



COLUMNISTS

ChessOK Cafe

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CHESS THEATRE

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Rybka Aquarium FAQ

Rybka 3 Aquarium is now available. The [June](#) and [July](#) columns give a glimpse into some of the capabilities of this new software, and in [April](#) and [May](#) I interviewed the developers of both Rybka 3 and Rybka Aquarium. It's still early in its release, but it's already clear that Rybka 3 is a huge step forward from the previous version, both in playing strength and functionality.

Aquarium cannot be compared to previous versions, as this is completely new software, and it is certainly very different from other chess software, as is evident once you start the program. The main emphasis in the first version was on analysis functionality and in that area it offers some new and interesting methods, as well as using a fresh approach to some of the older methods common in most chess analysis software. The [June](#) and [July](#) columns show two examples.

This month's column is dedicated to the new Aquarium user. It is based on questions that were posted by the users on the Aquarium [support forum](#) in the first few days after the release. Before going to the Q&A, let's have a quick overview of Aquarium's user interface.



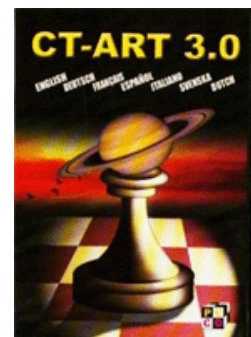
The Aquarium user interface

The numbers in the image indicate the location of the following user interface elements:

1. *The Ribbon* allows access to most of Aquarium's functions. It is divided into tabs that group related functions and display them together. The Ribbon is context-sensitive, automatically displaying functions relevant to the task that you are performing.
2. *The Navigation Pane* allows switching between the different modes (such as play, analysis and engine competitions) and provides access to data objects (such as databases, lists and games). By clicking links or buttons in the Navigation Pane you can switch modes and load the corresponding objects into the Working Area.
3. *The Working Area* is where you do all your work. You will spend most of your time playing, examining or commenting games, browsing a list of games, etc.

There are two more interesting elements in the upper left-hand corner of

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CT-ART 3.0

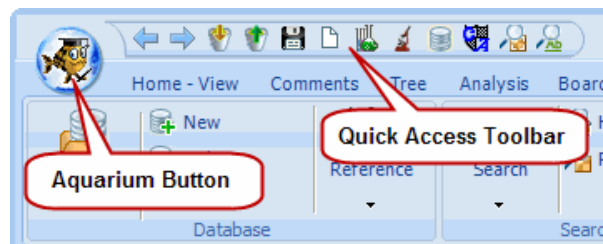


Chess Assistant 9



Chess Strategy 2.0

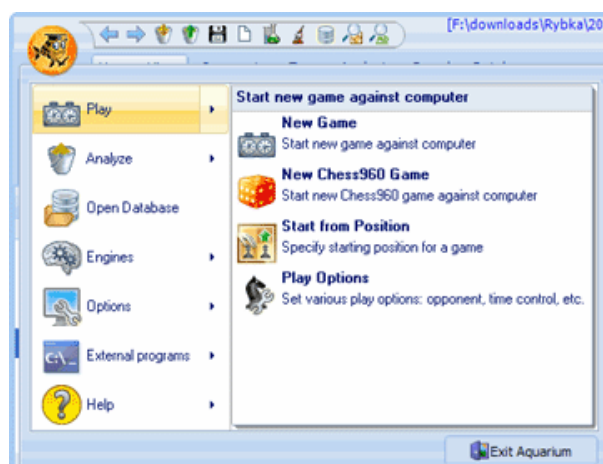
the Aquarium window.



The Aquarium Button and the Quick Access Toolbar

The *Quick Access Toolbar* (QAT) displays controls that are always available to the user, regardless of which tab is selected on the Ribbon. For this reason the Quick Access Toolbar is the single location in Rybka Aquarium where controls that must always be quickly available to the user are displayed; you can customize the Quick Access Toolbar by right-clicking on it.

The *Aquarium Button* displays the Aquarium Menu when you click it.



The Aquarium Menu

Here you have access to all the major functions of Aquarium. Note in particular the program options and help.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1 Is there a demo version of Aquarium?

A1 Yes, there is an [Aquarium demo](#). It has the following limitations:

- The chess engine never calculates for more than 2 seconds
- CDP, CBH, PGN databases can't be opened without converting
- Maximum of 10,000 games per database
- The tree only works while castling is still possible. Note that a tree is required for Interactive Deep Analysis (IDeA), Find Blunders and Game Analysis to work correctly. These analysis methods may therefore return unexpected results.
- Rybka 3 is replaced by Rybka 2.1 demo.
- The help file is not included.
- Larry Kaufman's material handicap opening book is not included.
- The utility programs AquariumTreeUtils and AquariumEpdProcess are not included.
- Other minor restrictions.

Q2 What is the difference between Rybka 3 Aquarium and Deep Rybka 3 Aquarium?

A2 Deep Rybka 3 Aquarium comes with the multiprocessor version of Rybka. You only need it if your computer has more than one core/

processor. Note that the multiprocessor version also runs fine on single-processor computers. So if you are planning to upgrade to a multiprocessor system, you might want to purchase the “Deep” version.

Q3 Where can I learn more about Aquarium?

A3 The following resources are currently available:

- The Aquarium help file is accessible through the Aquarium Menu as shown in the screenshot above.
- A printed manual is distributed with the DVD version. It is also available for download.
- The Aquarium [support forum](#) is a great place to ask questions and keep in touch with other users and the Aquarium developers, suggest new features etc. In order to register, go to the [registration page](#).
- ChessOK Cafe already has some Rybka Aquarium articles in the [ChessCafe.com Archives](#) that new users are encouraged to read. You can expect additional ChessOK Cafe articles about Rybka Aquarium in the coming months.
- Video tutorial will be available soon. Some very good user made video tutorials are already available. For links to the tutorials see the Aquarium support forum.

Q4 Will there be any free updates to Aquarium?

A4 Several new features are expected in 2008 and these will be offered as free updates. Additional features will be implemented based on feedback from users. In 2009 Aquarium will continue to be updated to enhance usability and solve any issues that may arise. These updates will be offered as downloads through the ChessOK Downloader. The next major version of Aquarium will be released in about one year. It will not be a free update.

Q5 I really want to see a certain feature implemented in Aquarium. What should I do?

A5 Users are encouraged to participate in the discussion about future plans for Aquarium. Just visit the Aquarium [support forum](#) and post your suggestions.

Q6 Can I use the Rybka engine that comes with Aquarium in other GUIs too?

A6 Yes. Rybka communicates with the GUI (Graphical User Interface) by using the so-called UCI standard (Universal Chess Interface), which means that it can be used in all GUIs that support UCI. This includes Chess Assistant, recent versions of Chessbase software ([Fritz](#), etc.), Shredder, Arena and others.

Q7 Can I use other chess engines besides Rybka in Aquarium?

A7 Yes, you can use any UCI or Winboard-compatible engine with Aquarium. Almost all modern chess engines fall into that category and there are literally hundreds of free and commercial chess engines that can be used in Aquarium.

| △ | Valid | Type | Engine |
|-----|-------|----------|---------------------|
| 134 | ✓ | WinBoard | wcrafty19 |
| 135 | ✓ | UCI | yace |
| 136 | ✓ | UCI | Zappa Mexico II x64 |
| 137 | ✓ | UCI | Zappa Mexico II x |

Use any UCI or WinBoard engine in Aquarium

Q8 Does Aquarium support CTG-books (i.e. Fritz/Chessbase opening book format)?

A8 Yes, Aquarium can read CTG books, but modifying them is not possible.

Q9 Does Aquarium come with an opening book?

A9 Yes, it comes with a few opening books and you can also create your own opening books.

| Move ↴ | flg | Eval | Total | Success | CAP | Play % |
|-----------|-----|------|-------|---------|-------|--------|
| 8...♖bd7 | ☐☐ | ±/= | 1619 | 47% | +0.22 | 42% |
| → 8...♗e7 | ☐☐ | ±/= | 1602 | 49% | +0.22 | 43% |
| 8...h5 | ☐☐ | ±/= | 357 | 54% | +0.68 | 12% |
| 8...♖c6 | ☐☐ | ±/= | 70 | 44% | +0.72 | 1% |
| 8...b5 | ☐☐ | ± | 57 | 33% | +0.33 | 0% |
| 8...d5 | ☐☐ | ±/= | 37 | 19% | +1.12 | 0% |
| 8...♜c7 | ☐☐ | | 25 | 40% | +0.22 | 2% |
| 8...h6 | ☐☐ | | | | +0.64 | 0% |

An opening book in Aquarium

A special Rybka 3 opening book by Jeroen Noomen is available from many sources. This book is in CTG format, which can be read by Aquarium.

Q10 I have an opening book in CTG format. How can I make Rybka use it when playing in Aquarium?

A10 This is explained in a video made by an expert Aquarium user (Buffos on the support forum): [Adding CTG books to Aquarium](#). An updated version of Aquarium is expected soon, where using CTG books will be easier.

Other Buffos videos are listed below:

- [Introduction to infinite analysis](#)
- [Tree Configurations](#)
- [Inserting variations from trees into the game notation](#)

Q11 What is IDeA?

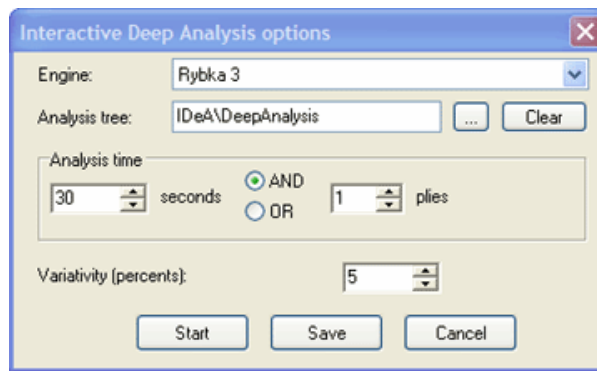
A11 The purpose of Interactive Deep Analysis or IDeA is to dig deeply into a position and return as much information about it as possible. IDeA keeps its analysis in a tree structure that is unlimited in size and the user can browse at will, even while the analysis is in progress.

Besides having a live view of the evolving analysis the user can also direct the analysis into the most interesting positions by excluding or adding positions and variations to the analysis queue.

In short IDeA is a highly selective search, controlled by Aquarium (and the user). Interesting lines are analyzed deeply, but weak moves are only considered briefly or not at all. For more information see the [June 2008 ChessOKCafe](#) column. Buffos has also made a video with an [introduction to IDeA](#).

Q12 What are the best settings for IDeA?

A12 The screenshot shows the starting parameters that you can define for IDeA.



IDeA options

There is no setting that is best for all purposes. It depends on the position, how you want to use the results, for how long you are going to analyze and the hardware you are using. Generally I would recommend that new users don't change Variativity and keep it at 5. Raising the value creates a broader tree (more alternatives are examined), but I have seldom seen any need for that.

If you want to use the resulting tree as a source of ideas for further analysis you can select a short analysis time. The same applies if you want to use the resulting tree as an input into some other type of analysis (like Delayed Analysis).

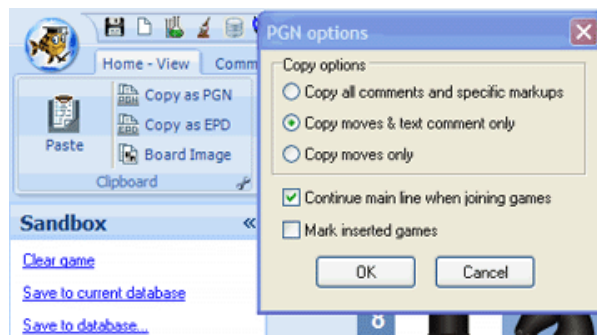
If you are analyzing a quiet position it may be better to use relatively short analysis time for each position. You can ensure sufficient depth of the analysis by raising the "plies" parameter. What is "relatively short" depends on your hardware. On a powerful Quad or 8 core computer thirty seconds may be a good choice. For less powerful hardware start by using one minute and experiment until you are happy with the results. If you are doing overnight analysis you should consider even longer analysis time.

IDeA can be quite good in tactical positions too. In that case you may not need a big tree with hundreds or thousands of positions, as you just want to find a winning move sequence if it exists. If so, you could select longer analysis time to make sure that the tactics are not missed due to insufficient depth. I've done some experiments with tactical positions and I have found out that even with low settings for time/plies IDeA can find surprisingly deep moves. I have experimented with five to fifteen seconds per move on a powerful computer and it has been enough to find some very deep solutions in test positions. It will be interesting to see what users find out when they start experimenting.

Of course IDeA is not best in all situations and sometimes the good old infinite analysis may be the best bet. The value of infinite analysis in Aquarium is greater than in other programs as the analysis is stored and Aquarium can use the results to build its analysis tree.

Q13 What are all those strange characters in the PGN game that I copied from Aquarium?

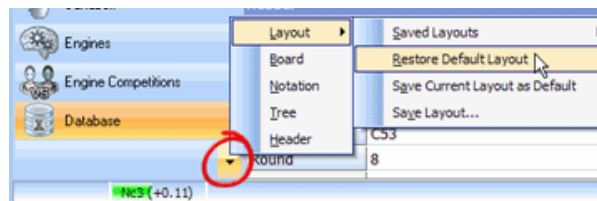
A13 The strange characters that you see are Aquarium specific markup. Although this markup is fully compliant with the PGN standard it's of little use in programs that don't know how to interpret it. While viewing a game, select the Home – View tab and click the small icon in the lower right corner of the Clipboard group as shown in the image.



PGN options Select “Copy moves & text comment only” to produce PGN that is easier to read in other programs.

Q14 How can I restore the original layout of the Working Area?

A14 If you have closed one or more windows in the Working Area you can always restore the default layout using the Layout menu, which you can access by clicking the small triangle on the button at the bottom of the Navigation Pane.



The default Working Area layout restored

In order to restore the default layout, first select Layout from the menu and then Restore Default Layout.

Q15 I want to play online chess, but I can’t start the Chess Planet client?

A15 The Chess Planet client is a separate download. Start the ChessOK Downloader. The Chessplanet client can be found under Aquarium \Components.

Q16 How do I switch opening books in Aquarium?

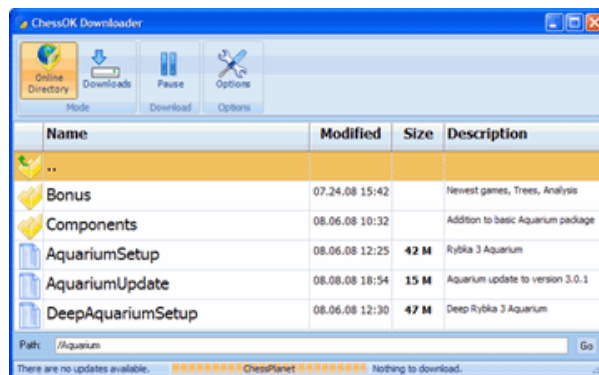
A16 Go to the engine list and locate Rybka. If you double click on the Book cell, a drop-down list with all available books is displayed. Select the one you want to use. For engine matches you can select the opening books for the two engines when setting up the match.

| Engine | Priority | Hash (M) | Rating | NoTB | Time | Book | |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|--------|-------------------------------------|------|---------------|--|
| Rybka 3 | Low | 1024 | 3150 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 30 | NarrowBook | |
| Rybka 3 1-cpu | Normal | 1024 | 0 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 30 | <none> | |
| Rybka 3 1-cpu w32 | Normal | 512 | 0 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 30 | Annotations | |
| Rybka 3 960 | Low | 32 | 3150 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 30 | NoAnnotations | |
| Rybka 3 960 1-cpu w32 | Low | 512 | 0 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 30 | NarrowBook | |
| Rybka 3 Dynamic | Low | 32 | 3150 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 30 | WideBook | |
| Rybka 3 Human | Low | 32 | 3150 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 30 | HandicapBook | |
| | | | | | | CTGExample | |
| | | | | | | DeepAnalysis | |

Select a new opening book for an engine

Q17 The ChessOK Downloader can’t connect to the Chess Resource Server.

A17 Some users may have problems connecting to the Chess Resource Server. If you are connecting to the Internet through a firewall (e.g. using Windows Firewall or similar software), configure it to allow ChessOK Downloader to access Internet. This may also happen because your network was configured to block some Internet traffic. Contact your network administrator and give the following technical information: ChessOK Downloader tries to establish a TCP connection to the Chess Resources Server via port 8569.



The ChessOK Downloader

The ChessOK support team also provides http-links to updates and data that allow you to download without using the downloader program.

Many of the Chess Assistant programs described by adi in this column are available in the [USCFSales Online Catalog](#).

Do you have a question about a Chess Assistant product? Send it along and perhaps it will be answered in an upcoming column. Please include your name and country of residence.

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