

THE GAME

Masterchess has been designed to be a no-frills chess playing program of advanced ability which is easy to use. Special emphasis has been placed on providing facilities useful to those wishing to improve their game as well as just pass a pleasant hour or three.

To this end it is possible to review an entire game, step-by-step, or re-arrange the pieces to make a point, or even build-up a position starting with a blank board. Handy for solving chess problems, or practising your end-game!

Early in the development of Masterchess, the 3-D, or perspective, view of the chess board was investigated and discarded. It is difficult to use on-screen and wastes a large amount of memory. The savings have gone into strengthening the computer opponent.

Standard algebraic notation is used both for inputting moves and for displaying them on the screen. This means that each square is referred to by a letter and a number. Looking from the White player's side of the board, the bottom left square is a1 and the top right is h8. This remains fixed, no matter what colour you choose to play ie. Moving the White Queen's pawn forward two squares is always written as d2 - d4.

You instruct Masterchess to make your move by telling it what square to move from and where to move to ie. d2 d4. (There is no need to press RETURN.) Unusual moves are handled in a similar fashion. Taking a pawn "en passant" enter the initial and final squares for your pawn. To castle, just input the King move and the Rook will tag along automatically.

USING THE PROGRAM

Upon loading, the game will ask you which colour you wish to play. Type in (B)lack or (W)hite. You then set the opponent's level of play, by deciding how long you wish to allow it to think over each move. Type in a number of seconds and RETURN. Although just about any whole number will be accepted, we would suggest that you start with a level around 30 seconds and take it from there. At 60 seconds Masterchess will beat most average players most of the time. If you fancy your chances move up to 180 seconds and then beyond 600 for a good thrashing! Should you get fed up waiting - or just wish to pressure the computer a little, hit RETURN whilst it's thinking. This forces it to play its best move so far, at the moment you push the button.

Also while the machine is considering, you can view which pieces have been taken by hitting the space-bar. Hit it again to resume normality. (This does not affect the machine's thinking.) The same display can be obtained during your turn by holding down the space-bar.

Pressing RETURN during your turn brings up the option menu:-

1. RETURN (from menu)
2. SET LEVEL
3. RE-ARRANGE
4. SET-UP
5. REPLAY
6. LOAD GAME
7. SAVE GAME
8. NEW GAME

Press the number key corresponding to the option you wish to call up. Taking each in turn:-

1. Returns you to the game.
2. Enter the number of seconds, then RETURN.
3. Allows you to put pieces onto any square, or take them off, WITHOUT RESTRICTION. Careful! Works from the current game position. You will be asked which square (ie. a1, b2, c3 etc.) and then which piece to go on it. Enter WP or BP for White/Black Pawn or BR, WN, BB, WQ, BK for Black Rook, White Knight, Black Bishop, White Queen, Black King etc. Beginning an entry with a letter other than W or B will clear the square. Press return to get out of the option.
4. Works as above, but starts with a blank board. Once complete press RETURN to begin play and RETURN again to get back to the menu.
5. Plays through the game from the start, or from the last use of (4) or (3), to the current position. Hit an alphanumeric key to carry on one move or hold down the space-bar for continuous action.
6. Loads in previously saved position. Follow on-screen instructions.
7. Saves current position onto a (blank!!) tape. Again, follow instructions.
8. Restarts from scratch, with the colour choice and level setting prompts.

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

Press PLAY on cassette recorder. Hold down START & OPTION buttons while switching on the computer. Press RETURN, program will now load.

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