer evaluation of the position following the move. Here the score is +0.37 in White's favor. CAP is a distributed computing project that Convekta has been running for several years with the participation of volunteers, and tens of millions of positions have been evaluated.

The "Move" column in the tree shows ten different moves. The first five occurred in games in the reference database, and the rest are classified as "Other moves." The latter were not considered important enough to be included in the theoretical material, but their CAP evaluation can indicate an interesting move overlooked by theory. The total shows that there are 96 games in the reference database and the overall score for the side on move (Black in this case) is 44%.

The colored bar below the total displays a breakdown of Black's results from the highlighted move in the move list (7...O-O). He drew two games (67%) and lost one (33%).

The right hand tab at the top of the window, the "Moves to" tab, can be used to look for transpositions and move-order variances. First select the tab and then right-click on a move in the move list and select "Show paths."



The above image shows that the position we are examining has occurred via four different move orders (paths) in the reference database. The move list shows that the final move leading to the position was 7.O-O in all 96 games. Therefore, it is the only move displayed in the “Move” column on the “Moves to” tab.

Opening Tables

The move tree only shows the next move and moves leading to the current position. Although very helpful for studying openings and catching transpositions, it is limited and doesn't give an overview of a whole variation or a comparison of several different variations. A move tree is also very different from the way theoretical material is presented in opening books. To address the shortcomings of the tree representation, Convekta designed so-called opening tables, which complement the move tree and present the theory in a familiar format. As the opening tables are dynamically generated, you can create a table for any position.

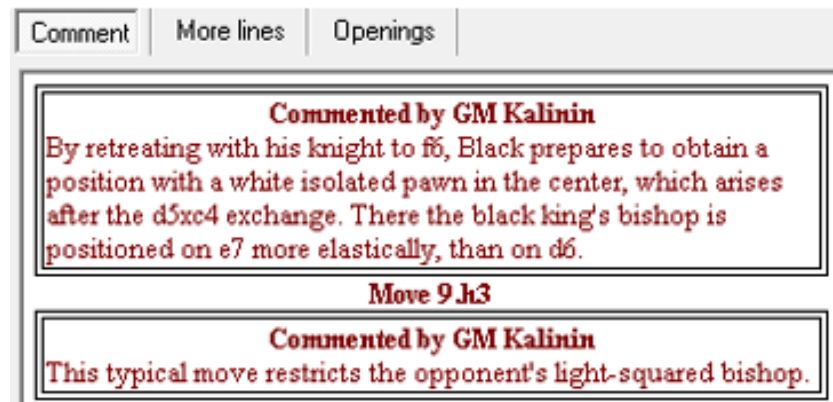
[...] 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♙xe5 d6 4.♘f3 ♙xe4 5.d4 d5 6.♙d3 ♙e7 7.O-O

	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	Eval
...	c4	h3	♙xc4	♙c3	♙b3	♙e1	♙g5	♙±/=	
O-O	♙f6	dxcc4	♙bd7	♙b6	c6	♙bd5	♙e6 ±/=	...	
...	c4	♙	...	...	...	...	...	...	±/=
♙g4	♙f6 ±/=	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	♙f4	♙e1	♙bd2	♙	...	...	...	...	±/=
♙d6	O-O	♙g4	♙d7 ±/=	...	...	...	...	...
...	h3	♙e1	♙	...	...	...	...	...	±
♙c6	O-O	♙f5 ±	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	c4	♙c3	cxcd5	♙e1	a3	♙e4	♙c2	♙±/=	
...	♙f6	♙e6	♙xd5	O-O	♙f6	h6	♙de7 ±/=	...	
...	...	♙c3	cxcd5	h3	♙	...	...	...	±/=
...	♙g4	♙f6	♙xd5	♙e6 ±/	...	...	...	...

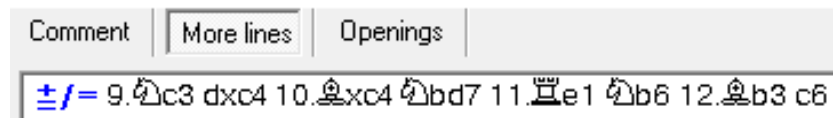
The top of the screen shows the variation that leads to the starting position for the table. In this case, 7.O-O, so the first move in the table is Black's seventh move. The move numbers are shown in the column headings (7-14) and the “Eval” column shows GM Kalinin's evaluation of the variation. The cursor (the blue square) is positioned before Black's seventh move in the first variation and

it can be moved using the arrow keys. The green triangles track the location of the cursor. The table displays six different variations, with each variation taking two lines. White's moves are on the first line and Black's moves on the second. However, this is optional and if you prefer you can have White's and Black's moves on the same line.

If you look at the moves of the first variation, you'll see that they are formatted differently. Some of them are displayed in normal type, while others are in bold or light-brown. A move that is displayed in bold has Informator-style analysis associated with it, which is then displayed below the opening table when you click on the move. A light-brown color means that the move has verbal comments. White's 9.h3 is both bold and light-brown, so it has both. When you click on that move the following comments are displayed below the table.



First there is a frame containing a comment on the current position and below that a comment relating specifically to the move 9.h3. Selecting "More lines" above the comments allows you to examine the side variations for this position. In this case there is one variation.



You can click on this variation to play through the moves. As you move through the opening table the program shows a list of all the games from the reference database that match the current position. So every time the position changes the list is updated.

Games from Opening Encyclopedia:3
1:0, Sax Gyula (2605) - Korchnoi Viktor (2610), 199
½:½, Polgar Judit (2630) - Hort Vlastimil (2555), 19
½:½, De Firmian Nick E (2550) - Rozentalis Eduard

In this case there are three games that match the position. Note the different background colors. The first and the third game have a light-green background. This means that the next move in the opening table (9.h3) was actually played in these games. The second game has a white background, which means that it

matches the position, but the next move was different from the one in the current variation. If we move forward one move in the variation, the second game would therefore disappear from this list.

A single click on a game displays the game score below the opening table. You can also open the game list in a separate window by right-clicking on the list and selecting “Open list” from the context menu. Use “Open game” from the context menu or double-click if you want to open and view a selected game.

If you would like to create a new opening table, just right-click with the mouse on a move and select “New table” from the context menu.

Bringing it all Together

I began by looking at the classifier for the openings and variations. When you double-click on a variation in the classifier, a screen containing all the tools mentioned above is opened.

The screenshot displays the ChessOK Cafe interface. On the left is a chessboard with a red square highlighting the square g4. Below the board is a table with columns: 9., Q-by, %, Year, ELO, and CAP. The first row shows 'h3 ±/= 2 75% 2004 2000 +0.18'. Below this is a section for 'Other moves' with a list of moves and their corresponding values. On the right is a move tree showing a sequence of moves: 1. e4 e5 2. Qf3 Qf6 3. Qxe5 d6 4. Qf3 Qxe4 5. d4 d5 6. Qd3 Qe7 7. Q-O-O. Below the move tree is a table with columns 7., 8., 9., 10., and 11. The first row shows 'c4 h3 Qxc4 Qc3'. Below the table is a section for 'Games from Opening Encyclopedia:3' with a list of games. At the bottom right are two comment boxes. The first comment is by GM Kalinin, discussing a knight retreat to f6 and a pawn exchange. The second comment is also by GM Kalinin, discussing a move that restricts the opponent's light-squared bishop.

9.	Q-by	%	Year	ELO	CAP
h3 ±/=	2	75%	2004	2000	+0.18
Qc3 ±/=	1	50%	1994	2030	+0.07

Other moves		
cx d5	0	+0.07
b3	0	-0.44
c5	0	+0.29
Qbd2	0	-0.11

7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
c4	h3	Qxc4	Qc3	
O-O	Qf6	dx c4	Qbd7	Qb6
c4				
Qg4	Qf6 ±/=			
Qd6	O-O	Qg4	Qd7 ±/=	
h3	Qe1			
Qc5	O-O	Qf5 ±		
c4	Qc3	cx d5	Qe1	
Qf5	Qe5	Qxd5	O-O	

Games from Opening Encyclopedia:3

1:0, Saxo Gyula (2605) - Korchnoi Viktor (2610), 199
 1/2:1, Polgar Judit (2630) - Hort Vlastimil (2555), 1
 1/2:1, De Firmian Nick E (2550) - Rosenthalis Eduard

Commented by GM Kalinin
 By retreating with his knight to f6, Black prepares to obtain a position with a white isolated pawn in the center, which arises after the d5xc4 exchange. There the black king's bishop is positioned on e7 more elastically, than on d6.

Move 9 h3

Commented by GM Kalinin
 This typical move restricts the opponent's light-squared bishop.

Here you have the chessboard, the move tree, a list of games matching the position on the board, the opening table and below that you can view verbal comments, variations or any game from the game list. Additionally you can analyse any position with Rybka 2.2, whether it happens to be in the opening table, variations or a game in the game list. Just select “Engines” from the menu bar and then “Infinite analysis.” The analysis is displayed in a new tab where the game list currently is. You can then add your analysis to the opening table. But we’ll explore this further next month.

All the Chess Assistant software described by Dadi in this column, as well as many more Chess Assistant programs, are available in the [USCFSales Online Catalog](#).

Dadi 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 Dadi!](#)

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