

Lucas Chess – Compete Guide

Competition with tutor

The idea behind the competition mode is to slowly guide chess learners towards a better understanding of the game by providing a tutor (another engine analyzing every move in the background) and by gamifying the process. To that end Competition lets you play against

increasingly difficult engines with fewer and fewer hints from the tutor as you progress. Thus one plays “with [a] tutor” to help.

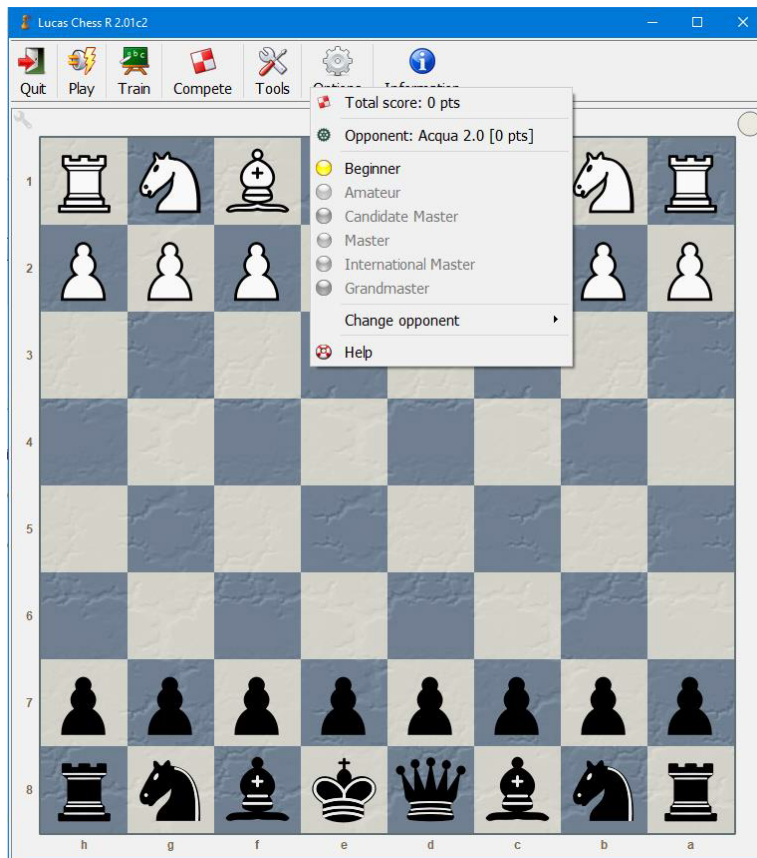
The various opponent engines are divided into five groups according to their strength — click “Change opponent” to select an engine. The engines in the easiest group don't have a lot of chess knowledge and make frequent mistakes, they are good for beginners to train with. The strongest group on the other hand contains engines that play on grandmaster level, like Rybka and Critter. Each but the lowest group requires a certain number of points to unlock. Points are acquired by winning games against engines in the lower groups.

Also, you advance through 6 grades: Beginner, Amateur, Candidate Master, Master, International Master

Master, and Grandmaster. Each grade provides a number of tutor hints during the game. The beginner grade provides seven hints per game, down to grandmaster which provides no hints at all. (You can conserve tutor hints by refusing them but takebacks count as a used tutor hint.)

To begin, click one of the available grades. The aim is to obtain the highest possible score:

- The current point score is displayed in the Competition menu and in-game information.
- To obtain points, you must win on different levels in grades of increasing difficulty.
- To overcome a grade it is necessary to win against the engine with white and with black.
- The grades are numerically ranked in the order of the following table:
 - Beginner : 5
 - Amateur : 10
 - Candidate Master : 20
 - Master : 40
 - International Master : 80
 - Grandmaster : 160



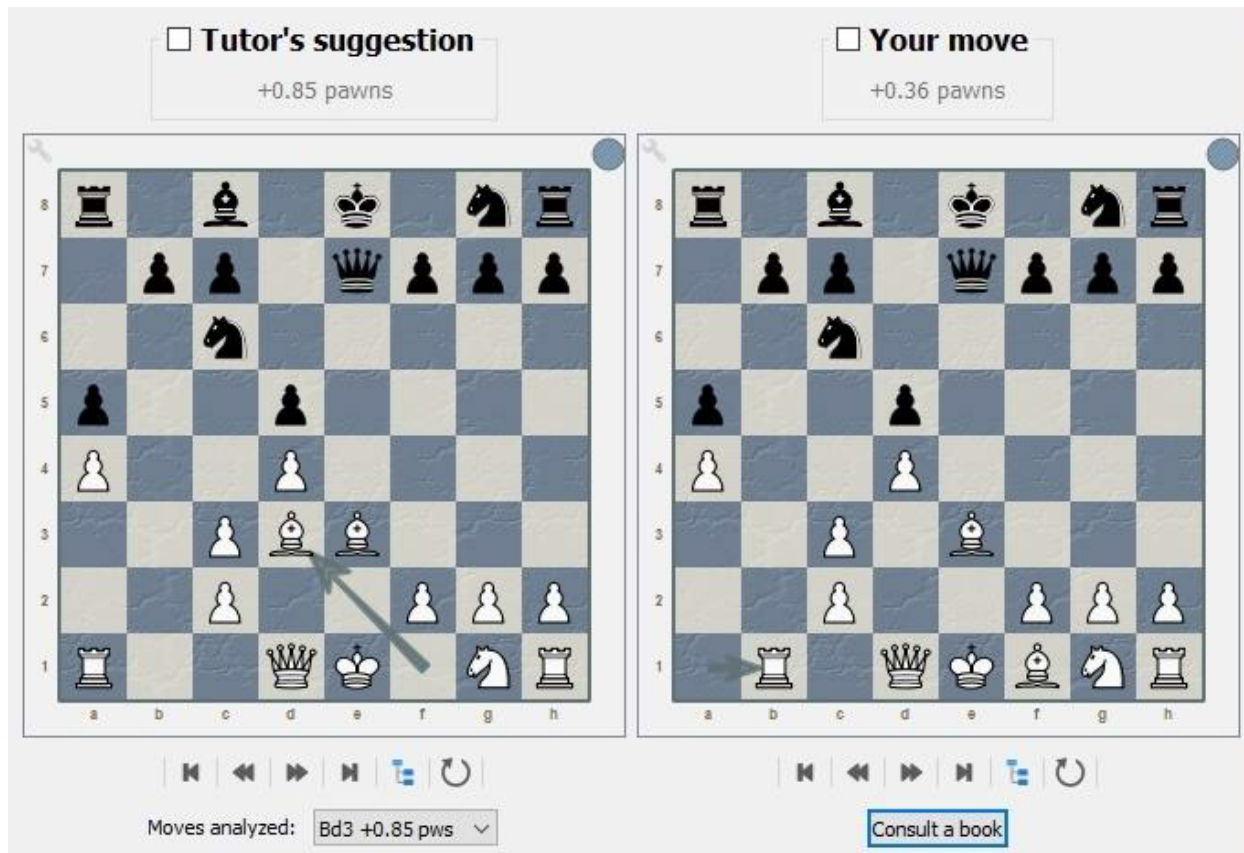
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- Each grade is comprised of levels. You can unlock the next grade and still play a level in the previous grade but you get no points for playing a level that you have already won.
- If you win, the score for each game is calculated by multiplying the current level number with the numerical rank of the grade.
- The engines are divided into groups. To be able to play with an opponent of a particular group a minimum total point score is required, as shown next to the group label.

Note: During gameplay, it is possible to use Utilities to save the game in various formats, including PGN. This is NOT the way to interrupt play so that it can be resumed in Competition mode. Rather, use the Adjoin button. See the Play guide for information on the toolbar.

The Tutor is your friend! This engine (by default Stockfish and it's not the engine you are playing against) is monitoring every move you make and if it finds it subpar, it will tell you and allow you to make the move it recommends instead of your own for as many times as you have hints available in the game. For both moves the tutor's rating is also shown in centipawn units. It is possible to limit the tutor's appearances to cases where it thinks your move is a blunder versus a mere mistake or inaccuracy. Go to Option, Engine Configuration, Tutor to adjust the setting.

When the tutor windows appears, the recommended move and your own are shown side by side and you can step through the continuations the tutor expects for both. At this point it's possible to explore further variations to your own move and the tutor move on an analysis board and sometimes there is also a third window, which is what the opponent engine expected you to do.



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It's important to pay close attention to the move ratings, because sometimes the tutor's suggestion is only marginally better than your own move, or maybe you intentionally want to push the game in another direction. Remember that you can only accept the tutor move a limited number of times per game; if your own move wasn't that bad you might want to stick with it, even if the suggestion is obviously better. Try to reserve the hints for truly questionable moves and catastrophic blunders. On the other hand you may want to accept hints that only give you a slight advantage in order to keep the game tipped in your favor as it progresses.

Once you have decided which move to make, you are returned to the game with the chosen move executed and your hints counter decreased by one if you decided against your own original move. Additionally you can also take back moves you have made, even if the tutor did not disagree with you. Taking back a move also uses up a hint though.

It's also important to remember that no clock is running in competition mode, so take your time for every move and move only when you have a plan. An often stated chess adage attributed to chess champion Emanuel Lasker goes: "A bad plan is better than no plan at all."

Elo-Rating mode

With the Elo modes the player can get a better idea of his playing strength. It might not be accurate enough to reflect real over-the-board strengths, but it should at least indicate a rough estimate of your performance level.

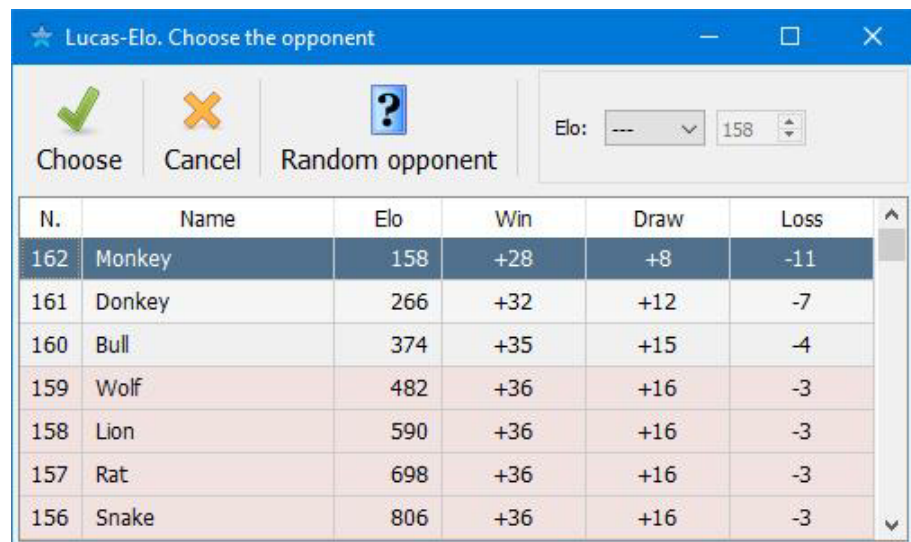
Lucas-Elo

In this mode you can play games without time control against a list of engine opponents that have Elo ratings between 158 and 3500. You start with a rating of zero and play against any opponent that you like.

In the list of engines you see the rating changes that you will get for a win, draw, or loss (a negative rating is not possible). You can also battle a random engine but be aware that the very best engines are randomly eligible.

There are no aids like the tutor or in-game analysis in this mode, it's just you

and your opponent and the game's outcome that determines how your rating changes. In time, this becomes a great way to get a more or less realistic rating for your playing strength.

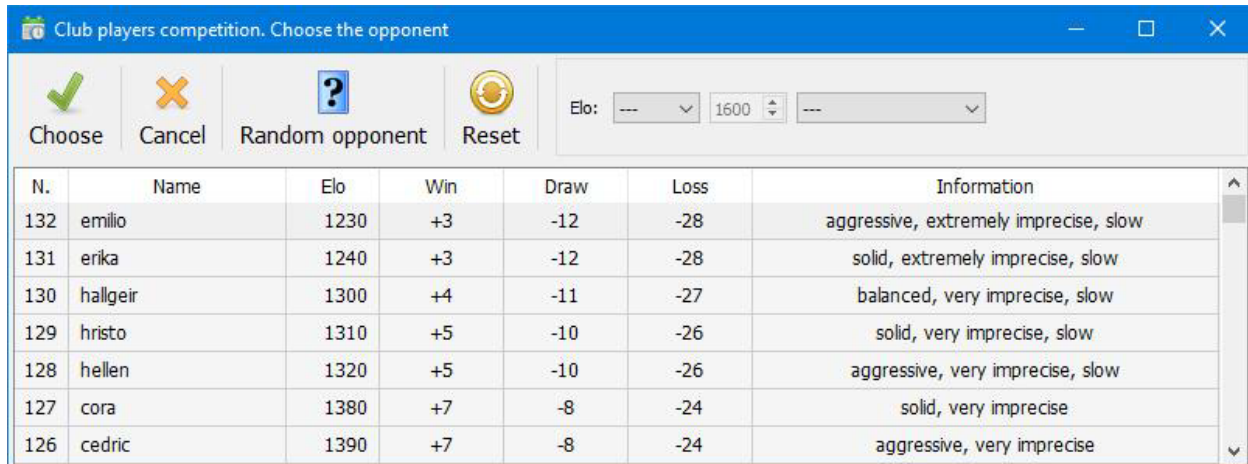


N.	Name	Elo	Win	Draw	Loss
162	Monkey	158	+28	+8	-11
161	Donkey	266	+32	+12	-7
160	Bull	374	+35	+15	-4
159	Wolf	482	+36	+16	-3
158	Lion	590	+36	+16	-3
157	Rat	698	+36	+16	-3
156	Snake	806	+36	+16	-3

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Tourney-Elo

The tourney mode is meant to emulate games against club players with strengths between 1230 and 2850 and various “personalities.” At the end of this mode's engine list (2450 Elo and above) are incarnations of a few grandmaster personalities, if you are up to the challenge. Unlike Lucas-Elo mode you have an initial rating of 1600, you cannot select the very best opponents at first, and the games are played with time controls (total minutes per player and, optionally, added seconds per move made).

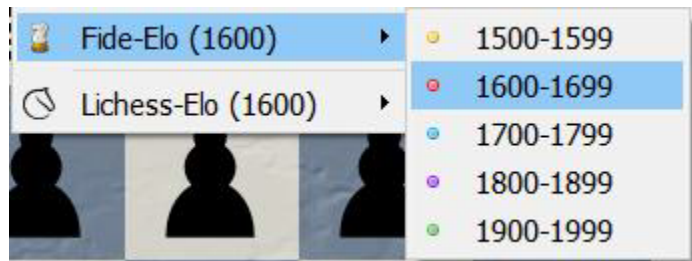


N.	Name	Elo	Win	Draw	Loss	Information
132	emilio	1230	+3	-12	-28	aggressive, extremely imprecise, slow
131	erika	1240	+3	-12	-28	solid, extremely imprecise, slow
130	hallgeir	1300	+4	-11	-27	balanced, very imprecise, slow
129	hristo	1310	+5	-10	-26	solid, very imprecise, slow
128	hellen	1320	+5	-10	-26	aggressive, very imprecise, slow
127	cora	1380	+7	-8	-24	solid, very imprecise
126	cedric	1390	+7	-8	-24	aggressive, very imprecise

Again you can opt to play a random engine within a certain range or use the Elo filters to find opponents. Like the Lucas-Elo mode the tourney games are devoid of helpers of any kind. If you want to establish your playing strength with time controls this is the right option for you.

Fics-Elo & Fide-Elo

These modes are quite different from the previous two. They are more akin to the “Play Like a Grandmaster” feature from the trainings menu. You select a rating range for your opponent and then a recorded game from one of the databases is opened.



The idea is that you try to make the best move you can come up with and if you make a move other than the recorded one, yours is compared to the move that has really been played in the game. An engine adjudicator then computes a rating for both moves and if yours is better you get the difference in points, if the original move is better you lose the difference. Should you make the same move that has been played in the game, then points stay the same. Deviating opening book moves are neither punished nor rewarded.

The game progresses as it has been recorded in any case, if you tried to make a deviating move, it gets replaced by the recorded one as soon as you see the point change. If you end up with a positive score, you win, otherwise you lose. Your initial Elo score (1200 for Fics-Elo games and 1600 for Fide-Elo games) is then adjusted accordingly.

Not as exciting as going head-to-head against an opponent (live or virtual)? Sure, to some extent, it's missing the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat (not to mention the boredom of draw). Even so . . .

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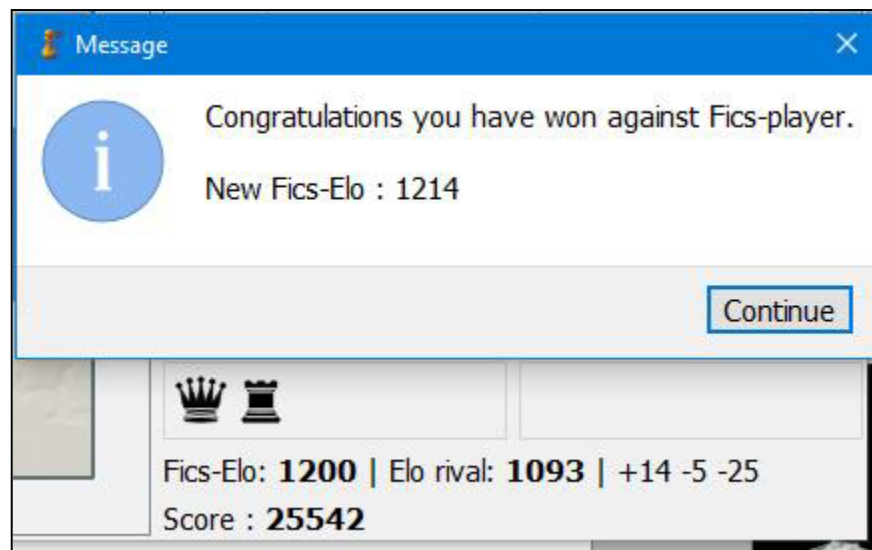


It's interesting how you are forced to make the best move possible and yet have no influence on how the game progresses. If the original player whose moves you are shadowing opted for an inferior continuation, you have to make the best of it the next move, at least in theory. In this case you might be amazed by how brilliant your own move was. If you are shadowing a better player, you can marvel at his genius while you make one inferior move after another

yourself. This play mode has a high entertainment value and yet can be quite insightful at the same time.

This player did quite well, starting with the default Elo of 1200 in Fics-Elo mode. Of course, he does not get the 25542 score points added to his Elo rating. Instead, since that score was positive, he receives the promised +14 for a "win." He would have -5 taken away for a "draw" (final score 0) and -25 for a "loss."

These Elo point stakes were determined by the difference between the player's Elo and that of the selected rival.



Lichess-Elo

This version appears to be similar to Fics-Elo & Fide-Elo except that the source of the games is Lichess.com.

Reset (Change elos)

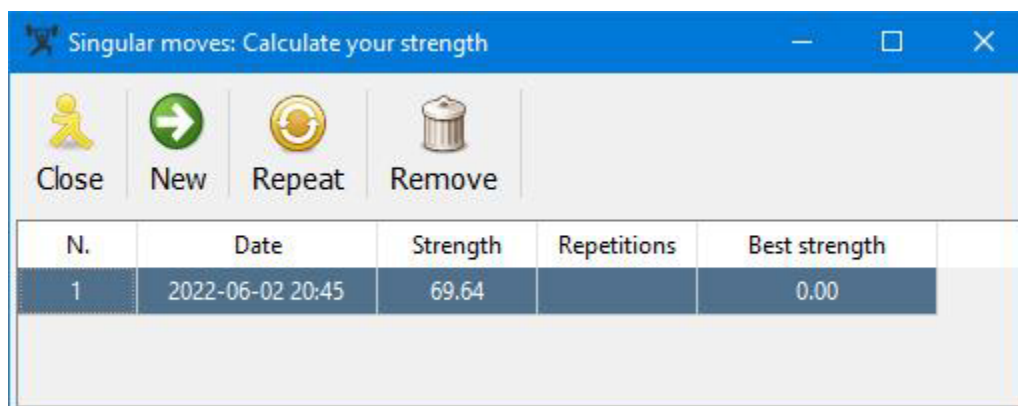
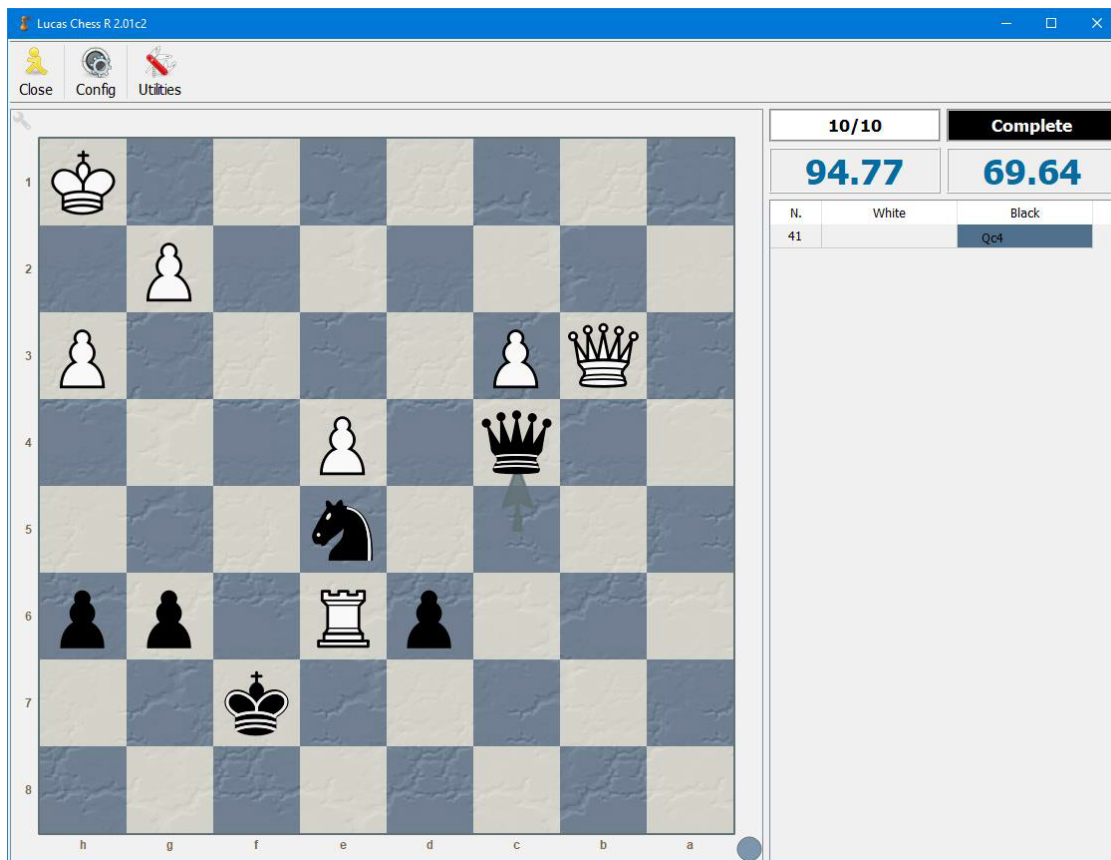
Incidentally, all Elo ratings can be reset or altered in some way in Options, General Configuration, "Change elos." By default, Lucas-Elo is 0, Fics-Elo is 1200, and the three others are 1600 Elo.

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Singular moves

Calculate your strength

There are a series of 10 chess puzzles. For each puzzle, the timer begins at 100. You get one guess as the time ticks backwards. Make the right move and score the remaining time for that puzzle. Under "Complete" is the average of time of the puzzles played so far. Guess wrong and you receive 0.00 for the puzzle which lowers your average substantially. After 10 puzzles, the results are recorded in the "Calculate your strength" register.

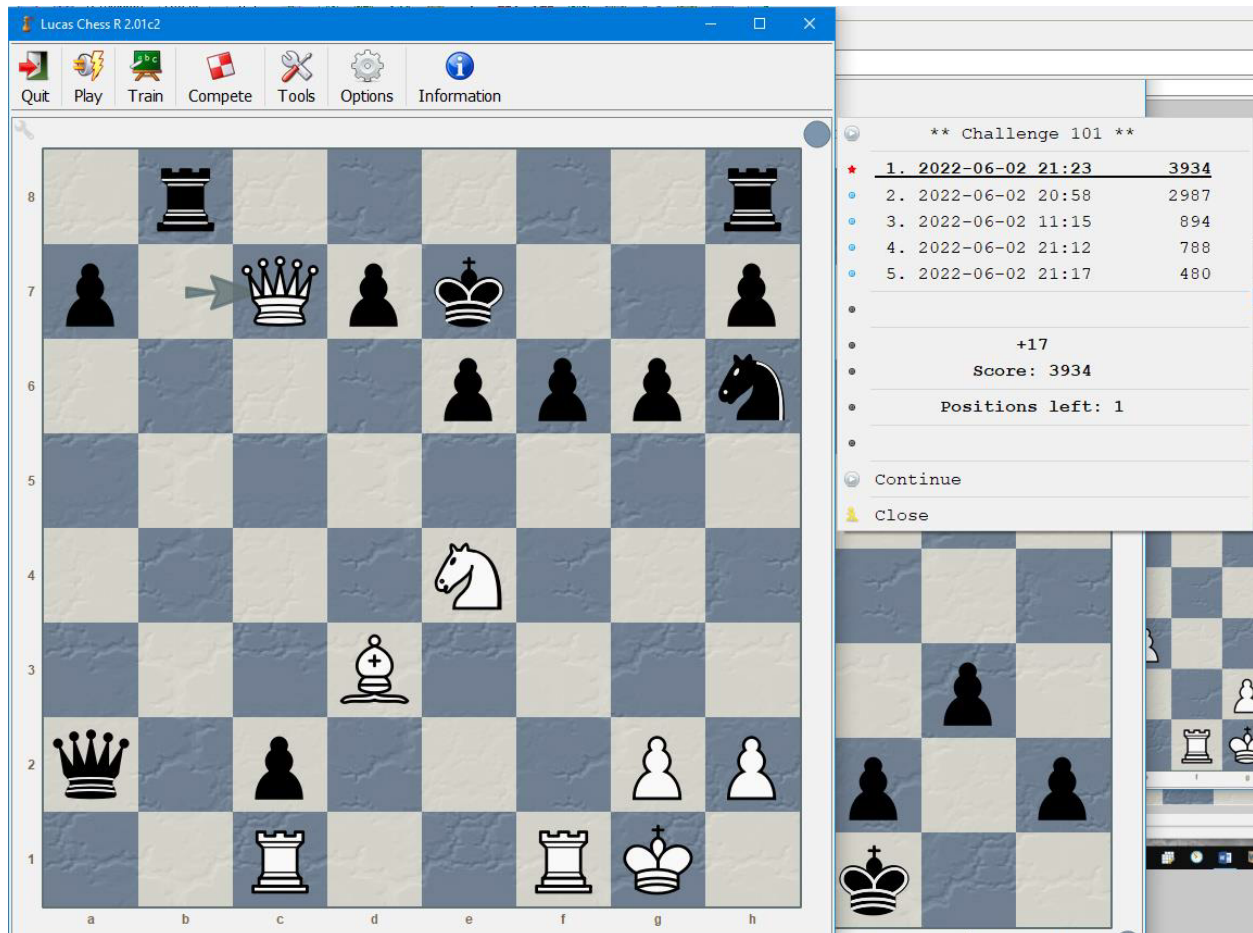


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Challenge 101

No timer in this one? Dream on. You don't see it, but it's ticking away.

Again, there are 10 chess puzzles. You get 5 or 6 chances to make the right move, but the number or chances used and/or the elapsed time reduces the score earned for completing the puzzle.



Use up those chances without getting the correct answer to a puzzle, and the game is over.

The score appears to be a function of three things:

1. How complex is the puzzle? (This also determines whether you get 5 or 6 chances.)
2. How many chances did you use before you made the correct move?
3. How long did it take you to solve the puzzle?

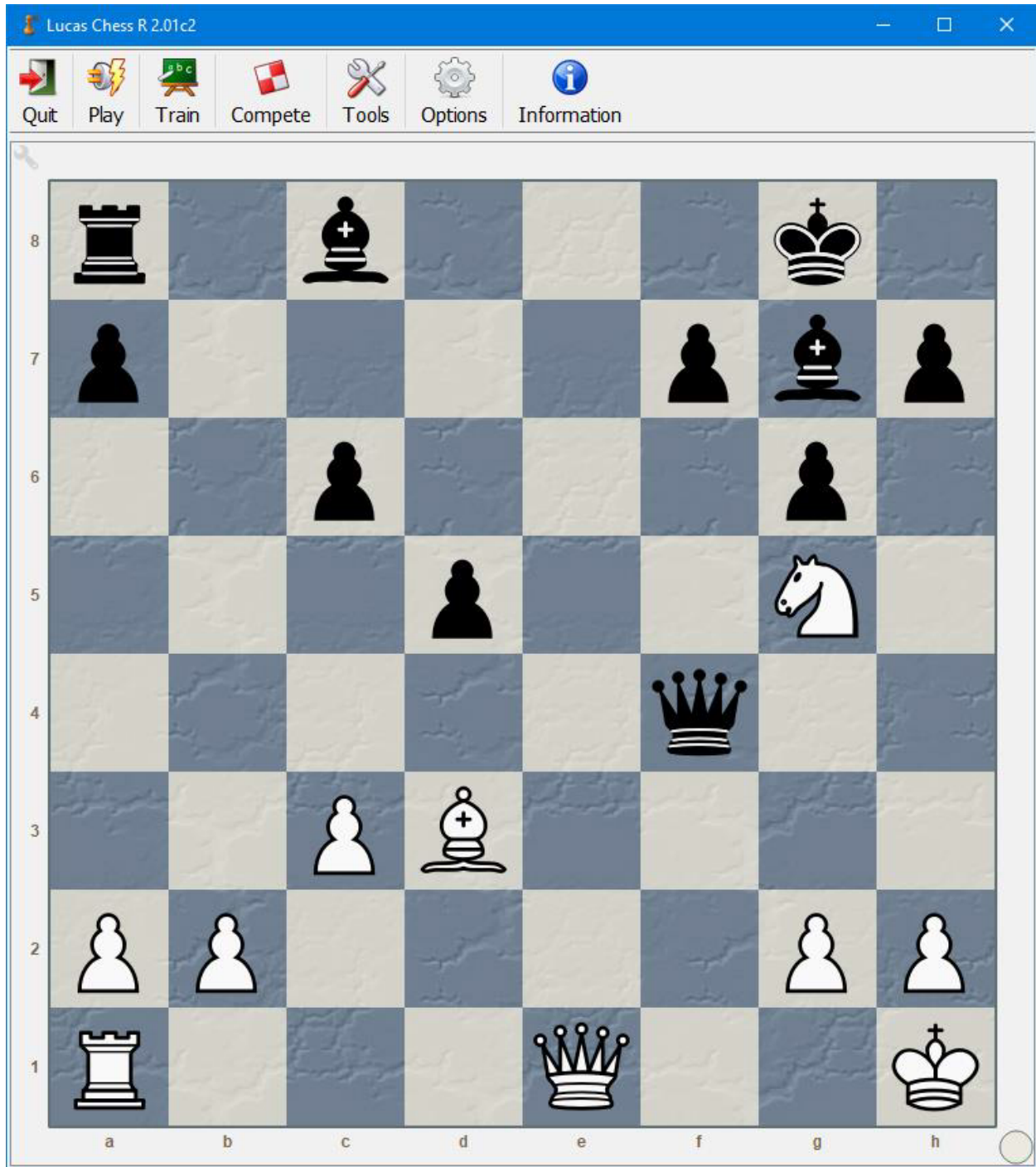
For, it is quite possible to solve a puzzle on the first try but receive no points because too much time had elapsed. You are allowed to continue; that is all.

As long as each puzzle is solved, the player may advance to the next one in the set of 10 positions. The final score will be a compilation of the scores of the solved puzzles.

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Lucas Chess stores Challenge 101 history in the user's profile, retaining only the ten games with the highest scores. There does not appear to be a way to view this list other than playing another round of Challenge 101.

Incidentally, a Challenge 101 puzzle is presented every time one starts Lucas Chess. Quick, what's the best move here?



[Qe8!]