Motivation

What is Chess Forge and how does it help you study chess openings? The idea for this software arose when we realized that no existing tools or web sites were offering the exact kind of experience that we wanted.

ChessBase software, chess.com, chessable.com and, of course, leechess dot com have provided us with hours of enjoyment using their rich functionality but one specific kind of workflow was missing.

We wanted to be able to constantly verify our understanding of the variations that we were learning and how well we were memorizing them. We wanted to smoothly switch from manual review and verification to a test game against the chess engine.

Before Chess Forge, we would use leechess dot com to open or upload a PGN file of interest… Let’s get a small sample study created specifically for this video here…

We can now browse through the variations … We can turn the engine analysis on too...

Now, to verify our feel for a particular critical position, we would copy it into the analysis board and play against the computer.

However, this is a rather clunky, slow workflow that does not scale well.

Let’s see how Chess Forge streamlines the whole process. Here, we will skip Chess Forge’s rich browsing and editing features and will focus on just the basics of the training process…

Let’s open the same PGN as before, except that now this is with Chess Forge running on a Windows machine.

Assuming that we have already studied the variations, let’s check our understanding of the positions arising after exchanges on e4 (by the way, this is French Rubinstein studied from the Black’s perspective).

The position that you are now seeing on the screen is evaluated as equal in the books and the engines wholeheartedly agree.

In Chess Forge you would create a bookmark here and then start a training session… Ok, my move… I think I’ve seen f5 played in similar structures …

No? Well, Chess Forge tells me that f5 is not in my workbook and immediately rolls out Stockfish to play against me from here. I can click above to go back a move or two, and try again but … let’s continue …

Rook to d3 … well, looks like I’m losing here already. Uhm… just 2 moves from a position that was supposedly equal.

If we go back to the Workbook, we see that the move there was Rook f to d8. If we ask the engine, it will suggest the same. F5 was not losing however, I could still stay in the game…. Like so …

This little session taught me very quickly a couple of things that I didn’t explicitly get from reading the books or from browsing variations.

First, before playing f5 in this structure, make sure that you counter the white rook on the d file to prevent its uplift to the king side. Rook f to d8 was, therefore, the right move, maintaining equality.

And second, failing that, defend against the mating threats by protecting the e6 pawn thus preparing f6 as a response to Knight to g5.

That was just a trivial example, but that kind of a process has worked for us to a great effect in more advanced cases too.

You will find more details on Chess Forge in this channel’s other videos.