



COLUMNISTS

ChessOK
Cafe

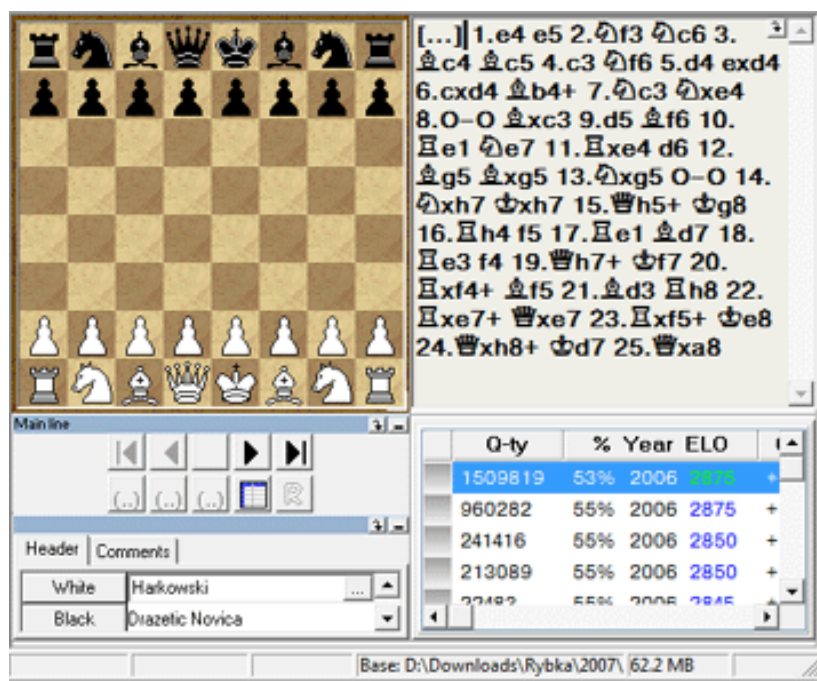
Dadi Jonsson



Annotating Games with Chess Assistant 9

Previous columns have dealt with using the chess engine to annotate games in *Chess Assistant 9*, but this month we'll be focusing on the do-it-yourself variety. When it comes to learning from your games, your own personal annotations are more important than an engines analysis. It forces you to think for yourself, instead of just accepting whatever the program suggests. Once your analysis is complete, then you can compare it with the engines results to either verify your ideas or find those that you missed.

When you begin annotating a game the *Chess Assistant* window will look something like this:



On the left hand side you have the board, the navigation buttons and the game header showing who played the game, the result, etc. The right hand side displays the notation at the top and the tree below that. If you want to turn off the tree in order to annotate the opening phase of the game (you can turn it back on later), then right click on it and select "This window's properties" from the bottom of the menu. This will display a dialog box showing all the different options that control how a game is displayed. The lower right corner looks like this:

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



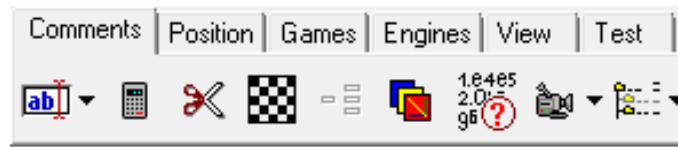
Click here for the [Flash](#) version or here to download and install the [Full](#) version.



The "Tree" checkbox (circled in red) controls the display of the tree pane. If it is not selected (as in this example) it will be hidden.

The "Comments" Toolbar Tab

Now you are ready to begin entering your annotations. The "Comments" tab on the toolbar above the notation pane provides easy access to the necessary tools.



There are nine icons on the toolbar, from left to right:

The annotation editor – you will be using this for most of your annotations. You can enter everything from the Informant symbols to long verbal commentary.

Move evaluation – the calculator icon allows you to enter positional evaluations, either using the Informant symbols or as a numeric evaluation similar to what the engine uses.

Delete moves and variations – the scissors icon displays a dialog box that allows you to delete moves (before or after the current move), the current variation (the whole game if you are in the mainline) or all annotations in the game.

Diagram – clicking the diagram button inserts a diagram at the current position. If it already contains a diagram, clicking the button will remove it.

Variation control – this allows you to promote or demote variations and decide in which order variations are displayed in the notation. The variation control is grayed out on the image above since we haven't added any variations to the game yet.

Graphic annotations – the icon with the stacked blue, yellow and red squares allows you to add graphic annotations to your game in the form of colored squares, arrows, text, etc. These graphics are then saved with the game.

Annotate opening – use this button to let *Chess Assistant* automatically annotate the opening. The annotations are in the same format as described in the articles on *Game Analysis with Chess Assistant 9* ([here](#) and [here](#)).

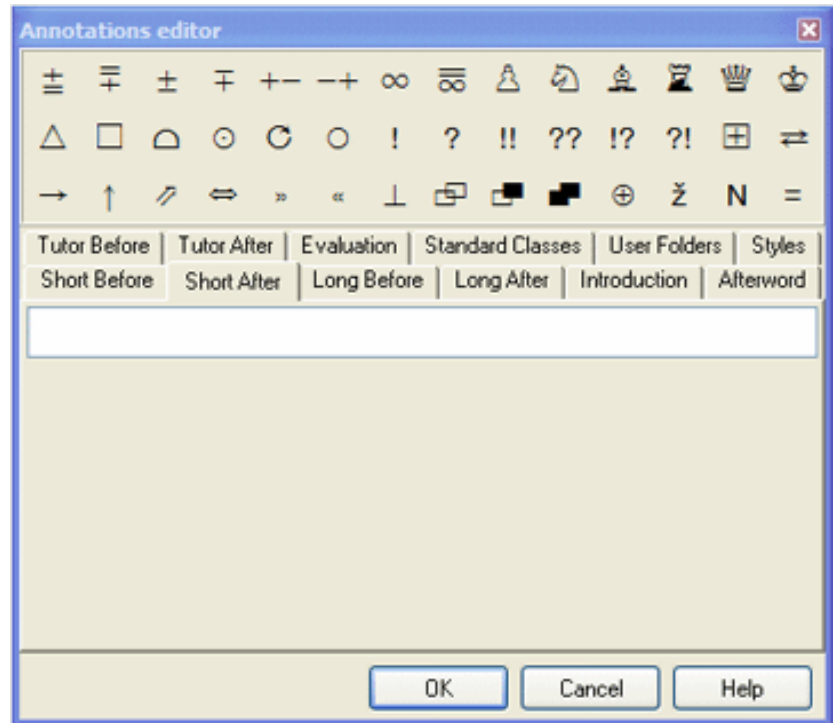
Multimedia comments – this allows you to add multimedia comments (audio, video and images) to the game.

Classes, folders and styles – this allows the following information to be recorded as annotations: i) Standard classes provide a simple method to categorize a move or a position. ii) Folders are part of so-called classifiers that provide some very powerful functionality for

classification of games and positions. A detailed discussion of classifiers is beyond the scope of this article. iii) Move styles are similar to styles in Microsoft Word and other word processing programs. You can use different colors and font properties to draw attention to certain moves. The name of the style indicates its purpose. Since you can search for styles they can, for instance, be used to bookmark games or positions that you want to revisit.

The Annotation Editor

Let's examine the annotation editor in more detail. You can display the annotation editor by clicking on its icon as described above. However, many users prefer to use the Ctrl+A keyboard shortcut. The image below shows the annotation editor.



The annotation editor is used for entering most of your annotations, so it is helpful to understand how it works. Fortunately, it is rather simple to use.

As shown at the top of the above image, you have quick access to the piece symbols and the Informant symbols. Clicking on a symbol adds it to your annotations. Note that these can be used in most of the annotation fields described below. If you are unsure about the meaning of a symbol, a tool tip with an explanation will be displayed when the mouse hovers over the icon.

The twelve tabs below the Informant symbols are used to enter different types of annotations (the two Tutor tabs are not of interest for game annotations):

Introduction – this tab allows you to write an introduction to the game that will be displayed before the first move.

Afterword – the text you enter here is displayed after the final move of the game.

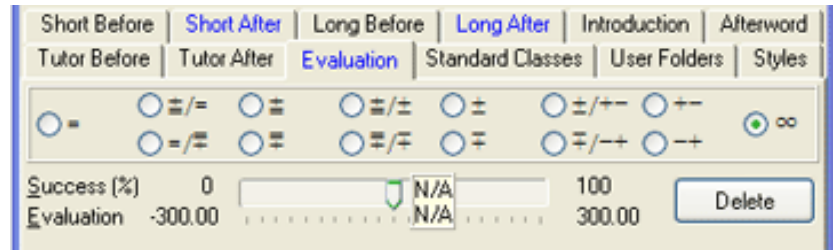
Short Before – this is used to enter the “Better is” Informant symbol.

Short After – this is used for affixing moves with traditional symbols such as “!”, “?”, etc. Some of the symbols apply to the move just played, while others describe the current position.

Long Before – this allows you to enter long commentary before a move.

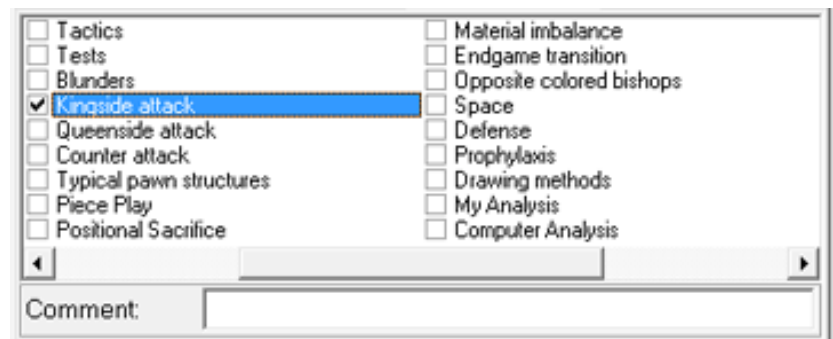
Long After – this allows you to enter long commentary after a move.

Evaluation – This tab offers the same options as “Move evaluation” on the “Comments” toolbar tab described above. All the fields described above are normal text boxes, but the evaluation tab is different, as can be seen in the image below.



There are two ways to enter an evaluation of a position. You can use the radio buttons at the top of the panel to select an Informant symbol. In this case I have selected “Unclear.” Or you can also use the slider at the bottom of the panel to enter a numeric evaluation similar to the ones used by chess engines.

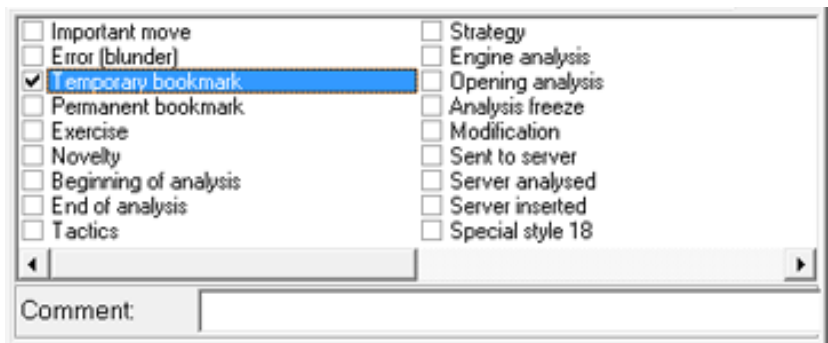
Standard Classes – This field, which was described above when we discussed the “Comments” toolbar, allows you to assign a move to one or more classes.



As shown in the image above, I have assigned the current move to the class “Kingside attack.” The scrollbar below the list indicates that there are more classes available than are visible on the image. Notice the “Comment” field at the bottom of the image, where you can attach a description to the class marker that is displayed in the game.

User Folders – User folders were briefly mentioned above, but won’t be described in this article.

Styles – Assigns styles to the current move. Styles were described briefly when we discussed the “Comments” tab on the toolbar. You can assign one or more styles to a move, as shown in the image below.



Here I have assigned the style “Temporary bookmark” to the current move. This makes it easy to quickly spot the move when I view the game. I can also search for all games in the database where I have bookmarked one or more moves. Thus, I can work on several games at a time and easily find them later to resume the analysis exactly where I left off. Of course there are many other possible uses for styles.

Adding Variations

When you want to add a new variation after the current move, just make the moves on the chessboard and the new variation is automatically included in the notation. The same method is used to add subvariations as well.

The Results

The notation pane is automatically updated as you add your annotations to the game. The following image illustrates the results of using some of the methods described above for annotating a game.



The symbol after 15.Bc3 was entered using the “Short After” tab in the annotation editor. It shows that this was the only move and a variation is given explaining why another move would fail. White’s seventeenth move was a mistake, as indicated by the question mark. A suggested improvement is given in the variation following the move. A diagram has been added after White’s eighteenth move by clicking on the chessboard icon on the “Comments” tab. After White’s nineteenth move we see three variations and the last one is attributed to Alekhine using a “Long After” field.

Keyboard Shortcuts

The table below displays some of the keyboard shortcuts that may expedite your work when annotating games in *Chess Assistant 9*.

Shortcut	Comment
Alt+7	White stands slightly better
Ctrl+7	Black stands slightly better
Alt+9	White stands better
Ctrl+9	Black stands better
+	White has a decisive advantage
=	Equal
Ctrl+0	Unclear position
Alt+0	With compensation for the material
Ctrl+Y	With counterplay
Ctrl+U	With attack
Ctrl+R	With initiative
?	A mistake
!	A good move
Alt+1	An excellent move
Alt+2	A blunder
Alt+3	A move deserving attention
Alt+4	A dubious move
Ctrl+W	The only move
Ctrl+E	Better is
Ctrl+Q	With the idea
Alt+6	White stands slightly better / Equal
Ctrl+6	Equal / Black stands slightly better
Alt+8	White stands slightly better / White stands better
Ctrl+8	Black stands slightly better / Black stands better
Ctrl+A	Annotation editor
Ctrl+S	Save a game
Delete	Delete annotations for the current move
Alt+Backspace	Delete the current variation
Shift+Ctrl+Backspace	Delete the end of variation
Backspace	Delete the last move

Delete	Delete moves dialog box if the current move is unannotated
--------	--

All the Chess Assistant software described by Dadi in this column, as well as many more Chess Assistant programs, are available in the [USCF Sales 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!](#)

 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

 [HOME](#)

 [COLUMNS](#)

 [LINKS](#)

 [ARCHIVES](#)

 [ABOUT THE
CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)

[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)

[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

© 2007 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

"**ChessCafe.com**®" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.