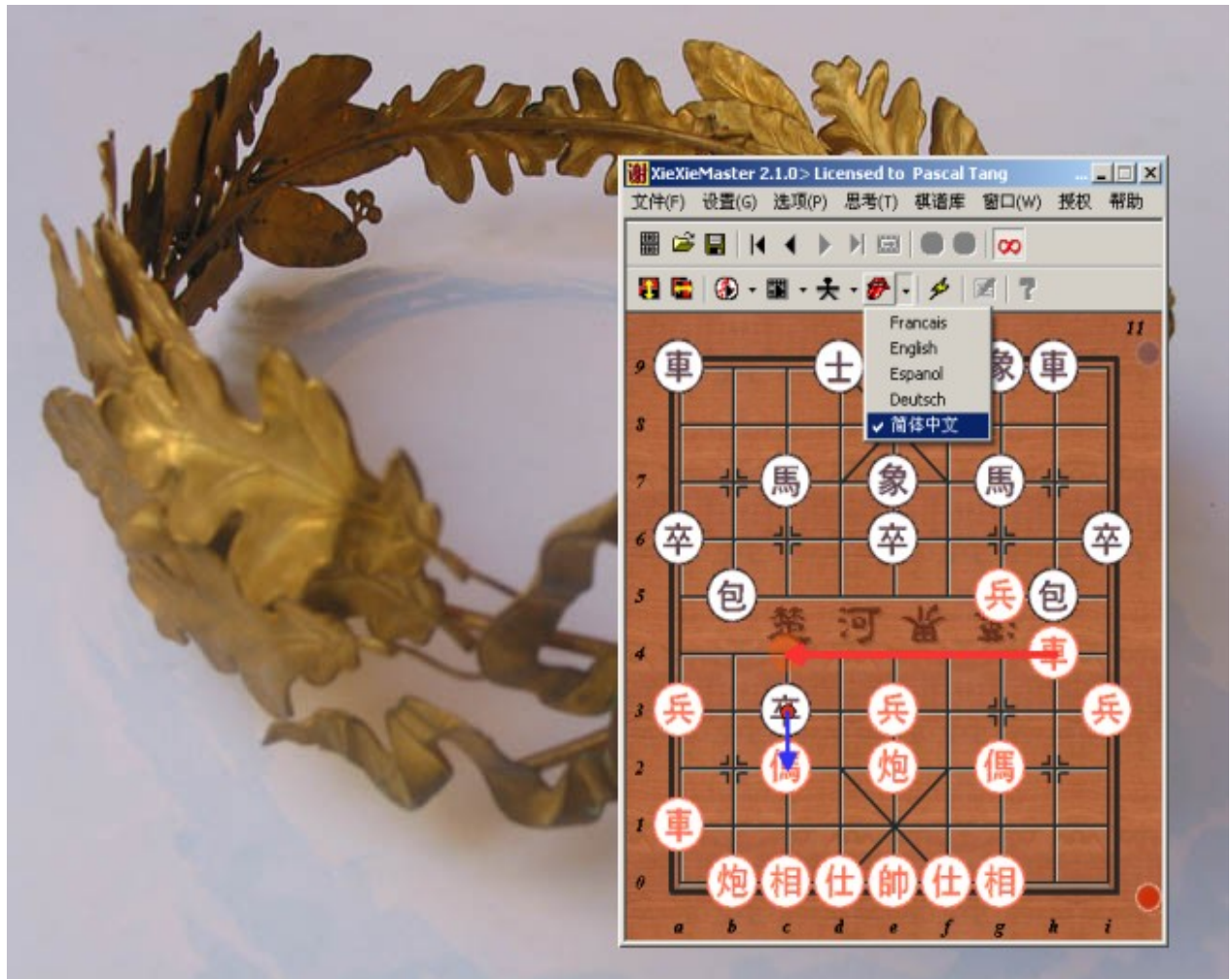


Xiexiemaster 2.5.0 CD/2.5.0

World Computer Chinese Chess Champion 2004 User's guide



Version 2.5.0
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2 Starting out

2.1 Introduction

XieXie Master belongs to the top Chinese chess program in the world. XieXie Master is the big brother of XieXie Junior who did very well in the internet tournaments.

Main XieXie results :	
First tournament summer 2002 at CXQ	3 rd , cash prize
6 th Computer Olympiads 2002	3 rd , bronze medal
7 th Computer Olympiads 2003	2 nd , silver medal
First computer chinese chess World championship in Tainan – Taiwan 2004	1 st , Gold medal, XieXie won the 1 st world computer Chinese chess championship.

As you see, XieXie's level improves every released version.

2.1.1 XieXie is designed for the beginner

2.1.1.1 Special levels

Special novice levels have been included:

- First Steps 1
- First Steps 2
- First Steps 3

These levels are adaptive but are easier to beat. These are the spirit of the levels:

- First Steps 1 can never win (it is not designed to).
- First Steps 2 can win but cannot see all the tactical combinations.
- First Steps 3 can win; see more tactical combinations than First Steps 2.

It is the best way to start playing Chinese chess and to improve.

You can also play handicapped games if needed (see below).

2.1.1.2 Handicapped games

XieXie can play with a few pieces down. And it also supports "**Iron pawn**" 's rule : "an iron pawn cannot be captured except it has moved or has opponent gives check when capturing the it. so for those who are betting a lot in handicapped games, it could be a good training.

Iron pawns look like this :



special "**Iron pawn**"

2.1.1.3 Game analysis

You can let XieXie analyze your games (your tournament games for example). Game analyze will help show the beginner in Chinese chess what move is wrong and the correct move in a given position. So it will make you improve game after game.

2.1.1.4 Permanent analysis

The permanent analysis and the arrows on the moves will allow beginner to follow high-hand games in real time.

2.1.1.5 Databases

The great amount of commented games from XieXie's databases will help the beginner to understand some openings and moves.

2.1.2 XieXie is designed for advanced players

XieXie Master gives the advanced players the possibility to:

- configure the XieXie's chess engine
 - o Chinese chess pieces value
 - o Chinese chess knowledge
 - o Contempt factor
 - o Selective search or not
- analyze the games
- comment the game
- annotate the moves
- understand standards such as AXF, WXF.
- managing a database of important games
- build your own opening book(s)



Level Advanced player is not the highest level of XieXie. To get a stronger level, let XieXie think longer. Use Level/custom menu to set the time XieXie is allowed to think on a given move.

2.2 System requirements

XieXie runs under Windows NT 4, Windows 2000, and Windows XP. XieXie is able to run under Windows 95, Windows 98, and Windows Millennium but with some minor graphics bugs.

2.2.1 Minimum system requirements

You will need a PC with a 486 DX2 66 processor and 64 MB of RAM. XieXie will run under such a system but needs more powerful hardware to play at full strength.


2.2.2 Recommended system requirements


The recommended configuration is a PC with a fast processor (Athlon XP or Intel Pentium IV), with 128 MB of RAM or more and a sound card for the sound effects and the tutorial commentary.

2.3 Features

- Respects 99% of the complex Chinese chess repetition rules.
- Accepts moves' comments
- Accepts moves' annotations
- Adaptive levels (Computer adjusts its level to meet your level)
- Analyzes your past games and tells you the correct move
- Reads games from internet Chinese chess site such as MoveSky or Club Xiang Qi.
- Plays games from any legal position
- Engine configuration:
 - o Size of hash tables
 - o Contempt factor
 - o Amount of knowledge used
 - o Value of pieces
 - o Use learning or not
 - o Selective search
- Learn from human players and from any good players
- Score curve window
- Play human vs. human game
- Play human vs. computer game
- Several timing (time/game, time/move, fixed depth, etc.)
- Infinite thinking
- Hint
- Supports AXF and WXF notation
- Endgame knowledge inside
- Next best move
- Printing
- Horizontal and vertical symmetries for the board representation
- Database support
- Book names recognition
- Allow you to build your own opening book
- Support several books simultaneously
- Game effects : sound, transparency, visual thinking lines, etc.

2.4 Starting a new game

Press button “” to start a new game. To play red, just move the pieces at the beginning of the game.

To play black, at the beginning of the game, press button . That forces XieXie to play the current side: the red side.

2.5 Moving pieces

There are 2 possibilities to enter moves: by drag and drop (default mode) or by click and click. See menu preferences/Move selection.



To review your game, you can replay and undo move using cursors of your keyboard (left ← and right → arrows).



To review your game, you can click on the score curve window.

3 The game

3.1 XieXie's menu

3.1.1 File Menu

New game	Restarts the current game. Red always moves first.
Load game	Loads the game onto the chessboard.
Save game	Save the current game
Save on each move	Automatic game saving. This is used to recover the games if the PC crashes.
Copy to clipboard	You can copy : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the chess board - the game list - The FEN position Onto the clipboard. This is used to paste the chessboard or the game list in your own editor.
Paste	You can paste from the clipboard a FEN position.
Print	You can : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Print the move list - Print graphical movelist
Exit	Exit program

3.1.2 Game Menu

Goto move	Select this item to go to a required move number.
Take back	Take back move or take back all
Replay	Replay a move or replay all
Level	Choose your level
Handicap	Allows you to play in handicap mode
Setup	Allows you to set a new board position
No computer mode	Allows you to input free moves without XieXie plays. This mode is compatible with permanent analysis.
Stop thinking!	Stop the chess engine

3.1.3 Preferences Menu

Vertical symmetry	This option applies a vertical symmetry to the board.
Horizontal symmetry	This option applies a horizontal symmetry to the board.
Toolbar	Allows you to hide or show toolbars.
Board style	Choose the board style
Pieces style	Choose the pieces style

Board size	Choose the board size
Move Selection	You have a choice between drag and drop and click-click.
Animation	Allows you to choose the speed of the piece's animation.
Notation	Choose the notation used in the game list
Board coordinates	Choose the board coordinate system
Language	Select a language
Sounds	Sounds ON/OFF. Using sound slows down the speed of XieXie especially in fast games.
Process priority level	Set the priority of XieXie's process. It is useful if you use several programs at the same time.

3.1.4 Thinking Menu

Ponder	If this item is checked, XieXie will think on the opponent's time.
Permanent Analysis	When idling, XieXie will search for the best move for the side to move.
Show computing moves	Indicates the computing moves in real time with arrows.
Chess engine configuration	Customize XieXie chess engine. See below.
Play on the current position!	Asks XieXie to start thinking on the current position. For example, when new game; press this button to force XieXie to play Red.
Analyze a game	Tells XieXie to analyze the game. Select this menu item again if you want the analyzer to stop.
Next best move	Asks XieXie to find out the second best move. For that, XieXie would take back the current move and look for the next best move.
Hint	Gives a possible move. Warning : this is not the strongest move.

3.1.5 Database Menu

Save game to database	Saves the current game to database
Browse database	Allows you to search games from the database.

3.1.6 Windows Menu

Clock	Shows or activates the clock window
Thinking window	Shows or activates the thinking window.
Game list	Shows or activates the game list window
Bar graph	Shows or activates the bar graph window. This window shows the evolution of the score during the game.
Game status	Shows or activates the game status window. This window is used to enter information about the game.
Comments	Shows or activates the comments window. This window enables you to comment the game and annotate the moves.
Logs	Shows or activates the logs window. This window is only used for debug.

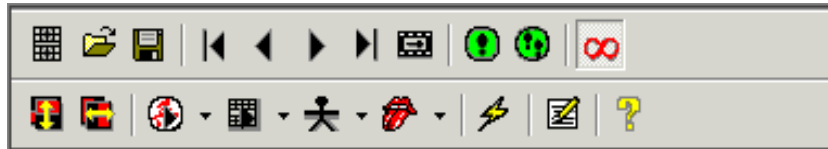
3.1.7 Licence Menu







Generate licence	Generate a licence file. The popup menu tells you where the license file has been generated.
Enter registration code	You can enter or modify the registration code.














3.1.8 “?” Menu

About XieXie	Shows the about dialog
---------------------	------------------------

3.2 The toolbar



	New game
	Open game file
	Save game file
	Undo all moves
	Undo move
	Replay
	Replay all
	<p>Allows to review a game automatically. If you want faster review press '+' key on the keyboard, If you want slower review press '-' key on the keyboard. If you maintain the SHIFT key pressed when you call this function, you will get a dialog allowing to set the time for each move :</p> <div data-bbox="597 1606 1104 1848" data-label="Image"> <p>The dialog box has a title bar that says "seconds / move" with a close button (X) on the right. Inside the dialog, there is a label "seconds / move" above a text input field. The input field contains the number "2". Below the input field are two buttons: "OK" and "Cancel".</p> </div>

	Stop thinking !. This button tells XieXie to stop thinking and to play the best current move.
	Start thinking. This button tells XieXie to start the thinking on the current position.
	This button tells XieXie to ignore last move and try to find another move.
	Level Infinite. If selected, XieXie will think indefinitely until the user presses the  button.
	Enter "Edit mode". This mode is used to enter moves from a game. If this button is not pressed, XieXie starts thinking after each user's move.
	Tells XieXie to give an idea on how to move (Hint).
	This option applies a vertical symmetry to the board.
	This option applies a horizontal symmetry to the board.
	Choose set of pieces
	Choose set of boards
	Allows to choose between 3 sizes of board (small, medium or big).
	Choose the language. You can choose between chinese, french, english, spanish and german.

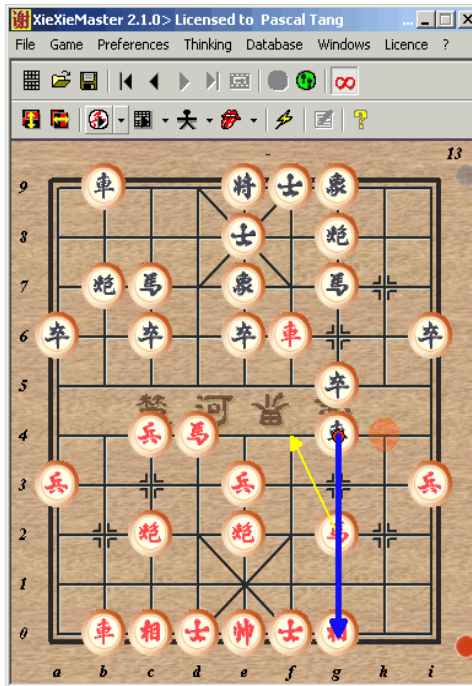
3.3 Keyboard shortcuts



You can use the keyboard arrows (\leftarrow \rightarrow) to replay or take back a move.



If XieXie is pondering and you want to play the pondered move, you can just press the <space bar> instead of moving the piece. It also works for permanent analysis.



In this example, pressing Space bar will make the red play H3+4.

3.4 Auxiliary windows

3.4.1 Thinking window

Current move analyzed

Speed

Nb nodes visited

Time spent

Time spent in pondering

Opening's name

KNodes/s	151	Time Used	2.50
Nodes	597	Time Used P	3.95
Current	(8) g6-g5 (1/43)	Central cannon	

```

5 (18972) =====> 0.42
6 [-0.59] 0.50 h9-g7 b0-c2 a9-a8 a0-b0 i9-i8 i0-i1
6 (100197) =====> 0.91
7 [0.23] 1.22 h9-g7 b0-c2 c9-e7 a0-b0 b9-d8 b0-b4 i9-i8
7 (236961) =====> 1.84
8 [-0.81] 2.39 h9-g7 b0-c2 a9-a8 a0-b0
8 (342114) =====> 2.52

6 [-0.65] 0.53 (b0-c2) c9-e7 a0-b0 b9-d8 c3-c4 g6-g5 b0-b6
6 [-0.59] 0.63 (b0-c2) g6-g5 a0-b0 a9-a8 i0-i1 i9-i8 c3-c4
6 (94688) =====> 0.92
7 [-0.34] 1.14 (b0-c2) g6-g5 a0-b0 i9-i8 c3-c4 a9-a8 e2-e6 g7-e6 b0-b7
7 [0.06] 1.53 (b0-c2) c9-e7 g3-g4 g6-g5 g4-g5 e7-g5 h0-g2 a9-a8
7 (439631) =====> 2.89
8 [-0.79] 4.13 (b0-c2) c9-e7 h0-g2 g6-g5 c3-c4 b9-d8 i0-i1 c6-c5 c4-c5 e7-c5
    
```

Nodes

Score of the ply

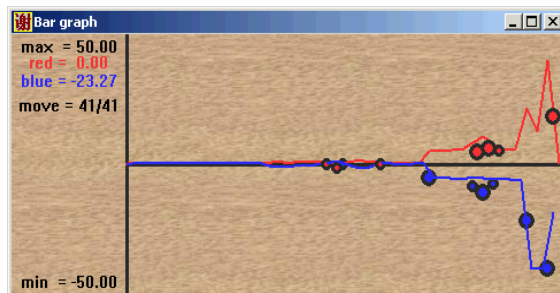
Move predicted

Ply reached

When characters # is displayed on the thinking windows, this means that the winning side is going to kill the weak side.

3.4.2 Bar graph window

The bar graph window displays the curve of XieXie evaluation function (also called score curve). This is very useful if you play against XieXie when you have made a mistake.



After a game analysis, the **red circles** represent red mistakes **and blue circles** represent blue's mistakes. Big circles correspond to big mistakes (according to XieXie and the time you let XieXie think).

See example in chapter “Analyzing a game”.



You can also click or move the mouse on this window to go to the position in the game you want.

3.4.3 Game list window

Depending on the notation used (AXF, WXF, etc.); each move is recorded on a game sheet. If you go back on your moves, the move is automatically dimmed on the sheet.

Game list	Game list	Game list
1. P7+1 h8+7	32. g4xg5 i5xi4	1. 马2+3 炮2-5
2. H8+7 c8.9	33. c1-c9 e8-d9	2. 车1+1 马2+3
3. E3+5 r9.8	34. b5xe5 i3xb3	3. 炮8=6 炮8-7
4. H2+4 p7+1	35. g5-h5 i4-h4	4. 马8+7 车1-2
5. H7+6 e3+5	36. h5-i5 i7-f7	5. 兵7+1 炮7+4
6. H6+7 c2.3	37. c9-c8 b3-b9	6. 相7+5 马8+7
7. C8.7 h7+6	38. c8-a8 f7-f3	7. 炮2+4 车9+1
8. R9.8 h2+4	39. f0-e1 f9-e8	8. 车9+1 车9-4
9. R1+1 r1+1	40. e5-e3 f3-f7	9. 车9=6 车4+5
10. R8+5 h4+3	41. e3-e4 h4-h3	10. 车1=2 车2+4
11. C7+4 h6+5	42. e4-h4 h3-g3	11. 车2+3 车2-7
12. H4+5 r8+7	43. h4-g4 d7-d3	12. 相3+1 炮5+4
13. H5+4 r1.4	44. a8xa5 g3xf3	13. 仕6+5 炮5-2
14. R8+1 p1+1	45. g4-h4 b9-c9	14. 马7+6 炮7-1
15. H4+6 r8-4	46. b4-f4 f3-e3	15. 马6+7 炮1+3
16. P7+1 c3+2	47. a5-a6 d3-d1	16. 马7-5 车7-5
17. C7+3 a4+5	48. e2-g0 e7-c5	17. 炮2+1 车4-2
18. C7.9 r4+1	49. f4-g4 g9-e7	18. 马3+4 马3+4
19. H6-7 p9+1	50. a6-a8 f7-f6	19. 车6=9 车2+3
20. R1.8 r8+3	51. g4-h4 f6-c6	20. 炮6-2 马4+3
21. R+.7 c3.5	52. h4-h9 e7-g9	21. 车9=7 马3+5
22. H7+5 p5+1	53. h9xg9 e8xf9	22. 马4-5 车5+3
23. R8+8 a5-4	54. e0-f0 c6-f6	23. 相1-3 车5-1
24. R8-8 a4+5	55. a8-f8 c9-a9	24. 相3+5 车5+1
25. R7+3 a5-4	56. f8xf9 e9xe8	25. 车2-6 卒7+1

If the game is a long one and not all the moves appear in the game list window, use the scroll box on the right-hand side. The next moves will automatically be entered at the end of the list whatever the section of the list is currently displayed.

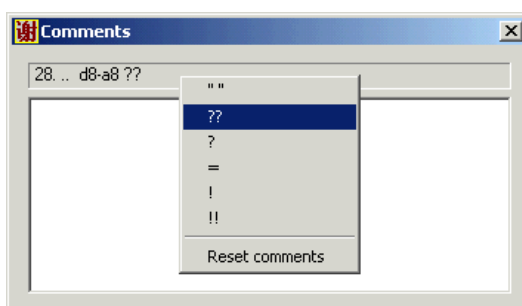
If you want to see Chinese ideograms in the move list window, you have to use a Chinese version of Windows or change the default language to Chinese (Please see your Windows user's guide).

3.4.4 Logs window

This window is only used for debugging purposes.

3.4.5 Comments window

This window is used to enter comments and annotations for each move.



Right-click on the window to open the pop-up menu.

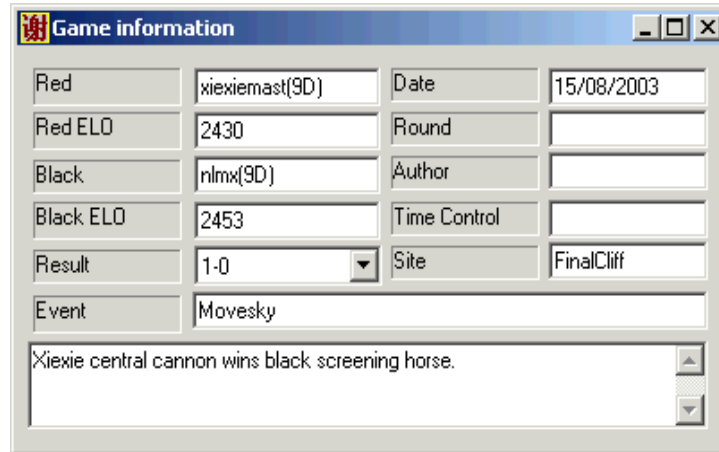
Possible annotations :

??	Very bad move
?	Bad move
=	Even
!	Good move
!!	Very good move

During a game, XieXie annotates the best moves “!” automatically.

The Edit box in the comments window is used to enter comments on the game.

3.4.6 Game information's window

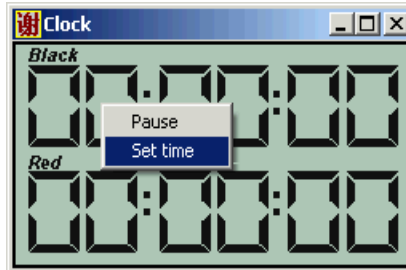


Red	xiexiemast(9D)	Date	15/08/2003
Red ELO	2430	Round	
Black	nlnx(9D)	Author	
Black ELO	2453	Time Control	
Result	1-0	Site	FinalCliff
Event	Movesky		
XieXie central cannon wins black screening horse.			

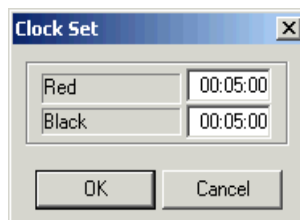
This window is used to enter information on the game. When saving the game, the same dialog appears.

Here, you can put in your comments which are valid for the whole game.

3.4.7 Clock window



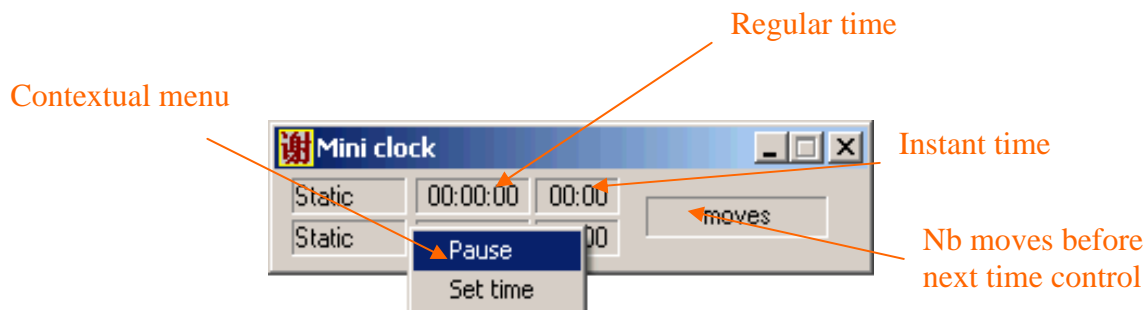
Re-scalable clock. A contextual menu appears when you right-click on the clock window : you can either freeze the clock ("pause") or set the new time.



Red	00:05:00
Black	00:05:00
<input type="button" value="OK"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/>	

Set time window.

3.4.8 Miniclock window

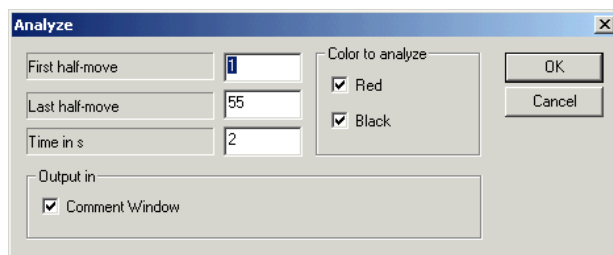


This clock is used when there is no room in your screen. You can right-click on it to set time or to pause the clock.

4 Advanced operations

4.1 Analyzing a game

XieXie is able to analyze the games you have played and give you an opinion. Just use menu “thinking/Analyze” the game...



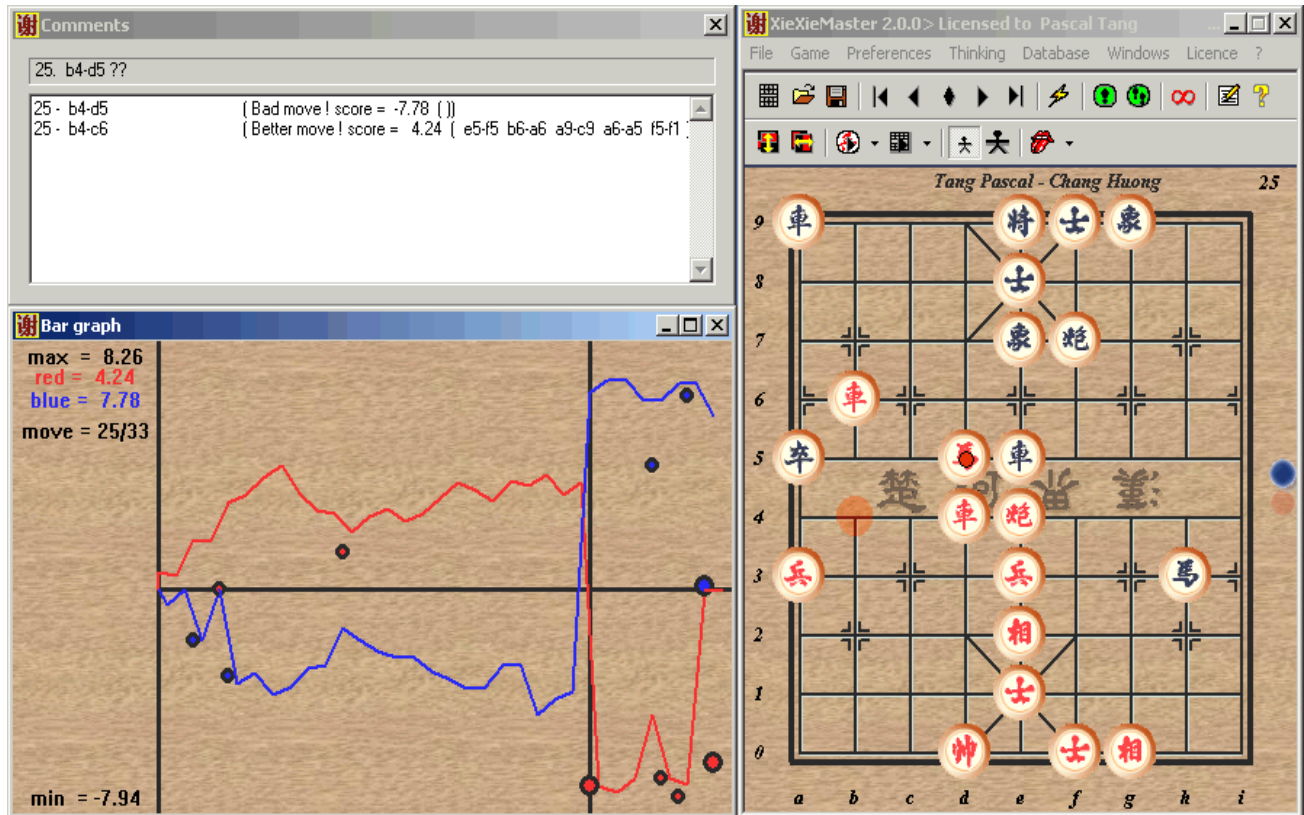
Note 1: First move and last move is expressed in half moves.

Note 2: Time in seconds is the time you allocate to analyze 1 move. The greater this value is, the more accurate the evaluation will be.

At any moment, you can stop the analyzer by selecting the “Thinking/Analyze the game” menu again.

If you have checked “comment window”, the results can be reviewed in the comment windows. The only thing you have to do is to replay the moves and see what XieXie thought in the same position.

Example :



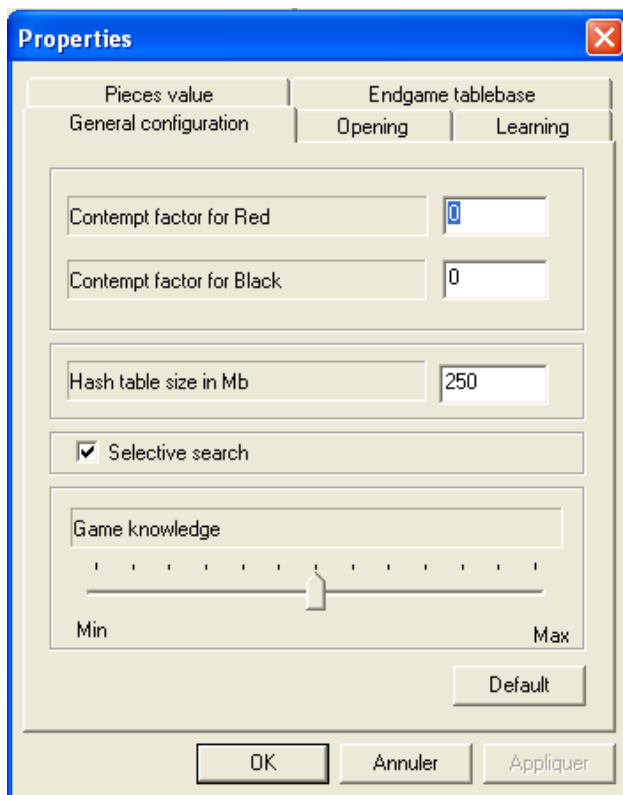
After XieXie has analyzed the game, we can see that in the position below, XieXie doesn't like red's move (b4-d5); he prefers b4-c5.

Hence, the move "b4-d5" is annotated as very bad move (??).

4.2 Customizing the chess engine

4.2.1 Configuring XieXie engine

You have the possibility to customize the A.I. (Artificial Intelligence) engine. Use “Thinking/Chess menu configuration” menu (or just double-click the chessboard)... The following dialog appears:



4.2.2 General configuration

Hash table size: Hash table is an allocated memory to store computed positions. That allows XieXie to think faster while she needn't have to recompute any computed moves. The more memory you have, the faster the search is. But it is recommended not to set the size to high (It must be strictly inferior to available free memory).

For fast games, set the hash table smaller. For instance, you can take about 5-10 Mb for games using 5min/game.

Selective search: Use selective algorithm to search the best move. Selecting this allows XieXie to search deeper for the same amount of time but as XieXie doesn't consider all possible moves, XieXie could miss some good moves.

Game knowledge: This option is used to select the play of XieXie : positional or not. If knowledge is set to 0, XieXie will play like a “robot”, that means tactically very strong but strategically very weak. The more knowledge you use, the slower the thinking of XieXie is.

Press the default button if you want to play with the standard XieXie. This selection is recommended.

Contempt factor:

The contempt factor is used to control draw situations :

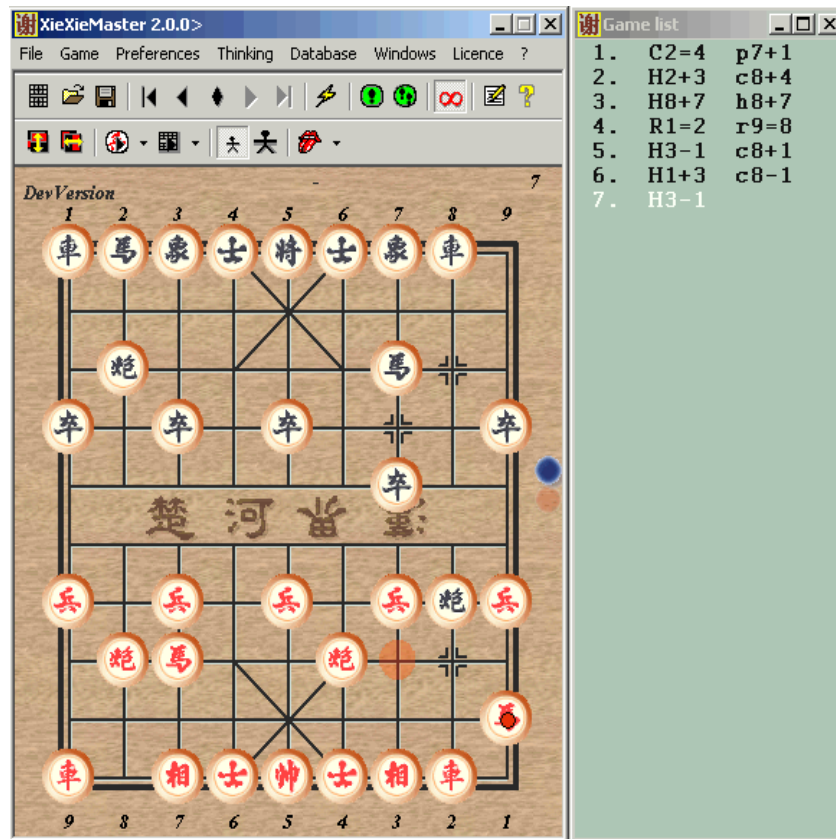
- By repetition
- By insufficient attacking pieces

This factor goes from -500 to +500 (it can be adjusted higher, but it is not meaningful. This is normally set to 0. It is expressed in cent-pawns. For example, if you want XieXie to be more aggressive and not to claim for a draw, just set the contempt factor to -100 or -200 for the color XieXie plays.

If XieXie plays with a stronger player, contempt factor of XieXie must be set to 200, because a draw is a good result. If XieXie must play with a weak player, a draw is not a good result so the contempt factor of XieXie must be set to -200 or more.

This is useful against very strong players. XieXie will always look for a draw.

Consider the following diagrams :



If Black plays again C8+1, black plays a “Draw game”. Against weak players, it is not a good strategy. Try to avoid C8+1 and play another move as you usually have more chances to win the weak player. To avoid XieXie plays these kinds of repetitions which lead to a draw, you can set contempt factor for black to -100 or contempt factor for red to 100.

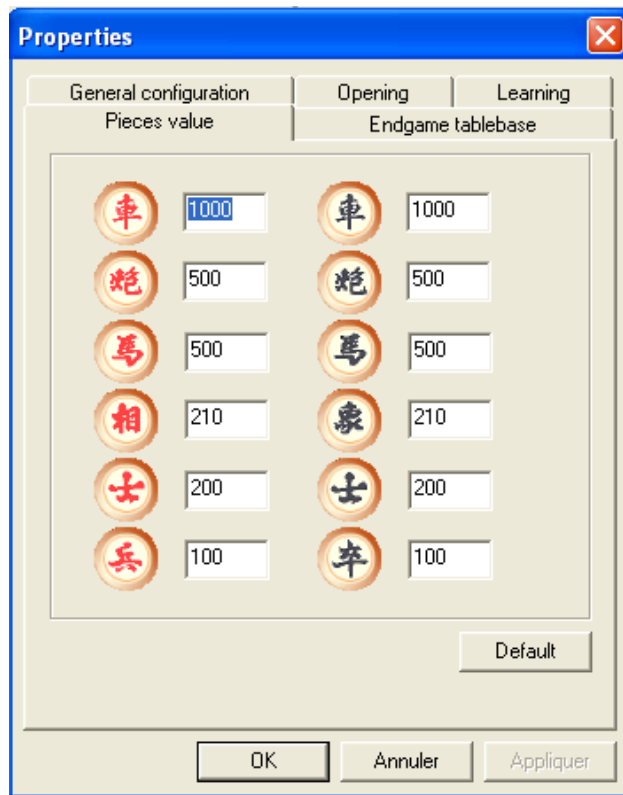
4.2.3 Scoring function in XieXie engine

Evaluation of XieXie is based on material score :

Pieces	Score
Pawn	100
Advisor	200
Elephant	200
Horse	500
Cannon	500
Chariot	1000

For instance, XieXie has a score of +5.00, which means that XieXie is ahead of 1 cannon or 1 horse or has a great positional advantage.

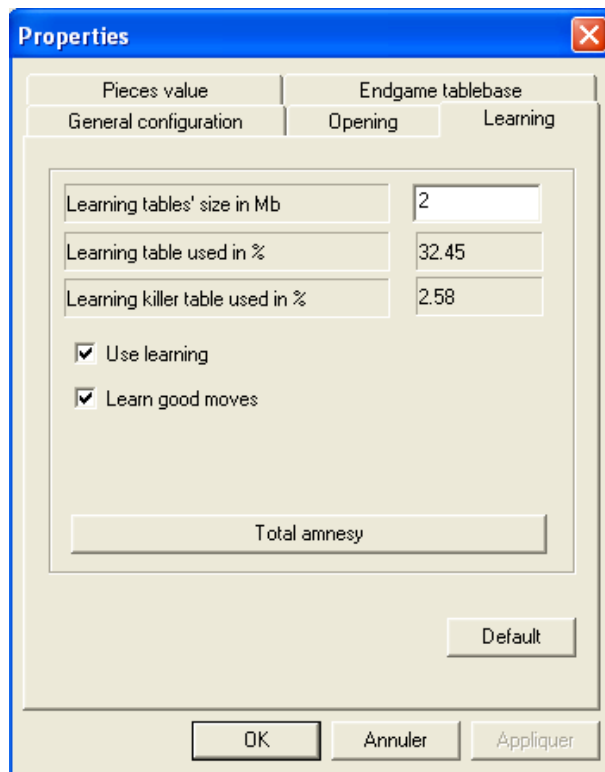
If you don't agree with these pieces' values, you can change them. Then XieXie will play a different style according to your new settings.



Suppose XieXie is playing black. If you set red cannon to 600 and black horse to 400, XieXie will try to trade opponent's cannons with his own horses as his horses have less points. This is useful when you know XieXie's opponent likes to play cannons.

4.2.4 Learning

Here you can configure how XieXie learns from good moves.



4.2.4.1 Learning table size

It represents how much memory, in Mb, XieXie used for learning. Usually, 4 Mb is enough.

4.2.4.2 Learning table used

It represents the percentage of the tables filling up. If it exceeds 50 %, that means the learning table maybe too small. The size of the learning table can then be enlarged.

4.2.4.3 Learning killer table used

It represents the percentage of the tables filling up for killing moves. If it exceeds 50 %, that means the learning table may be too small. The size of the learning table can then be enlarged.

4.2.4.4 Learn good moves

When this option is checked, XieXie learns the moves from his opponent. This option is not consuming CPU time.

4.2.4.5 Use learning

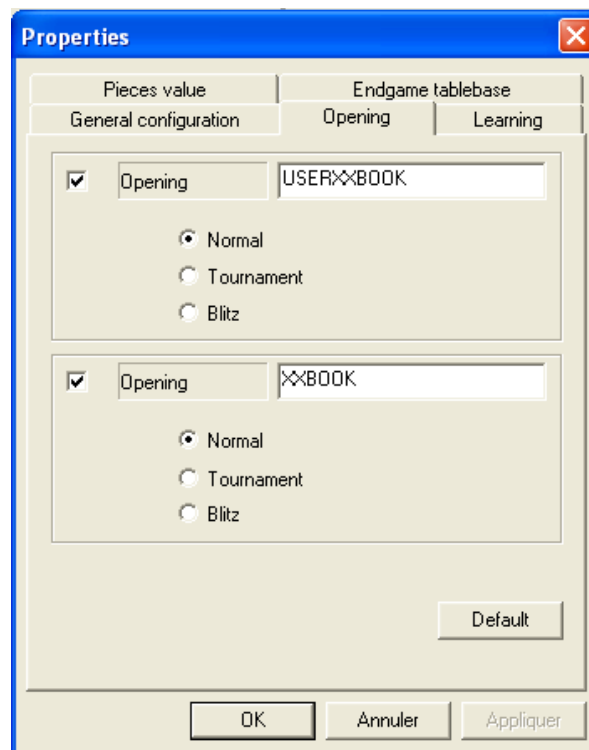
When this option is checked XieXie is able to use his experience from past games, so XieXie cannot fall into the same traps. Using this option slows down the search a little bit. But the size of the learning won't affect the speed of search : **the more learning you get, the better it is.**

You have several ways to add learning to XieXie :

- check "learn good moves" option and play with strong players
- let XieXie analyze some high-hand or tricky games. While analyzing, XieXie will learn automatically.

4.2.5 Opening book

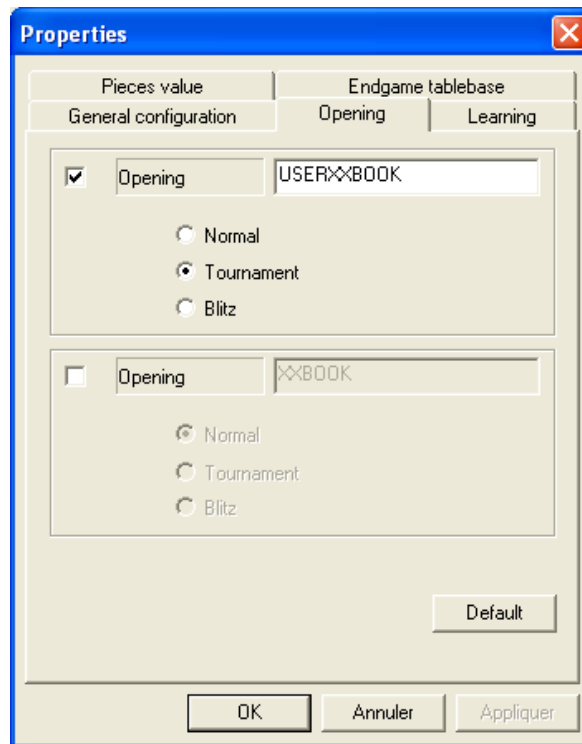
Here you can Tell XieXie how to use opening books. By default, XieXie only uses "XXBOOK" opening book. If you want to use your own opening book, you can generate another opening book with **BookMaker** tool.



Default button will set the opening dialog defaults.

Example :

Xiexie only uses USERXXBOOK in tournament mode. XXBOOK is not used.

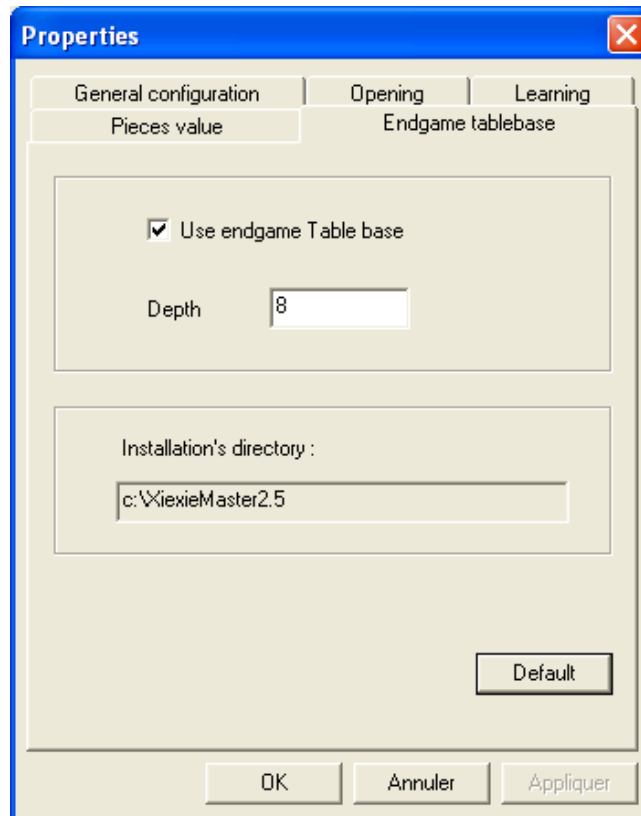


You don't have to use Xiexie's default XXBOOK, you can replace it by your own book : so you can manage 2 personal books.

The first opening book's priority level is higher than the second opening book's priority level : if a position is found in the 2 books, move from the first book is chosen.

4.2.6 Endgame tablebase

This dialog box allows you to control the use of the endgame tablebase.

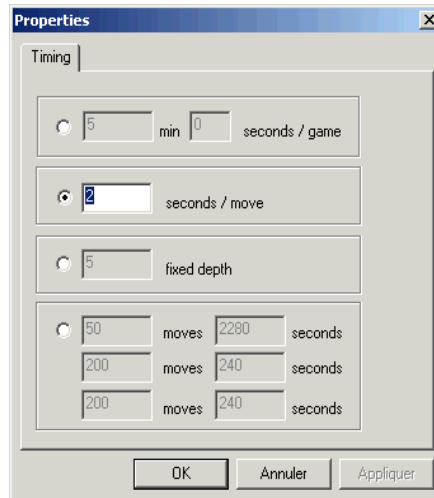


If “Use endgame Table base” checkbox is checked, XieXie will use endgame tablebase feature.

“Depth” is the depth you allows XieXie to use endgame tablebase. Because the search of endgame positions can be slow, it is not reasonable to set the depth too high, except for solving puzzles. Max depth search is 200.

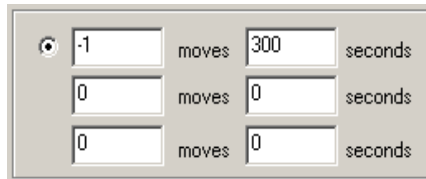
Customizing level

Setting levels time per move/ Level time per game/ Level depth per move has no problem.

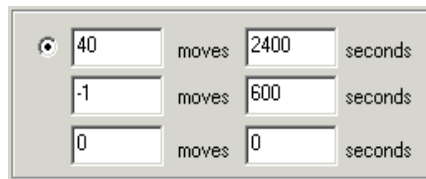


The tournament time control (last one) must be used like that :

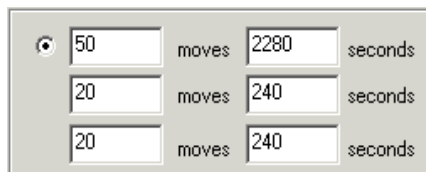
Example 1 : 5 min for the whole game



Example 2 : 40 moves in 40 minutes, 10 minutes for the whole game

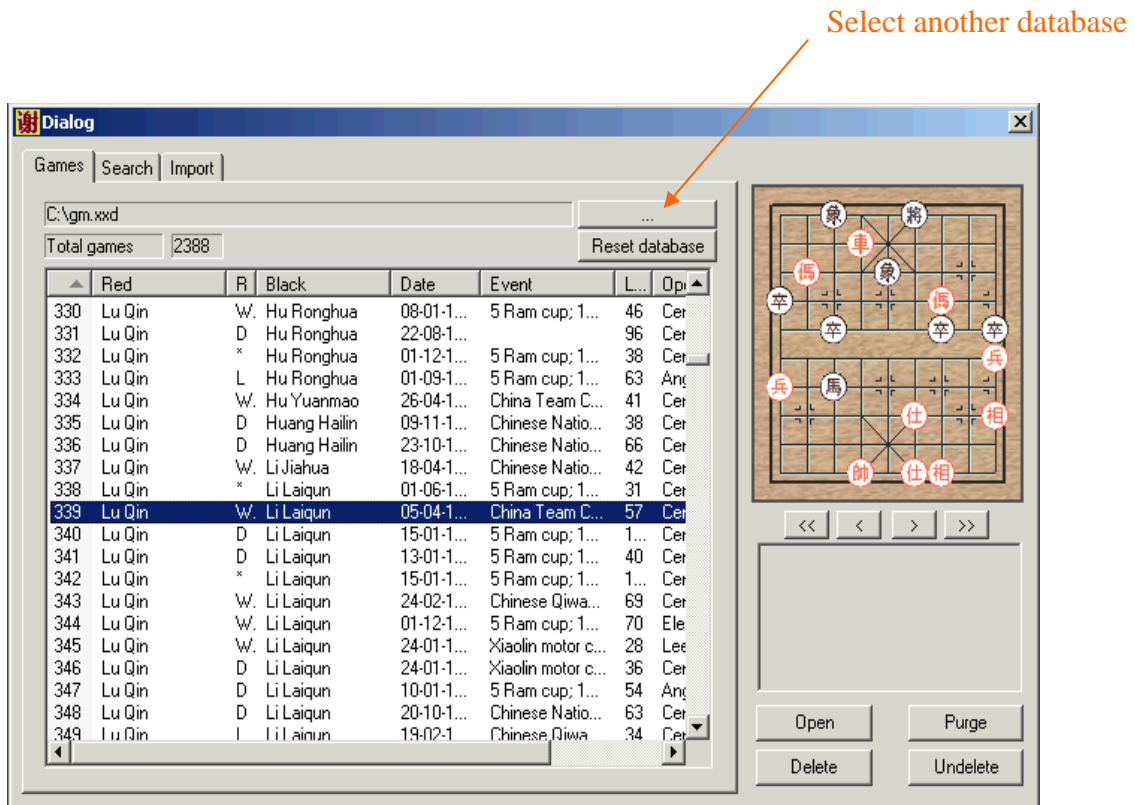


Example 3 : 50 moves in 38 minutes, 20 moves in 4 minutes, 20 moves in 4 minutes, 20 moves in 4 minutes... When the last time control is over, then, XieXie will cycle on the last time control.



4.2.7 Handling databases

The current database can be accessed via “Database/browse database...” menu.

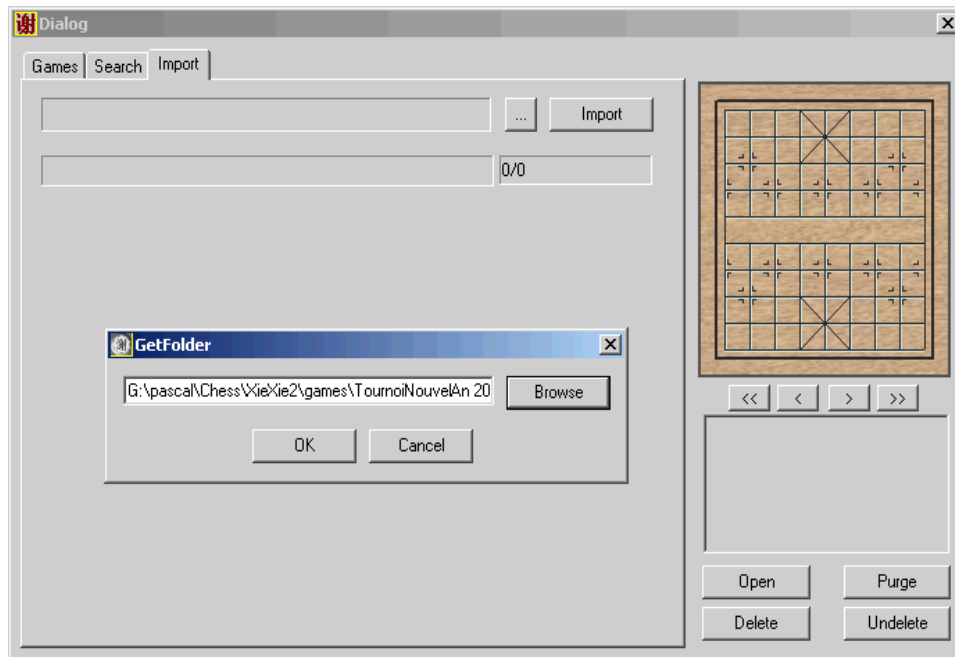


The first time the database is opened, it will be empty : This is normal. By default, the database name is default.xxd. You have to fill the current database or select another database by clicking to the “...” button.

4.2.8 Importing games to database

You can add a game to the current database by using “Database/save game to database” menu.

If you have a collection of games to add, it is better to use the import function in the import tab.

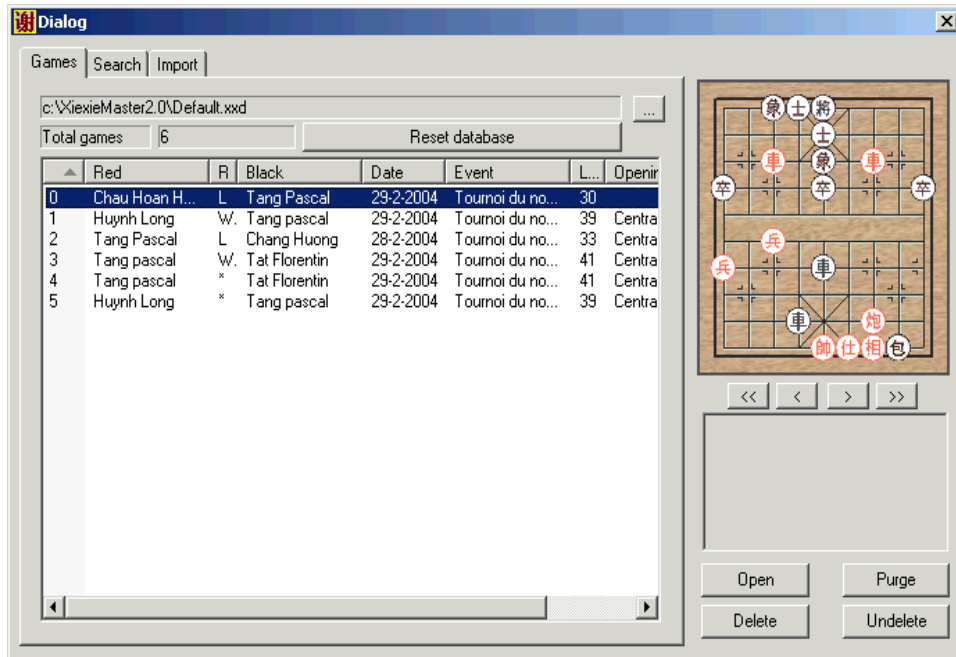


First, select the directory of the game files you want to import by clicking the “...” button. XieXie can only import game files when the format is recognized.

Then, click the “Import” button. Go to the “games” tab, you will see the imported games. By clicking on the list, you can directly preview the game.

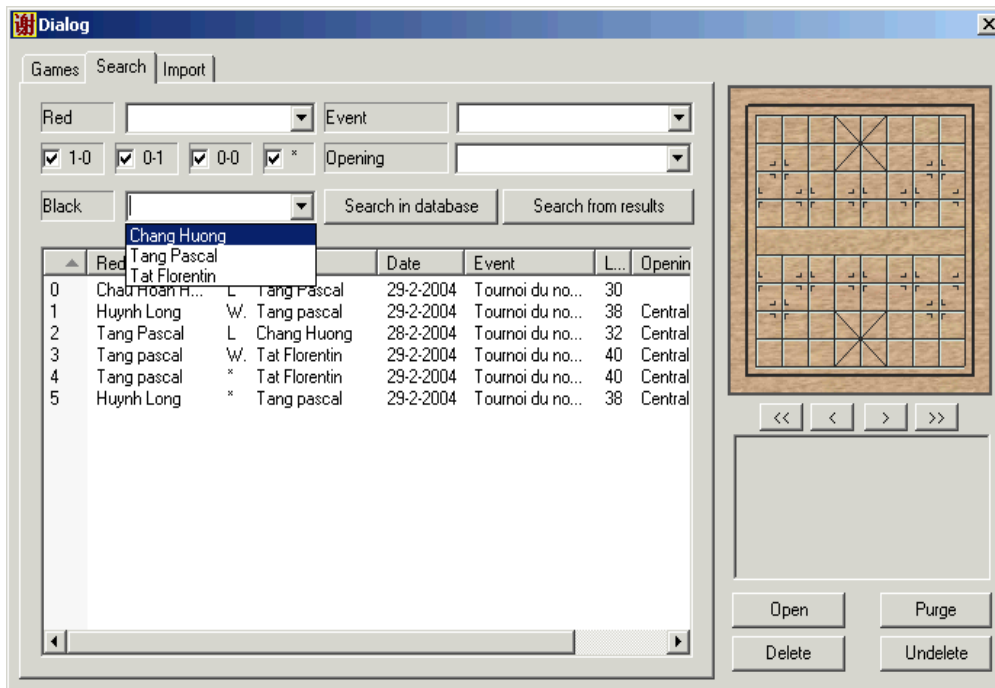
Button “Open” allow you to load the selected game.

Button “Delete” allows you to delete the selected game. You can undelete by using the “Undelete” button. The deleted game is still in the database; it will be removed only when the button “Purge” is pressed.



4.2.9 Searching games

The search tab allows you to search your games according to several criteria.



5 Tips and tricks

5.1 Getting games from MoveSky

Use the save button of the MoveSky client. Then use XieXie to open and study the game with your favourite Chinese chess program: XieXie. :o).

5.2 Getting games from Club Xiang Qi

- 1) Go to Records section
- 2) Choose your player.
- 3) Right Click on the game number and select “save target as...”
- 4) Save your file. Filename must end with .html.
- 5) Read the saved file with XieXie

5.3 Back to defaults

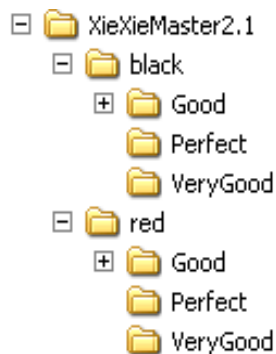
If you want XieXie to come back to defaults value : press the “Shift Key” while starting XieXie.

6 Creating your own opening books

A simple tool called “Bookmaker” allows you to build your own opening book. So if you find XieXie’s book move weak, you can patch it with your private opening book.

6.1 Selecting game files

When you start Bookmaker for the first time, it creates **red** and **black** directories. In these directories, 3 sub-directories have been created : **Good**, **very Good** and **Perfect** :

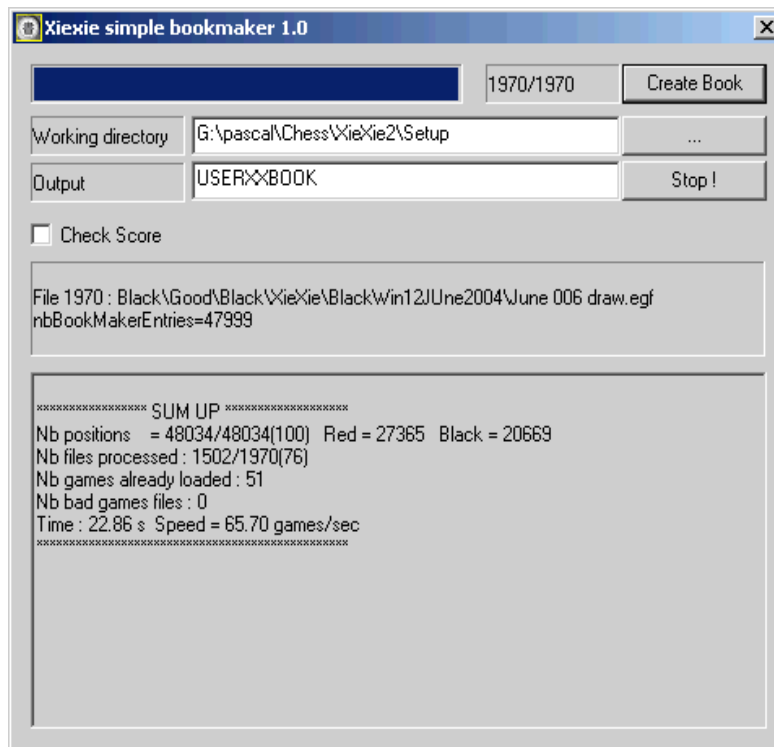


What you have to do is just to put your game files in the appropriate directories : you have a good red game : just put this game in the **red/Good** directory. If you feel red has played very good just put it on the **red/VeryGood** directory. And if you think red plays perfect game, put in **red/Perfect** directory.

In tournament book, positions found in **Perfect** directory are played first, then **veryGood** and then **Good**.

6.2 Opening book creation

When all the game files are in the appropriate place. You can generate the book by pressing “**Create Book**” Button.



To build safer books, you may check “**Check Score**”. So every position is quickly evaluated and when a problem occurs (Score for Black very negative for a black book for example), XieXie reports it in the log windows.

7 Frequently Asked questions

7.1 *How can I play a lower level?*

If XieXie is too strong for you, you have a few possibilities:

- Set the strength lower in the Game/level menu. For example choose First steps 1.
- Retrieve *pondering* option (see further).
- Deactivate learning in engine's configuration.
- Set handicap for red side in the game/Handicap menu: Here, you can free 2 horses if you want...Handicap is always set on red side. Flip the board in the menu preferences/Rotate board or directly click the toolbar. Force XieXie to play first by choosing the menu: Thinking/Play on the current position (or the green circle button in the toolbar).
- You can simulate 3 moves first by using the setup position function: choose game/setup position menu, make your 3 moves, and choose game end Setup position menu.

How can I play a higher level?

If XieXie is too weak for you, you can:

- Set the strength higher in the Game/level menu. For example choose 20 seconds per move: XieXie will think 20 seconds to move.
- You can play with handicap.
- You can change your computer. Chinese chess program strength is strongly related to your hardware. Your computer may be too slow or has too little memory.
- Check that “pondering” is enabled
- Verify the configuration of the chess engine
 - Hash table size (it must be small for fast games)
 - Knowledge must not be 0 (except against some software players).
 - Pieces values must be set to default
- Note that to play at his highest level; XieXie must have his learning option enabled. (See engine configuration). Having the learning option enabled allows XieXie learn and use his opponent’s best skills!
- In fast games, disable all sounds (“preferences/sound/None” menu). Using sounds can slow down XieXie.
- Let XieXie analyze and learn high-hand games : the more games he analyzes the stronger he will be (enlarge learning table if necessary).



If the thinking time is too long, you can force XieXie to play faster with one click on the Flash button in the toolbar.



Level Advanced player is not the highest level of XieXie. To get a stronger level, let XieXie think longer. Use “Level/custom” menu to set the time XieXie must think on a move.

7.2 Files format supported?

XieXie supports the following formats:

XBF/XGF/EGF	XieXie binary file format
CCF	AXF/WXF format
AXF/WXF	AXF/WXF format
MXQ	Move sky file format
XQN	ASCII file format

This makes it easier for you to view internet games or exchange data with other Chinese chess programs with XieXie.

7.3 How can I save a game?

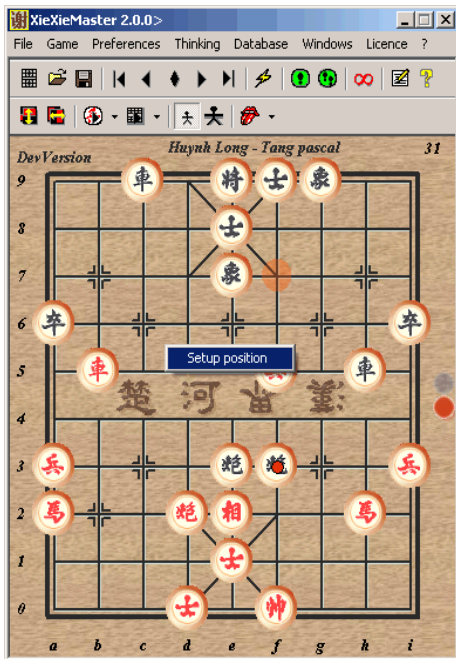
Use the File menu, or the toolbars. If you can't save, it may be because XieXie is still thinking. To stop the thinking, click on the flash button (⚡) in the toolbar.



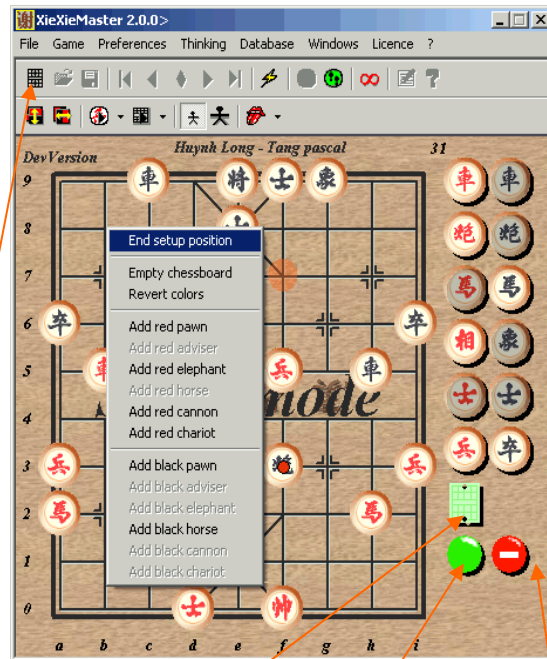
You know XieXie is thinking when the thinking window has activity.

7.4 How can I setup a position?

To setup a position, choose game/Setup Position menu. When you are in setup mode, the word "Setup Mode" is displayed on the board. When the desired position is set, click on game/End setup position (You can also use the right button on your mouse).



Initial position



Empty board

End Setup

Cancel Setup

Move your piece freely. If you want to remove a piece, just put it out the chessboard. To add pieces, choose among those which are at the right of the chessboard and drag them on the board. If the piece (on the right) is grayed, that means that all available pieces of this kind are already on board. To get more features, please use the mouse's right button on the chessboard.

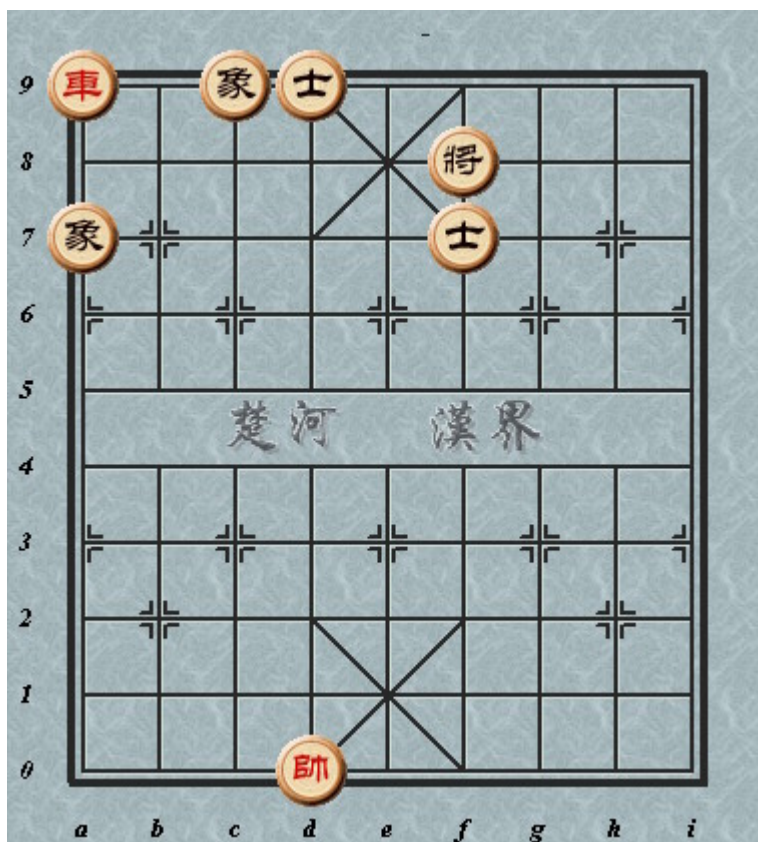
7.5 How can I search mates or Chinese chess problems/puzzles?

Setup the position, click on the infinite symbol on the toolbar and let XieXie think all night, week, month...

7.6 What is endgame tablebase ?

Endgame tablebase is a set of files (*.endgame) which is used to store all the positions and its evaluation (Draws, Wins in n moves, Loses in n moves). When such a position is encountered, XieXie will always play “winning” move in a winning position.


Some endgames are very difficult like krkbbbee (King+rook vs king+2 bishops+2 elephants). For example, thanks to endgame tablebase, XieXie knows how to play this position :



If XieXie plays red, it will get “[EGTB 12]” as score, that means it will take 12 moves to eat a bishop or an elephant if black plays “perfectly”.

7.7 How can I enter a game?

In the default mode, you play against the computer. To enter a game just deactivate computer by choosing the

Game/No computer mode menu (Or click on the toolbar ). When this button is

pressed, you only have to enter your moves without being “disturbed” by XieXie.

7.8 What is pondering?

XieXie is able to think on the opponent’s time: this is called *pondering*. This option is set by default.

7.9 How can I choose the opening book?

You can choose the kind of opening in the “Thinking/opening book” menu.

You have 3 kinds of books:

- Tournament : lines used by GM in tournament games
- Normal : Random book.
- Blitz : most common opening book

7.10 When I open the logs, clock, bar graph.... Does it affect the speed of search?

Opening windows does not affect the speed of search. So open as many windows you can display on your screen monitor !

7.11 XieXie cannot run anymore on my PC, what should I do ?

- 1) Be sure you get the file key.dat in your XXM’s directory and you get the registration code.
- 2) Be sure XieXieMaster is running in his own directory.
- 3) Remove “CurrentGameV1.xgf” in your XXM’s directory file and restart XieXie.

If you want XieXie to come back to defaults value : press the “Shift Key” while starting XieXie.

7.12 At what level is XieXie playing ?

This question is very difficult to answer as XieXie is not allowed to play against humans in human championship. The following is an estimation:

Computer	5 minutes/game	10 minutes/ game	1 hour/game
P4 2.8 Ghz	2490 ELO	2470 ELO	2450 ELO
AMD K7 2800+	2450 ELO	2380 ELO	2360 ELO
K7 1.5 GHz	2420 ELO	2360 ELO	2320 ELO
K7 800 MHz	2380 ELO	2320 ELO	2250 ELO
Celeron 600	2310 ELO	2260 ELO	2180 ELO

Read this carefully, that doesn't mean that in 5 min/game XieXie plays better. It only means XieXie wins the stronger player when the timing is short. In theory, XieXie program plays better if you let him think longer...

During the computer chinese chess world championship, XieXie was estimated to be a 8 Dan Player (Equivalent of 2450 Elo).

7.13 How can I update the version/get support?

Just send an e-mail to xiexiegrandmaster@yahoo.fr (or ptang@caramail.com) with your home and Internet coordinates. If you find a bug, you can also report it to the authors. They will do their best to deliver a corrected version.

If you need any answers about the program feel free to email them. Your questions will be answered as soon as possible.

For XieXie updates (opening books, news, etc.), just go to the website:

www.cc-xiexie.com

Note: Don't make illegal copies of XieXie! You will kill Xiang Qi software development!
Thanks!