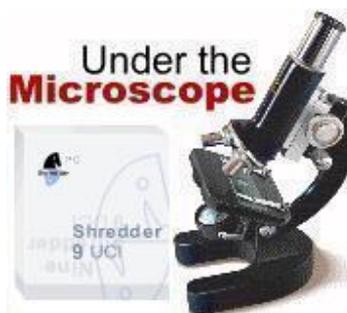


## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE: "Shredder 9 UCI"



review updated on 19.2.2006

### "Shredder 9 UCI" English review

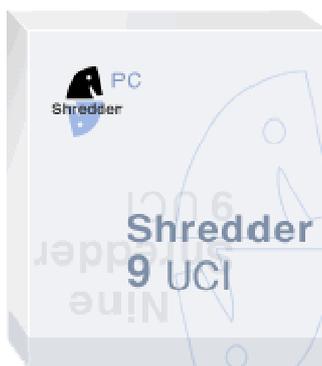
© 19.2.2006 Jovan Petronic. International Master. FIDE Senior Trainer

<http://www.jovanpetronic.com>

Test Machine:

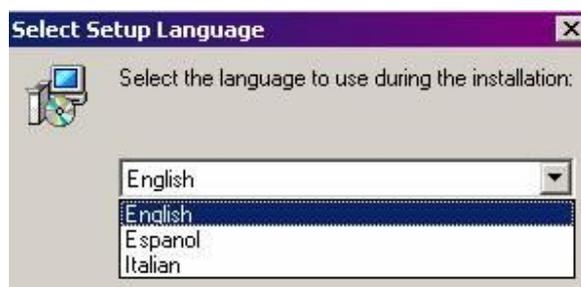
Intel® Celeron™ CPU, 1.1 GHz, 128 MB RAM, Windows Millennium.

Shredder 9 UCI comes as a 6 megabyte downloadable standalone executable. It is advertised as the "latest and strongest version of the Shredder chess family for Windows". The Shredder 9 Opening book is an 18 megabyte download add-on.



### Highlights:

**1. Easy installation. The installation process of Shredder 9 UCI takes less than a minute. No restart is required.**



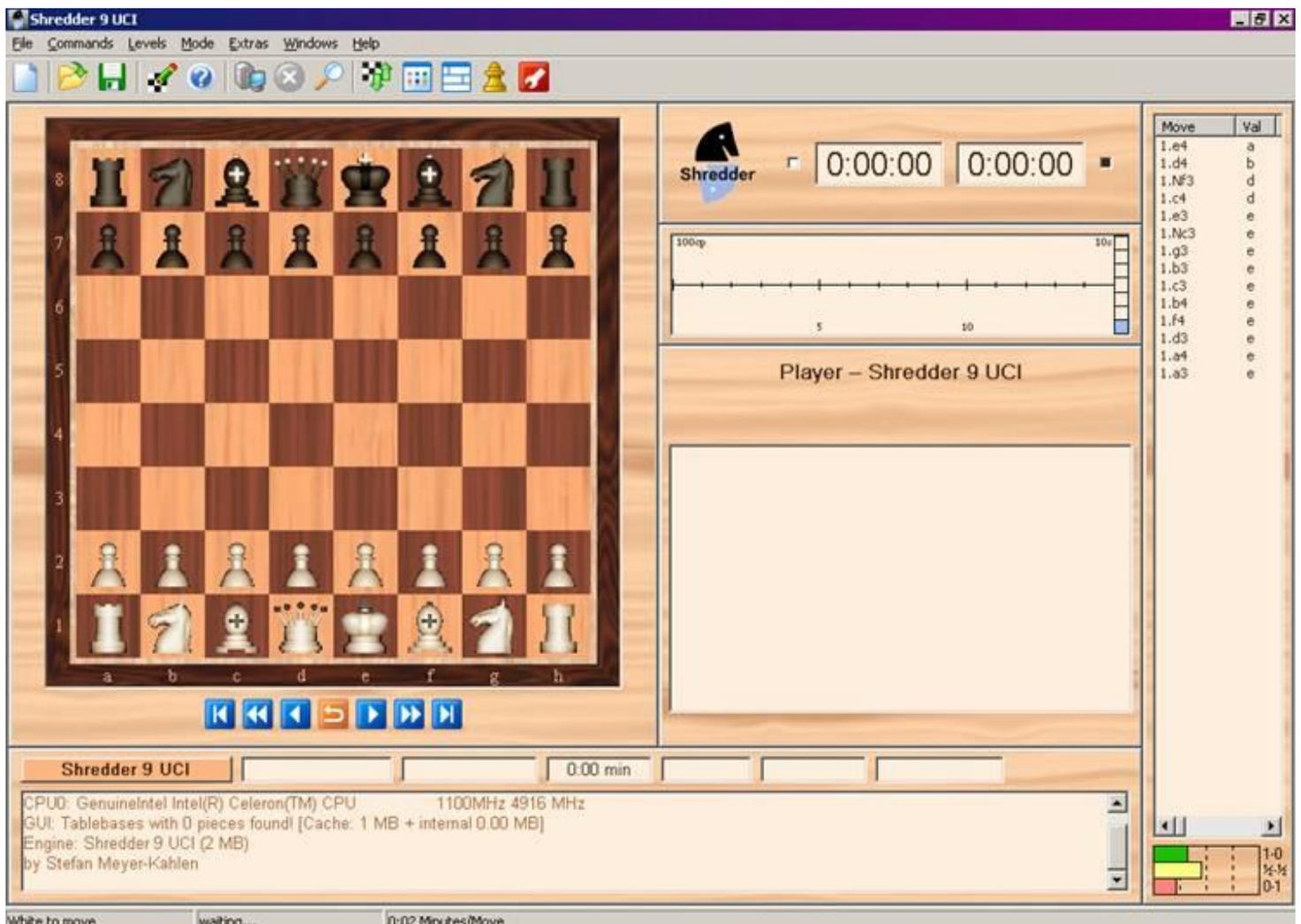
Remark: Six languages are supported! German, English, Spanish, French, Italian and Dutch. I have chosen to install English, for my review.



You are prompted for an optional registration of the GUI and the Shredder 9 UCI engine.



.... finally producing a screenshot of the "newborn":

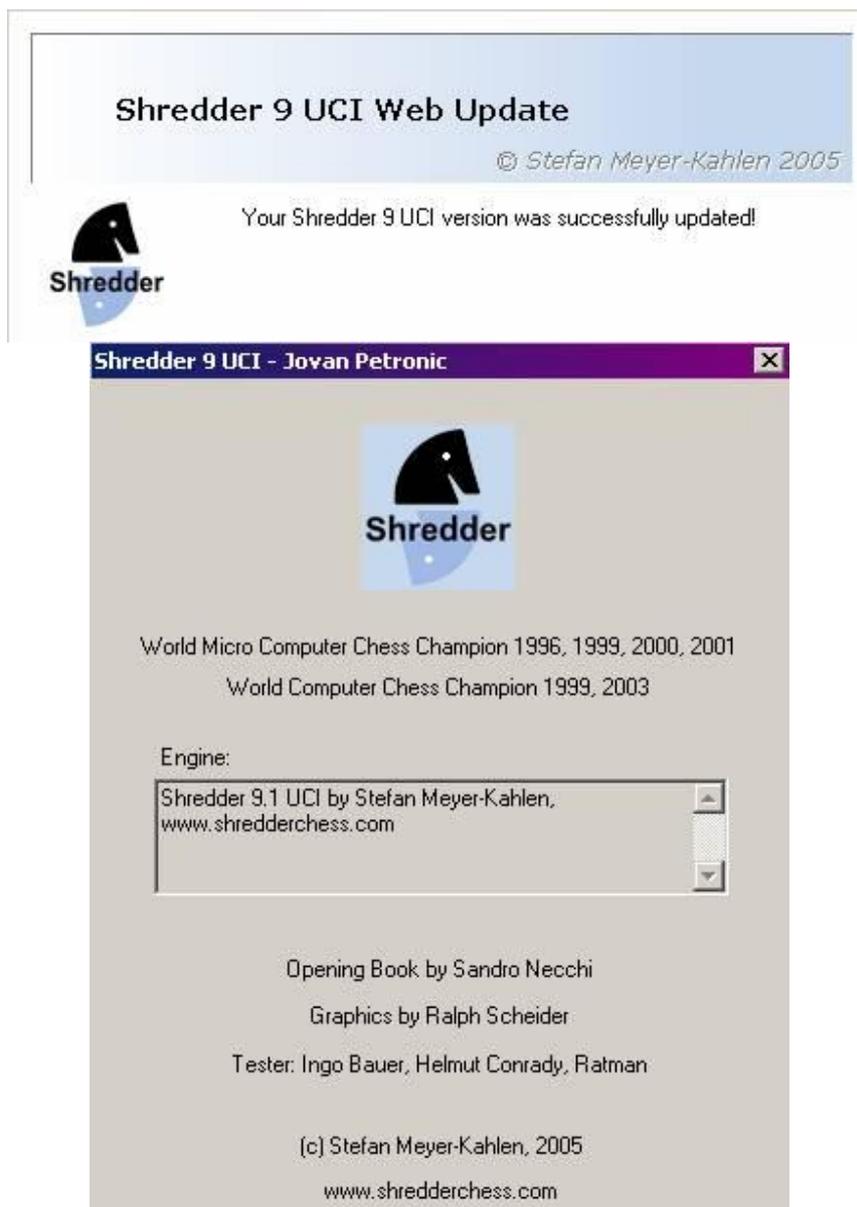


The installation of the Opening book runs smoothly as well. Both installations are programmed with an uninstall utility. The uncompressed Opening book takes up approximately 95 megabytes, and the Shredder 9 UCI 13 megabytes.

Here is the online info (<http://www.shredderchess.com/chess-program/shredder-9-uci.html>):

"With Shredder 9 UCI you get the latest and best version of the Shredder family that exists since 1993 and the latest version of the Shredder user interface for Windows. Shredder 9 UCI will also work on computers with multiple processors or one processor with multiple cores but will only use one processor or core for his calculations. For a further performance increase on those machines you need Deep Shredder 9 UCI. This is also true if you are using Windows x64, as a 64 bit Shredder 9 engine is included in Deep Shredder 9 UCI. Shredder 9 UCI runs on all Windows PCs with at least Windows 98."

## 2. Updates. As a registered user, you are eligible for free online updates.

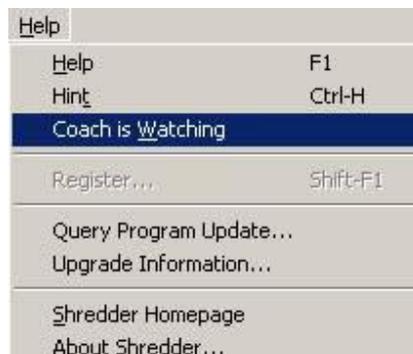


Remark: The (customizable) automatic online update "promoted" my installed Shredder 9 UCI into 9.1. An impressive list of World Computer Champion titles is listed in the "About Shredder" screen above. A few recent World Champion (blitz) titles seem to be missing?

### 3. GUI. The interface is pleasant for the eye, colorful, professionally designed. Sound effects are supported.

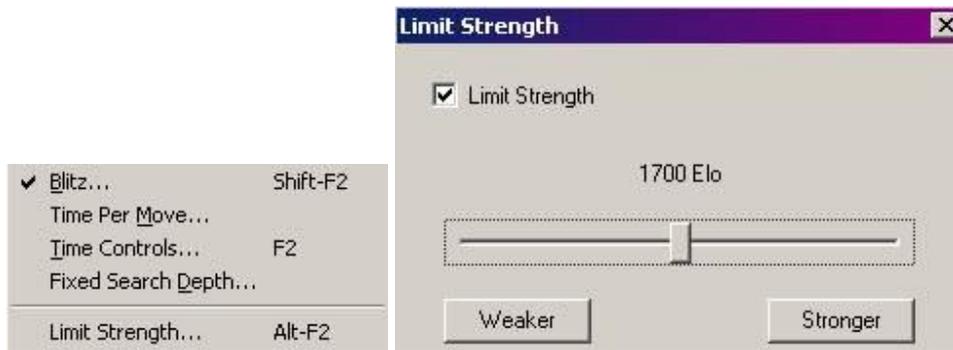


Above is a screenshot of my (after-midnight) first challenge. I was OK, with good time management. I'd rather not comment what happened later, I'll take my revenge in the morning. And I'll be sure to turn on the "Coach", alerting, in this case, the Coach, too, for any mistakes made.

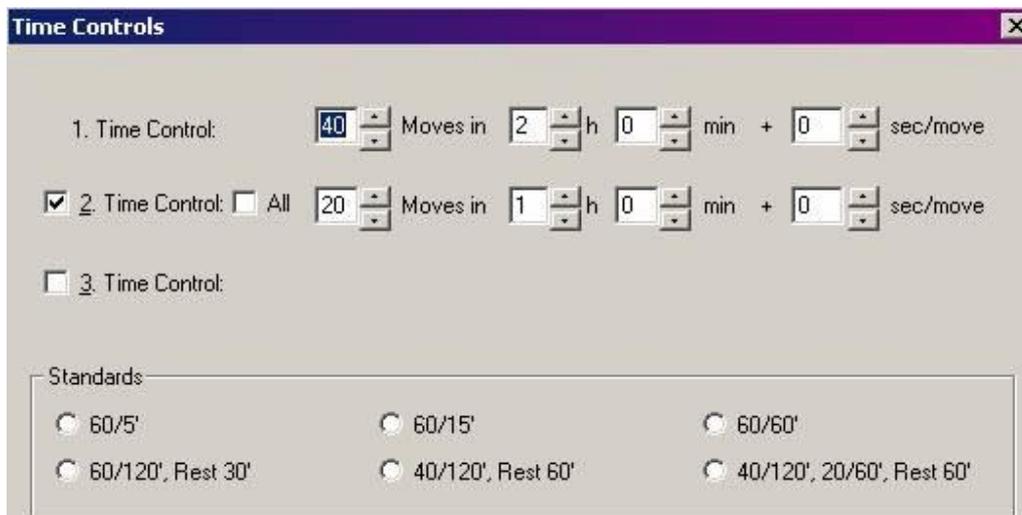


There are many windows in the main screen, with a lot of information to explore. I enjoy statistics, it seems the window on the right features all possible continuations at a given moment, something I am always interested in, especially as a trainer.

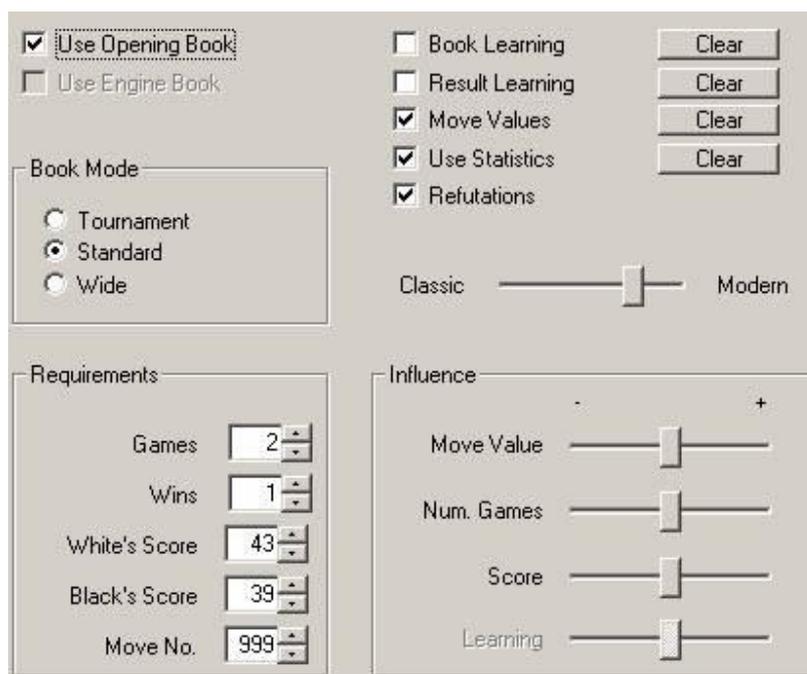
All possible levels of play are supported! Here are a few examples:



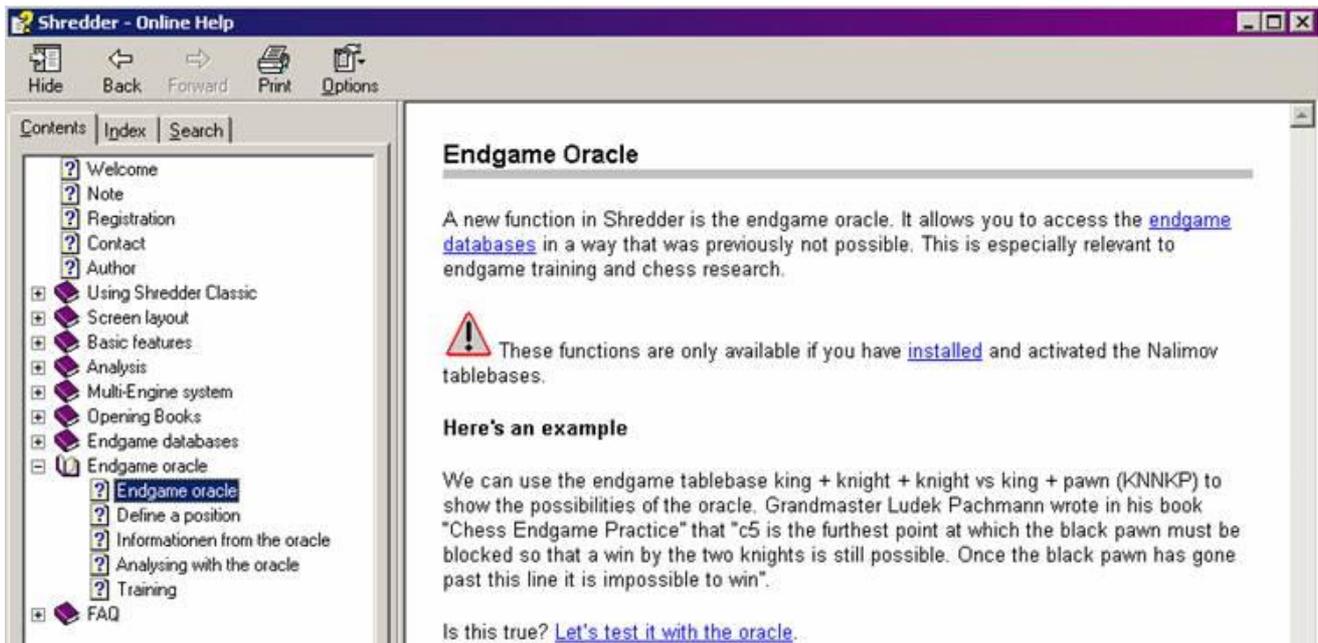
If I had only seen the "limit strength" one before I started my game....



Numerous book and engine options are also fully customizable.



**4. Help. An extensive online help file is provided. Below is a sample screenshot:**



**5. Opening book. The extra opening book features more than 1.2 million opening moves.**

Remark: Shredder 9 UCI comes with a built-in opening book, the downloadable one (highly recommended) needs to be configured.



**6. Fischer Random Chess (Chess960). For supporters of Fischer Random Chess, Shredder 9 UCI provides full compatibility. Below is a screen shot with a 3D board!**



Remark: One "advantage" for the human player, is that Shredder 9.1 UCI cannot use the Opening book advantage, while playing Chess960!? "Only" it's powerful engine.... Six different pieces and chessboards are available, in both 2D and 3D.

**7. Databases. PGN, CBF and EPD databases are supported. Shredder 9 UCI comes with a 906 World Chess Championships PGN game database.**

Remark: Automatic program conversion PGN-CBF (not included) is preferred, as the latter consume significantly less space. When researching a multi-game database, "next, previous game" seems not to be supported as a one-click option.

**8. Engines. Various engines are supported. Shredder 9 UCI comes with six pre-installed ones, accompanying the main Shredder 9 UCI engine.**



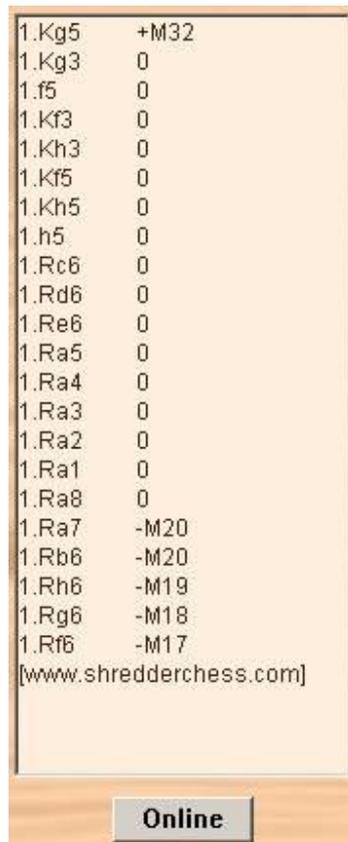
Remark: The publisher emphasizes that the extra chess engines differ in playing style. Automatic tests and different engine comparisons are supported, as well as simultaneous activity of up to ten engines.

**9. Online endgame database.**



Shredder 9.1 UCI provides almost instantaneous (!) online access to "more than 1045 Gigabytes of data" (!!), with up to 6 pieces on the board!

The diagram above features one of the mysteries of Rook endgames, the "f and h pawn Rook ending". (Grand)Masters of the past have spent countless hours analyzing whether the defending side can make a draw or not. A mystery? Not any more. The online database uncovers that White is winning, and with only one way to do it! Check out the solution screenshot below:



1. Kg5!! – all other candidate moves draw (with some losing, too).

Even without online access, the powerful Shredder 9 UCI engine is heading in the right direction:

Shredder 9 UCI		1. Kg5 (1/22)	Depth 26/26	11:54 min	+3.50	250 kn/s	Hash 99.9%
18/37	0:08	+2.78	1.Kg5 Kh7 2.f5 Rg7+ 3.Rg6 Ra7 4.Rh6+ Kg8 5.Rd6 Kh7 6.f6 (2.076.712) 254				
19/37	0:13	+2.77	1.Kg5 Kh7 2.Rh6+ Kg8 3.f5 Rb2 4.Rh5 Rb5 (3.443.968) 260				
20/38	0:20	+2.79	1.Kg5 Kh7 2.f5 Rg7+ 3.Rg6 Ra7 4.h5 (5.385.532) 262				
21/43	0:30	+2.76	1.Kg5 Kh7 2.f5 Rg7+ 3.Rg6 Ra7 4.Rh6+ Kg8 5.Rd6 Kh7 6.Rg6 Ra1 7.Re6 (8.164.631) 264				
22/40	1:33	+3.01++	1.Kg5 Kh7 (23.611.443) 253				
22/44	3:30	+3.45	1.Kg5 Kh8 2.h5 Rg7+ 3.Rg6 (52.074.162) 247				
23/45	4:49	+3.48	1.Kg5 Rb1 2.Ra7+ Kg8 3.f5 Rg1+ (71.895.262) 248				
24/46	6:51	+3.50	1.Kg5 Kh7 2.h5 Rg7+ 3.Rg6 Rc7 4.Rh6+ (102.868.451) 250				
25/45	8:48	+3.50	1.Kg5 Rb1 2.Ra7+ Kg8 3.f5 Rg1+ 4.Kf6 Rh1 5.h5 (132.817.497) 251				

Additionally, Nalimov tablebases are fully supported, if your hard disk can spare the extra space. Can the 1045 Gb of online data be compressed to fit onto my 14 Gb laptop HD? I guess I am asking too much.

Below is a screen shot of more useful info from Shredder's online help:

The Nalimov endgame databases are available free on the internet.

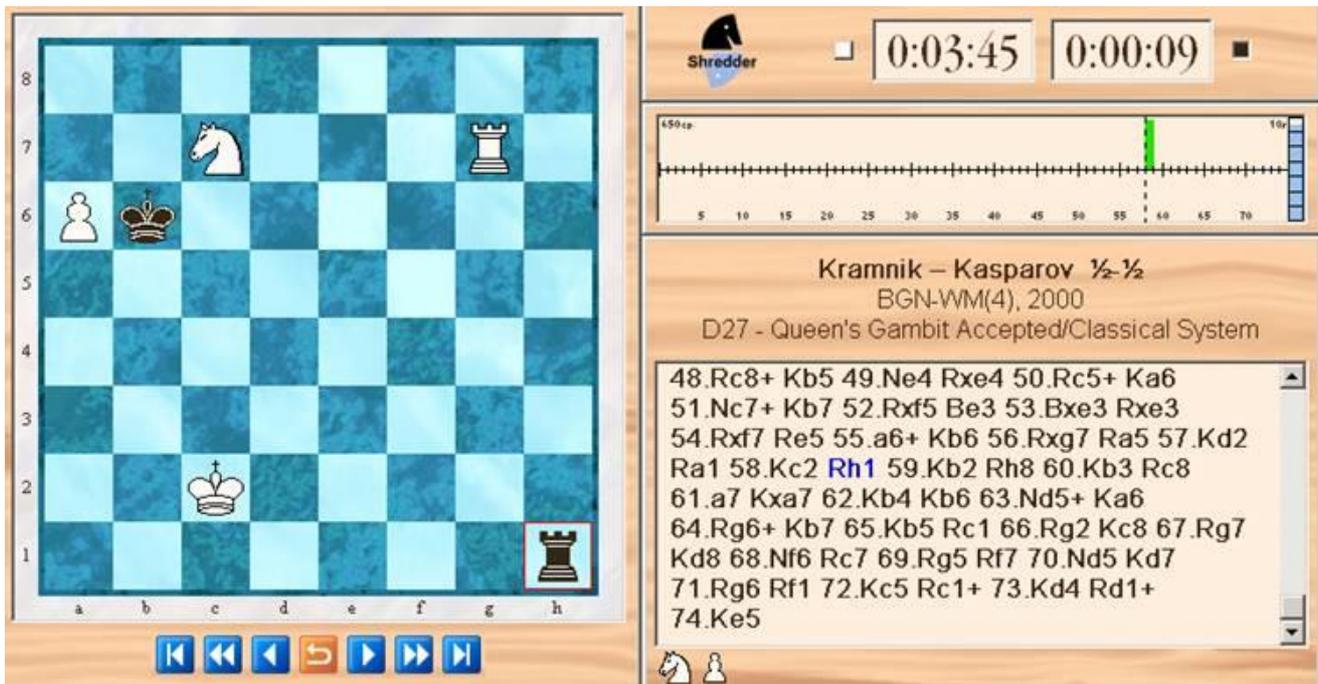
The endgame databases are huge databases containing all positions up to 6 men. For all positions the exact value of this position is stored. If a position is won, the exact number of moves until mate is stored allowing a chess program which uses the tablebases to precisely evaluate many positions with just a few pieces left on the board.

Shredder can directly access a huge online endgame database in the Internet where all available endgame databases with 3 - 6 pieces are stored. Simply click on "Online" in the [moves window](#) when it is set to endgame databases.

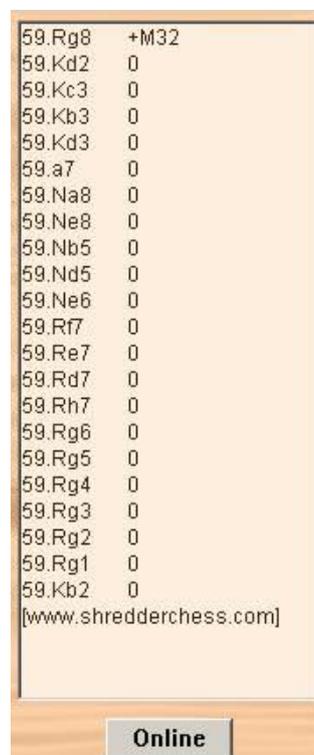
Remark: The "Online" button will pop-up below the "moves window", as soon as it recognizes an available endgame position.

Here is another stunning example, I accidentally uncovered, while browsing through the WCH game database.

If only Kramnik had Shredder 9 UCI at the time....



Being a Knight and a Pawn up, Kramnik failed to "materialize a drawn ending". Kasparov just played 59... Ra1-h1? (one of eleven possible losing moves, compared to five that lead to a draw), allowing Kramnik to force a win! How? Hours (days?) of human analysis or a click of a mouse, using Shredder 9 UCI with online endgame database access, which one do you prefer? I prefer both.... With a "slight advantage" towards the click.. Here it goes:



Wow! Only 59.Rg8! wins! Kramnik missed it and played 59.Kb2? Have there been any more mistakes in this exciting endgame? I leave the rest, along with the winning idea of 59.Rg8!, to you and - Shredder 9 UCI!

**10. The Endgame Oracle. Advertised as a new feature of Shredder, it possibly opens new frontiers in endgame research, related to tablebases. I refer the reader to Shredder's online help, for more info, as the feature requires pre-installed endgame tablebases (not included in the program download).**

Remark: I will update my review of the Endgame Oracle section, as soon as I locate and install the required tablebase files.

**11. External boards. DGT boards and SmartBoards are supported.**

**Conclusion:**

Shredder 9 UCI is a software masterpiece. "Miniature" in size, it unleashes the power of a giant. With free online support, it's an invaluable resource for endgame study, with almost infinite offline playing and analysis possibilities, powered by a multiple World Computer Chess Champion engine.

After approximately 5 hours of browsing (typing included) - I can recommend Shredder 9 UCI for all chess fans and professionals, players and trainers alike. The program worked flawlessly on my "stone age" test machine.

**Product link:** <http://www.shredderchess.com/chess-program/shredder-9-uci.html>