

BILDNER

Includes the
new features
of version 17

Walter Saumweber

ChessBase Tips & Tricks

- *A quick introduction to the software*
- *Key features explained in detail*
- *Useful selection of topics for any user*





ChessBase Tips & Tricks



Publishing Company:

BILDNER Verlag GmbH
Bahnhofstraße 8
94032 Passau

<https://www.bildner-verlag.de>
info@bildner-verlag.de

ISBN: 978-3-8328-5653-3

Updated edition for Chessbase 17, August 2023

Author: Walter Saumweber

Publisher: Christian Bildner

Image sources for cover and contents:

Screenshots from Chessbase 17 by courtesy of
Chessbase GmbH

© 2023 BILDNER Verlag GmbH Passau

All information in this book is published regardless of any patent protection. The name of the wares are used without guarantee of the free usability. The utmost care was applied during compilation of texts and images. Nevertheless, errors cannot be completely eliminated. The author and the publisher can in no way be held responsible or made legacy liable for any such errors or their potential consequences. The publishing company and the editor are grateful for improvement and for pointing out any errors.

Nearly all hardware and software notations and trademarks mentioned in this book can, without special marking, be subject to trade- or brand mark protection or are protected by patents.

The names of companies, people, products and email addresses used in the examples are fictitious. Any resemblance is purely coincidental. All rights of this book including all parts of it are reserved. The General License Terms of BILDNER Verlag GmbH Passau, Germany, apply.



Foreword

ChessBase exists since 1987 and is "the" chess (database) programme par excellence worldwide. On the one hand it is correct to call the software this, but it by no means says everything about the scope and, above all, the usefulness of this programme. For example, you can use ChessBase to prepare for your next chess opponent or to learn new openings, and ChessBase can also help you to improve your tactical skills and your playing strength in general. You can do this not only by using the many built-in features, but also by using the features that ChessBase makes available online. As you can imagine, ChessBase – like any powerful software – is correspondingly complex, and this is where this book comes in. It is aimed primarily at the following groups of readers:

- ▶ Chess players who are not yet very familiar with ChessBase, especially the new features, and who want to familiarise themselves with its operation as quickly as possible.
- ▶ Chess players who have been using ChessBase for a long time, but are not yet familiar with various special functions and features, or do not know exactly how to use them.

It is, of course, up to you to decide which group you belong to. In any case, this book can help you if you have the ambition to get the best out of ChessBase. We have deliberately chosen the tips and tricks format. It allows us, and you as the reader, a sensible choice of topics. This means that you don't have to read the book from start to finish, but can pick and choose what interests you most. However, we recommend that you always read to the end of a Tip before trying to apply the methods shown in it, as possible alternatives to the main methods, important additional information or things to look out for are often only described at the end of a Tip.

We have tried to select the most important and interesting ones for you. According to the target groups mentioned above, the following are some of the aspects that have been emphasised:



- ▶ Something is so important that you must know it in order to work with ChessBase.
- ▶ A feature/function is one of the "highlights" of ChessBase.
- ▶ A feature/function is basic, but it needs some additional information to be able to use it to its full extent.
- ▶ There is no or very little information about a feature/function that needs explanation elsewhere – for example on the internet – or the information is no longer up to date.
- ▶ A feature/function is little known, or experience shows that it is rarely used, although it can be very useful to the user.

The tips in this book each fulfil one or more of these criteria, so the selection can be characterised as basic, very important, special, complicated, particularly efficient and very useful. While we have been selective in our choice of tips, we have tried to present the topics covered as completely and comprehensibly as possible, so that no questions remain unanswered while reading. This is especially true for those ChessBase functions which are somewhat more complicated to use than others.

We would especially like to thank Mr Rainer Woisin and Mr Matthias Müller from the ChessBase company, who supported us during the work on the book. We wish our readers much pleasure and success in reading this book.



Table of Contents

Foreword	3
----------------	---

1 Handling Fundamentals 9

1.1 Minimize / Expand Toolbar	10
1.2 Customizing Quick Access.....	11
1.3 Switch Between Several Open ChessBase Windows.....	14
1.4 Show Database Preview	14
1.5 Adjusting the Size of the Database Symbols	16
1.6 Arranging Window Areas	17
1.7 Opening ChessBase Options.....	19
1.8 Setting the Language for the User Interface	19
1.9 Execute Commands/Functions with a Right Click	20
1.10 Resetting ChessBase Settings	22
1.11 Restoring the Default Layout	23
1.12 Saving and Reusing Window Layouts	23
1.13 Assigning All Supported File Types to the ChessBase Software	26
1.14 Assigning Individual File Types to Another Software	27
1.15 Setting your own Keyboard Shortcuts	31

2 Working with Databases 35

2.1 Adding Databases to the "My Databases" View	36
2.2 Where Should Specific Databases be Stored?.....	39
2.3 Open Database Folder in Windows Explorer – Shortcut.....	42
2.4 Open Databases and Games	44



2.5	Creating a new Database	46
2.6	Pinning Databases to the Favorites List.....	48
2.7	Deleting Games	50
2.8	Copying Games to Another Database	51
2.9	Configuring Columns.....	57
2.10	Sorting Databases.....	59
2.11	Detecting and Deleting Duplicate Games.....	61
2.12	Using the Clip Database	65
2.13	Special Icons for Databases.....	70
2.14	Create Search Booster	71
2.15	Setting a Reference Database	72
2.16	Simple search.....	75
2.17	Advanced search.....	85
2.18	Saving and Recalling Search Queries	90
2.19	Searching Several Databases at Once.....	91
2.20	Creating a Backup Copy (Archive) of a Database.....	92
2.21	Using Opening Books	94
2.22	Importing Games into an Opening Book.....	100
2.23	Making an Opening Book a Workbook	103
2.24	Creating Your Own Opening Book	105
2.25	Converting Old Databases to the New Format.....	105
2.26	Finding Spectacular Games by Beauty Scores	108
3	Tips for Working in the Board Window.....	113
3.1	Entering a New Game and Saving it in a Database	114
3.2	Special Methods for Inputting Moves	116
3.3	Correcting the Move Entries.....	119



3.4	Further Options when Entering a New Move	120
3.5	Undoing Actions	122
3.6	Deleting Moves/Variations	123
3.7	Upgrading Variations	125
3.8	Cleaning Up Variations	127
3.9	Entering a Position.....	129
3.10	Copying a Position	132
3.11	Determining if a Position Already Occurs Within a Game.....	134
3.12	Commenting a Game	135
3.13	Searching for Comments	141
3.14	Exchanging Moves.....	143
4	Training with ChessBase	147
4.1	Set a Default Engine	148
4.2	Installing a new Engine in ChessBase	149
4.3	Having a Position Analysed by a “Kibitzer”	153
4.4	Evaluating the Analysis in the Engine Window	155
4.5	Configuring the Analysis in The Engine Window	156
4.6	Analysis Preview, Inserting Calculations with a Mouse Click	160
4.7	Using the Buddy Engine to Determine Whether Moves are Forced	163
4.8	Visual Assessment in the Engine Window	165
4.9	Parallel Analysis with Multiple Engines	167
4.10	Changing the Analysis Engine in the Current Engine Window.....	169
4.11	Configuring the Analysis Behaviour of an Engine	170
4.12	Temporarily Deactivating an Engine	172
4.13	How to Remove an Engine completely.....	174
4.14	Assisted Analysis	175



4.15 Tactical Analysis 177

4.16 Deep Analysis 181

4.17 Analysis Jobs..... 182

4.18 Replay Training..... 191

4.19 Installing the "Best Games For Replay Training" Database" 199

4.20 Creating a Dossier About a Player 201

5 Special Functions..... 205

5.1 Null Move 206

5.2 Merging Games 207

5.3 Inserting Variations by Drag and Drop 209

5.4 Generating Opening Surveys..... 213

5.5 Plan Explorer 216

5.6 Investigating Suspected Cheating with the Centipawn Analysis .. 219

5.7 Deactivating ChessBase 223

6 Online Functions and Features 225

6.1 Logging in to ChessBase 226

6.2 Registering with Playchess 228

6.3 Even More Benefits with a ChessBase Premium Account..... 230

6.4 Using the Online Database 230

6.5 Update Service for the Mega Database..... 233

6.6 Keeping ChessBase up to Date..... 239

Index 241

1 Handling Fundamentals



This chapter will focus on the ChessBase user interface and the most essential settings. You will be taught how to customize your environment to your preference.

Paul Morphy – Duke Charles of Brunswick and Comte Isoard de Vauvenargue, Paris 1858

Instead of listening to the opera, three men met in a loge at the Paris Opera to play chess. This game continues to serve as a lesson in rapid development of chess figures and displays the superiority of the American chess master Morphy, who enforced almost all of his opponent's moves. He mastered the game against the Duke of Brunswick and the French Count Isoard, who were consulting alongside with Black.

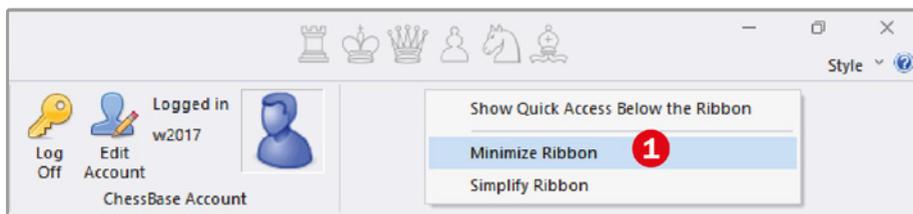




1.1 Minimize / Expand Toolbar

Most of the ChessBase commands and functions can be found in the upper toolbar. There is a toolbar in the main ChessBase window (database window) as well as in the board window, however with different tabs and commands/options adapted to suit the context on it. The toolbar in ChessBase can be compared to the menu bar in Microsoft Office programs.

In order to have more space to work with in the main area, you can choose to minimize the toolbar. In the minimized state, only the names of the tabs are visible. To minimize a toolbar, use the right mouse button to click anywhere on the bar and then use the left mouse button to click **Minimize Ribbon** **1** in the context menu that appears.



Toolbar of the database window, right-hand side

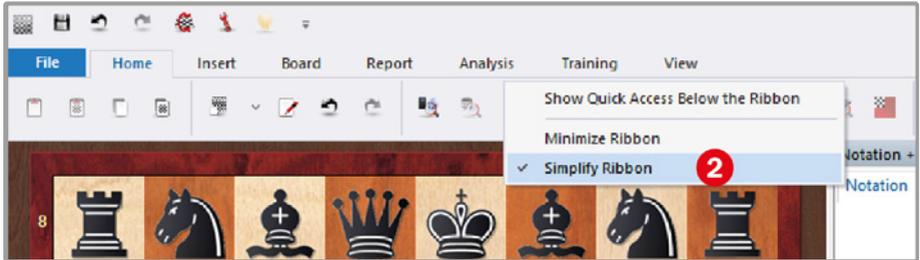
To temporarily display a tab of a minimized toolbar, simply click on its name. After selecting the desired command, the tab is automatically hidden again.

To show a minimized toolbar completely at a later time, right-click again on the section which is still visible – for example, on one of the tab names – and then left-click on **Minimize Ribbon** (in the minimized state there is a tick in front of this command).

The **Simplify Ribbon** **2** option in the toolbar context menu is a new feature in ChessBase 17. The tabs are still displayed, however the icons on them are



much smaller and without labels. The tooltips are still available – simply hold the mouse over an icon to see its description. If the simplification of the toolbar is activated, you can also see this in the context menu by the tick in front of the command. If the need be click on it again to restore the old state (full-size toolbar).



Simplified ribbon in the board window

1.2 Customizing Quick Access

At the top left of the database window and in all other windows (board window, games list window) you will find a small toolbar, Quick Access. This is initially only filled with a few icons, of which it can be assumed that most users will frequently need the commands/functions they represent. If you often work with Quick Access, you can expand this toolbar as you wish or simply remove symbols that are not needed.

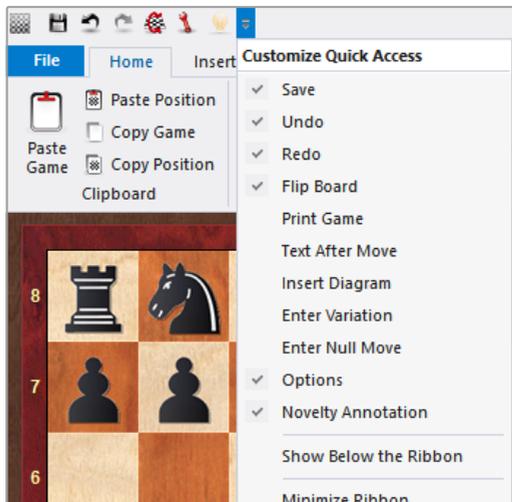
Some frequently used commands are offered by Quick Access directly in a menu that opens when you click on the icon on the far right with the arrow-head pointing down (if you hold the cursor over it, the tooltip **Customize Quick Access** appears). The following illustration shows this menu in the board window. The ticked commands are in the Quick Access toolbar.



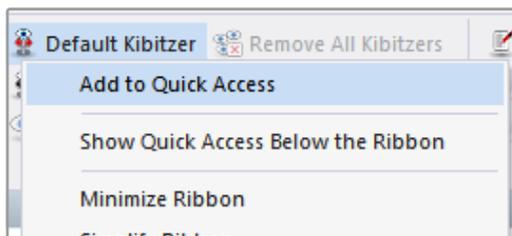
If you select a command without a tick in the open menu **Customize Quick Access**, the corresponding icon is added to Quick Access. Selecting a ticked command removes the corresponding icon from Quick Access.

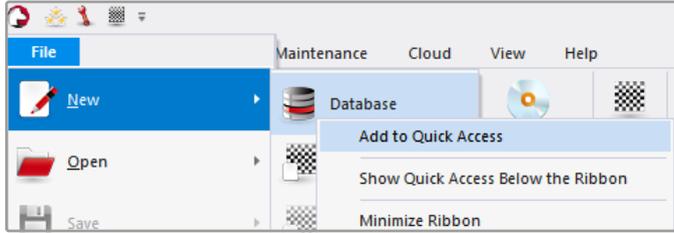
In order to add commands/options that ChessBase does not provide in the menu **Customize Quick Access**, simply locate the command or the corresponding icon button in the toolbar and access it via right-click on the mouse. As a result, a context menu appears; select the command **Add to Quick Access**.

This same command is not only available in the toolbar, but also in the **file** menu, as the following illustration shows for the database window.



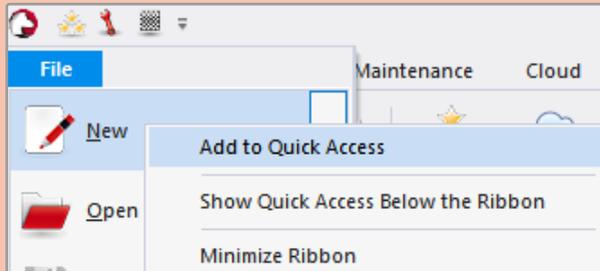
*Quick Access toolbar with the opened menu **Customize Quick Access** in the board window*





In this illustration the context menu command **Add to Quick Access** adds an icon for creating a new database to the Quick Access.

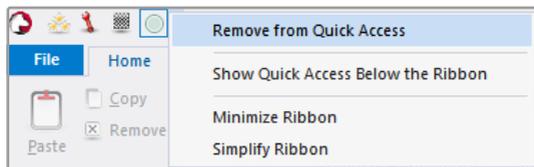
You could also right-click directly on **File/New** without opening the submenu to add the icon for creating a new database in Quick Access. In this case ChessBase always takes the default command when executing **Add to Quick Access**, which is always the first command of the submenu (in this case **File/New/Database**).



For example if you want to add a symbol for building a new position to Quick Access, you have to right-click on **Position Setup** in the **File/New** submenu and select **Add to Quick Access** in this context menu.



To remove an icon added to Quick Access in the way just described, right-click on the icon in Quick Access and select **Remove from Quick Access** in the context menu.

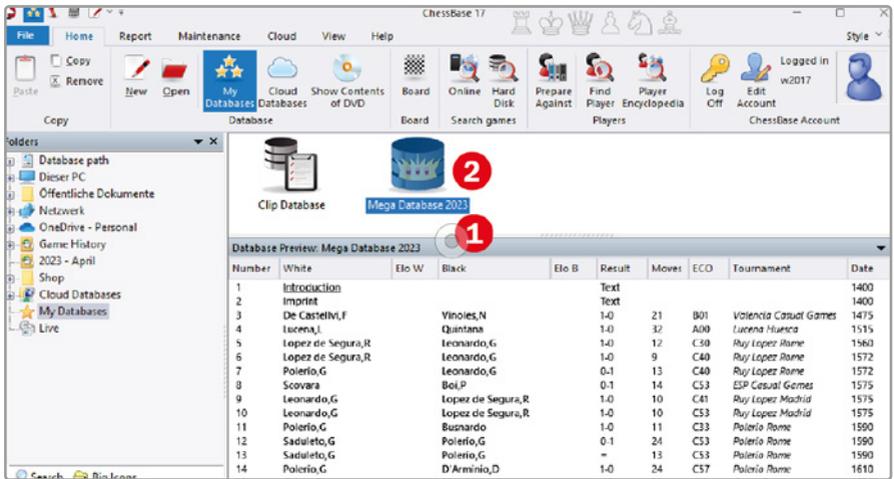


1.3 Switch Between Several Open ChessBase Windows

To switch between different ChessBase application windows (for example, database window plus several open board windows), you can use the familiar Windows functions. For example, you can click on the corresponding symbols in the taskbar or press **Alt+Tab**. ChessBase also offers a software-specific Quick Access that makes it even faster: hold down the **Ctrl** key and press the **F6** key to move to the next ChessBase window. This method has the advantage over **Alt+Tab**, in that navigation takes place exclusively between open ChessBase application windows and not between all windows open in Windows.

1.4 Show Database Preview

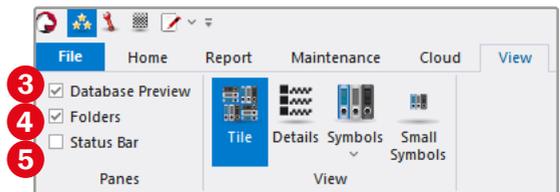
The Database Preview in the database window is helpful. When you select a database in the database section, it lists the games it contains. Depending on what you want to do, the Database Preview can be as useful as a games list window, so you may not need to open the database.



The **Database Preview** **1** shows the games of the **Mega Database** **2** selected in the database section.

In the Database Preview, for instance, you can rearrange the way the games are displayed by clicking on a column title, just as you would do in a games list window. For example, to first display the most recent games, click on the column title **Date** once. Every subsequent click on the column title reverses the sequence of order. Just as in a games list window, by using a double-click on a game, it opens in a board window.

If the **Database Preview** is not displayed, you can activate it by enabling the corresponding check box on the **View** **3** tab.



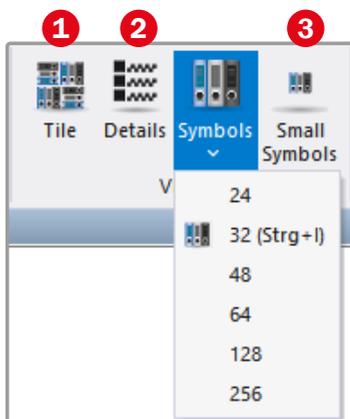
With the check box next to **Folders** **4** you can hide and show the database explorer. If the check box next to **Status Bar** **5** is activated, a status bar with context-dependent information appears at the bottom of the database window. If, for example, a physical folder is selected in the database explorer, you will see its path in the status line.



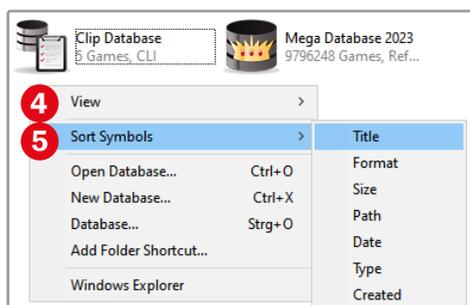
1.5 Adjusting the Size of the Database Symbols

If the database symbols in the database section are too large or too small, you can modify as desired through the selection of the display size that suits you on the **View** tab in the corresponding group.

Tile **1** shows medium-sized tiles with additional information, such as the number of the games it contains. Click on the icon **Details** **2** to display the databases row by row with even more information (you can also set the **Details** size for database icons by pressing **Ctrl+D**; note, however, the cursor must be in the database section when you press this key combination). By clicking on the lower half of the **Symbols** button, the menu you see in the illustration above opens. This allows you to choose from several tile sizes but without any additional information. Size 32 can also be set by pressing the key combination **Ctrl+I**. The smallest possible tile size is displayed by clicking on **Small symbols** **3**. Use this to explore what suits you best.



You can access the same setting options via the context menu. Right-click on a free space in the database section to open it. Then click on **View** **4** at the top of the context menu and select the desired size in the submenu.





Using the context menu command **Sort Symbols** **5** you can sort the database symbols in the database section optionally by title, format, size, path, date of last change, type or time of creation.

1.6 Arranging Window Areas

You can rearrange the window areas integrated into a ChessBase application window (database window and board window) according to your preferences by grabbing them by the title bar and dragging them to the desired position with the cursor. "Grab" means to click on the title bar with the left mouse button and keep the mouse button pressed while dragging.

While dragging, a guiding symbol **1** appears as you see it in the illustration. To dock the window to one edge, move the cursor to one of the arrow buttons while keeping the mouse button pressed. The area the window will occupy will appear in light blue.



Move the cursor to one of the arrow switches of the guiding symbol to dock the window area to the corresponding edge.

If you release the mouse button, the window area is anchored to the selected edge. In the following illustration, the book window is anchored to the lower edge of board window **2**.



To release a window area from its anchoring, grab it again at the title bar and simply pull it a little in any direction (but not onto the guide symbol with the arrow buttons) before releasing the mouse button. You can now position the window freely, even outside the ChessBase application window.



A detached, i.e. unanchored, window area (here the notation area) appears in a new window.





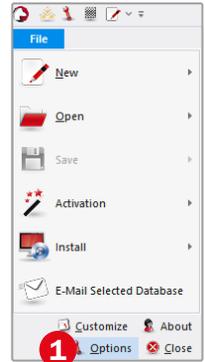
1.7 Opening ChessBase Options

The most important settings for your ChessBase software can be made in a dialogue box called **Options**. To open it, click on **File** at the top left of the database window and then on **Options** **1** at the very bottom of the pop-up menu.

With the same menu sequence **File/Options**, you can also call up the **Options** dialogue box from the board window.

The keyboard shortcut **Ctrl+N+O** given in the tooltip does not work on every computer because it is sometimes assigned by other software.

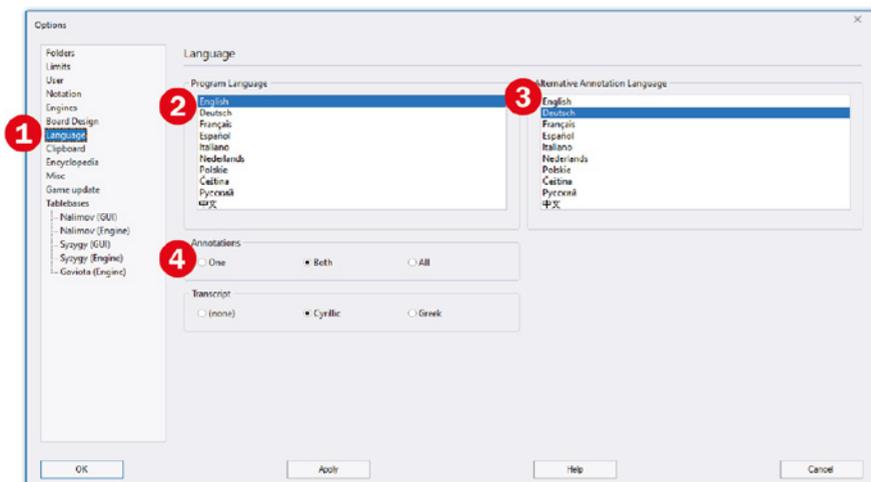
You will discover how to set the language in the ChessBase options in the following step. We will discuss other setting options at various later points.



Accessing the options dialogue box in the database window

1.8 Setting the Language for the User Interface

Your user interface may appear in a given language after installation. To set another language, access the ChessBase options as described previously. Select the category **Language** **1** in the left-hand area of the dialogue box and set it to the first language of your choice **2** in the right-hand area.



The second language **3** refers to text comments in a game. As ChessBase supports multilingual comments, you can set in a second language in which the comments appear, if available. With the selection **One**, **Both** or **All** **4** you control whether only your first, both or all languages should be displayed when a game is commented in several languages.

1.9 Execute Commands/Functions with a Right Click

Many functions can be accessed in ChessBase by performing a right-click. The context menus displayed are situational, i.e. they contain the options that seem to be appropriate in the particular context. This implies that you will often quickly achieve your goal by using a right-click than via the menu items. So always remember this option when working with ChessBase.



Some options are only accessible over context menus. For example, if you wish to adjust the display of the chessboard in the board windows, right-click anywhere on the board and select the menu item **Board Design** in the lower part of the context menu. A dialogue box of the same name opens where you can make the desired settings.



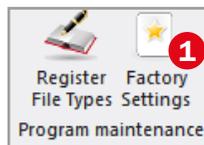
Context-related menus can be accessed at any point by right-clicking. They are an important operating element in ChessBase (the options greyed out in the picture are not available at the moment because the initial position is still on the board).



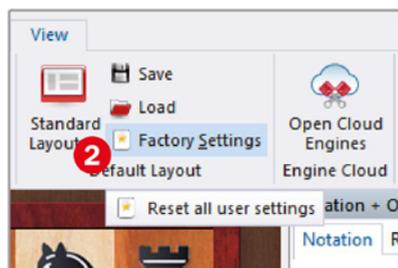
1.10 Resetting ChessBase Settings

You can reset your ChessBase settings to the initial state at any time if necessary. This option is available in the database window and the board window.

Click on the Maintenance tab in the Database window to display this tab. At the right end of the **Maintenance** tab, click on the **Factory settings** **1** icon in the **Program Maintenance** group and confirm any message windows that appear and any prompt from the Windows User Account Control with **OK** or **Yes**.



Alternatively, Factory settings can be maintained by clicking on the tab View in the board window then access **Factory Settings** **2** in the **Standard Layout** group. Afterwards, the above-mentioned queries must also be confirmed.



You can open a board window by pressing **Ctrl+N** or by clicking on the board symbol on the **Start** tab in the database window.

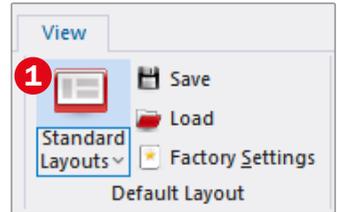
With the command **Factory settings** you can reset, among other things, all settings of the **Options** dialogue box, which can be accessed in the database window and in the board window via the **File** button (see "1.7 Opening



ChessBase Options" on page 19) to the original values. Whether this action is carried out via the button in the database window or the same button in the board window is irrelevant – the result is the same.

1.11 Restoring the Default Layout

To restore the original window layout for the board windows, click on the upper half of the **Standard Layouts** button **1** in an open board window, which is also in the **Default Layout** group of the **View** tab.



Keep this option in mind. This way you can "experiment" with the board window without hesitation to find a window layout to your desired preference. Should everything get out of order, simply restore the original layout with a mouse click.

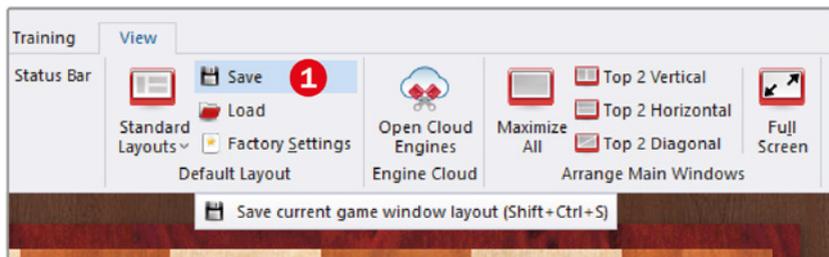
1.12 Saving and Reusing Window Layouts

In the board window, there are many possibilities to adapt the display according to your preferences. For example, you can enlarge or reduce the chessboard by dragging it with the mouse and you can also show additional areas (an extra book window, a search window for the online database, a window for training videos etc.) by activating the checkboxes in the **Panes** group of the **View** tab and place them as you wish as described in "1.6 Arranging Window Areas" on page 17.

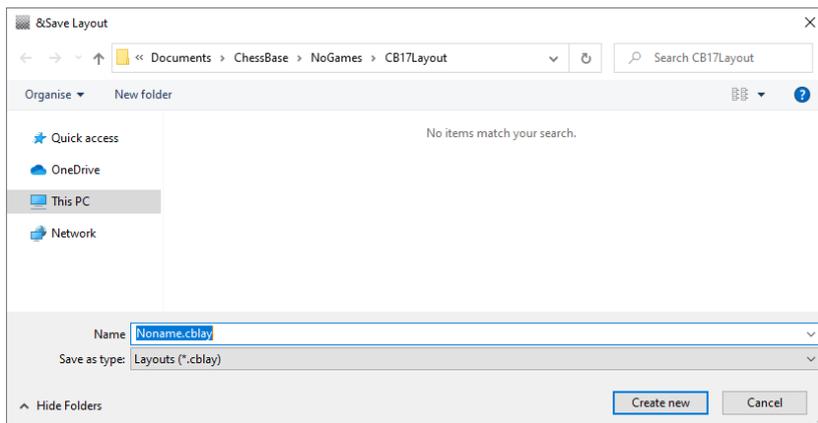


If you like the layout in the board window, you can save it in a file to reuse it when needed:

- 1 To do this, click on the **Save** icon **1** in the Default Layout group of the View tab.



- 2 The **Save Layout** dialogue box appears. ChessBase suggests the folder **Documents|ChessBase|NoGames|CB17Layout** in the Windows user directory as the storage location for the layout file, but you can also save the file in any other location.





- 3 You may overwrite the suggested file name. For example, name the layout file **MyLayout** (you need not include the **.cblay** file extension in the **Name** field).
- 4 Click the **Create new** button in the **Save Layout** dialogue box to save the layout file in the specified folder.

To reuse the saved layout in the board window at a later time – perhaps because the window arrangement there has been disorganized – click on the **Load** icon in the **Default Layout** group of the **View** tab, select the layout file in the dialogue box that appears and click **Open**.

File extensions play a big role in ChessBase. An ordinary database can consist of over twenty different files with the same name (with the Mega Database 2023 there are over thirty), which differ only in the extensions. For example, the file with the extension **.cbh** contains the game header, the file with the extension **.cbg** stores the moves and variations, the **.cba** file contains comments, the **.cbp** file the player names and so on. For you to see the extensions of files, such as **.cblay**, in all dialogues, it is advisable to activate their display at Windows level. To do this, place a tick in the checkbox **1** next to **File name extensions** on the **View** tab in the **Show/hide** group in Windows Explorer.

