

NetChess

Version 5.1

Written by:

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INTRODUCTION:

NetChess is a spin-off from my Chess Recorder program. NetChess allows two payers to play interactively over any Microsoft networking product. (I.e., LanMan, Windows for Workgroups, or Windows NT)

NetChess runs on Windows 3.0, 3.1 and Windows NT. (Contact the author if you are interested in running an NT version of the Chess Recorder.)

For those users in a hurry to start, and familiar with Windows applications, feel free to jump right in. Type NETCHESS from the Windows File Run dialog. NetChess is straight forward enough that this manual is unnecessary.

YOU SHOULD HAVE:

After expanding the .ZIP file, you should have the following files:

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| NETCHESS.EXE | The NetChess Application |
| SETUP.EXE | The Setup utility |
| NETCHESS.HLP | The help file |

Quick Start Usage

Run NetChess from the File/Run menu of File Manager.

To make a connection, select the Network/Connect menu item.

From the Connection dialog, enter the IP address, or machine name of the machine you wish to connect to. Set the color of the pieces you wish to play with and click OK. If your opponent has entered your IP address or machine name correctly, and selected the opposite color, you will connect and may begin play.

Please take a moment to read the [possible connection problems](#) help page.

Possible Connection Problems

As with any network application there are several things which can go wrong. Here is a list of the most common problems, and their solution.

Problem: A connection is not made.

Possible Solution:

- Both sides have selected the same piece color
- One side has entered a machine name and the other has entered an IP address.

Problem: One player gets notification that the connection was made, but the other player does not.

Possible Solution:

- One side has entered an invalid IP address or computer name.

Problem: The connection drops

Possible Solution:

- This happens every once in a while when using machine names. If you use IP addresses, NetChess will use a winsock connection which is much more stable.

REGISTRATION:

If you find NetChess useful, please take a moment to send a \$15 check to:

Eric Churchill
23241 NE 73rd St.
Redmond, WA 98053

New users will receive an unrestricted copy of the most recent version of NetChess.

I will accept checks for non-US funds providing the following conditions are met:

- After the currency exchange to US dollars, I have at least \$15.
- If the check is drawn from a non-US bank, it is also in non-US funds. (ie, I will not accept a check drawn from a Berlin bank made out for US funds.)

If you are unsure of the exchange rates, email me and I will tell you the current rates to convert your currency to US dollars.

Please include the following information when registering:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Country: _____

Version Number: _____ Floppy Disk Size: _____

E-Mail address: _____

If you have email, and would like the new binaries emailed to you, which of the following will you accept:

UUENCODED binaries _____

CompuServe attached files: _____

The post office seems to take a fiendish delight in x-raying floppies. If at all possible, I would prefer to email binaries to you, rather than use the mail.

Comments:

Registered users of previous versions may receive an upgrade to version 5.1 for \$5. This minimal cost covers shipping and handling.

WHAT DOES IT DO:

The biggest plus of NetChess is that it allows you to play an opponent anywhere on your local area network and see your game on a GUI board. In addition to this, you can:

- Save games to a file to be finished later.
- Recall old games for study.
- Add new moves to the end of an existing game.
- Step back through an existing game and step through a new ending.
- Go to a specific move number in the current game.
- Print a listing of the moves to either a file or a printer.
- Print a character based copy of the board to either a file or printer.
- Rename existing games through the Save As dialog.
- Enter player names to be displayed on the screen and on printouts.
- Disable warning beeps.
- Change the notation from Algebraic to Coordinate to Long Form Algebraic notation.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

Requires Windows 3.0 or later, WfW or Windows NT. Your network must support either TCP/IP or NetBEUI.

A mouse is recommended, but not required.

Will run on EGA, VGA or SVGA monitors. Color is recommended, but not required.

SETTING UP NETCHESS:

First things, first. Make a backup copy of the NetChess floppy, and put the original away. Only use the copy.

If you are unfamiliar with the procedure for copying a diskette, insert the NetChess floppy into the floppy drive. Run the setup utility found on the floppy from File Manager.

If you are familiar with copying files, you may copy the files on the floppy to your hard drive and run them from there.

USING NETCHESS:

When NetChess first starts, you will be faced with a brand new chess board, and an empty box to the right.

The box to the right of the chess board will be where NetChess displays a list of the moves made in the current game. This box is called the Move Listbox.

To make a move, click on a piece with the mouse. The color of the piece will invert to show the piece has been selected. Move the mouse pointer to another square and click on the empty square. Providing the move is a valid one for this piece, it will be moved to the new location. At the same time, the move will be recorded in the Move Listbox.

Above the Move Listbox are 3 information fields. The top field displays which color is to move next. The second and third fields display the names of the players, if you have entered them.

Menus

The following will give you a brief idea of which menu item you may be looking for to provide a desired functionality.

File

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[Open](#)

[Save](#)

[Save As](#)

[Print](#)

[Exit](#)

Options

[Enter Names](#)

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Board

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Notation

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Network

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New Game

This will clear the chess board and the Move Listbox. All the pieces will be reset in preparation for a new game.

Open

Presents a standard Windows Open File dialog. You may click on a game file or type a valid game name into the edit field. Click on the OK button to open the new game.

Only files ending in the .GAM extension will be displayed in the Open dialog to make it easier for you to locate your games.

Save

Save the current game. If the game is a new game, and has not yet been given a name, it will be saved as DEFAULT.GAM. Once the game has been given a name, that name will always be used.

Save As

This dialog allows you to rename an existing .GAM file, or save a new game with a name other than DEFAULT.GAM. Type the desired name into the edit field and click the OK button.

Print

The print dialog allows you to specify what you would like to print, and where it will be printed.

You may either print a move listing, or a copy of the chess board.

You may send the output to either a printer or to a file.

If you are sending the output to a file, be sure to change the name of the file in the edit field if you want the output named something other than DEFAULT.TXT.

If the output is going to a printer, make sure to select the correct LPT port. LPT1 is by far the most common port, but some networks use LPT2. If you get an error with one, try the other.

Exit

Exit NetChess. If you have made changes to the current game, you will be prompted to save it before exiting.

Enter Names

There is a field above the Move Listbox which displays the names of the current players. This dialog will allow you to change the names displayed, and also the address for each player.

Detailed Player Info

This menu item will display a dialog box containing the name of the current .GAM file and the full name and address for each player.

No Warning Beeps

Clicking this menu item will disable the warning beeps. If you attempt an illegal move, NetChess will not allow it, but will also not beep to inform you of your error.

Paste Game to Clipboard

This menu item will give you a choice of pasting your game to the Windows clipboard in ASCII format. This is very useful if you are playing email chess. You can make your move and then use Paste and shift-insert to copy the moves to your email application.

Whole Game: Paste the entire move list.

Last X full moves: Paste only the last X (where you decide what X is) full moves to the clipboard.

Replace Tabs with Spaces: You have the option of replacing tab characters with spaces when you paste. By default, the moves are separated by tabs. If your email application does strange things with tabs, its best to replace them with spaces.

Single space between moves: By default there are several spaces between whites and blacks moves. This allows nice looking columns when you paste. However, if you are selecting to wrap the line after more than 1 full move, these several spaces will look strange. In this case, you should choose only a single space between moves.

Include board: You may include a character representation of the current board position when you paste. This is useful for people playing opponents on the CHESS-L list, or the news group REC.GAMES.CHESS.

No wrap: Do not start a new line when pasting. This will cause the entire move list to be placed on a single line. Your email editor will then handle the wrapping.

Wrap after X full moves: You decide where to wrap to the next line. If you enter 1, each full move will be on a new line. If you enter 5, you will have the first 5 moves on a single line before a new line is started.

Header: If you wish to have the game preceeded by text, enter it in the Header control. This text will appear before the board, or moves when you paste into your mail program.

Invert Board:

Selecting this menu item will invert the playing board. If the white pieces are at the bottom of the screen, selecting Invert Board will place the black pieces at the bottom of the screen.

Row and Column Labels:

Clicking this menu item will remove the row and column labels alongside the chess board. Clicking the menu item a second time will redraw the labels.

Set Colors:

This Popup menu item will give you the option to change the colors for:

White Pieces

Black Pieces

White Highlight

Black Highlight

White Squares

Black Squares

Selecting one of these menu items will give you a color dialog where you may select the color you would like to use for those pieces on the board. These color selections will be remembered when you exit and restart NetChess.

The Highlight color is the color on the left side of each piece, toward the center which gives the 3-D effect. If you prefer to have solid color pieces, set the color for the Piece, and Highlight to the same color. That will cause the pieces to be drawn with one color instead of two.

If you get your colors messed up and want them back to the defaults, use the **Reset to defaults** menu item to reset them.

Use Keyboard:

If you check this menu item, you will be presented with a keyboard selection icon. This is a square with red on the left and right. This square will move as you move the arrow keys on the keyboard. When you get to the piece you want to select, press the spacebar. Then move to the square you want to move to, and press the spacebar again.

This menu option is remembered for each invocation of NetChess.

Show Material Advantage:

Checking this menu item will present a small floating window with the captured pieces displayed. You can move this window to any location on the screen that you like. As long as NetChess has input focus, the Captured Pieces window will be visible.

Setup:

Clicking on Setup will reset the board to the default. You can then use the mouse to click on pieces to move them. To move a piece, click on it, and then on the square you wish to move to. If you want to remove the piece entirely from the board, click on the piece and then click in the region outside the playing surface. The piece will be removed.

If you wish to add pieces to the board, click on the piece you wish to add from the selection to the right of the board. Then click on the board to add the piece.

When you are finished setting the board up, click the Done menu item to resume play.

Algebraic:

This menu item is selected by default. It causes the Move Listbox to be filled with moves in the Algebraic notation. (ie. e4)

Coordinate:

This menu item causes the Move Listbox to be filled with moves in the Coordinate notation. (ie. e2-e4)

Long Form Algebraic:

This menu item causes the Move Listbox to be filled with moves in the Long Form Algebraic notation. (ie. Ra1-a5)

International Correspondence

This menu item causes the Move Listbox to be filled with moves in the International Correspondence notation. (ie. 5254)

Connect

This menu item will bring up the connection dialog which allows you to connect to your opponents machine and begin play. There are a few things you must know in order for this dialog to connect to your opponent.

Which color pieces do you want to play? One of you must select White and the other must select Black. (Obviously)

Enter your opponents IP address, or computer name in the text field. To find out what your computer name is, use the Network Applet in the Control Panel. **To provide a more stable link, it is strongly recommended you use IP addresses, rather than machine names.** Using IP addresses will cause NetChess to use winsock, rather than mailslots.

The *Minutes to wait for the connection* control allows you to wait as long as you want for the connection to be established. This is useful if you and your friend have an agreement to play at 1:00. You can start waiting for the connection at 1:00 and set the timer to wait for 20 or 30 minutes in case your opponent is late.

The *Time Limit* control allows you to set the length of the game. Due to the randomness of mailslots on Windows, this time will not be accurate to the second. During a 60 minute game it may vary by as much as 10 seconds between the two machines.

Chat

This menu item will bring up a chat dialog box. You may enter short messages here and send them to your opponent.

RE-CONNECTING A GAME:

First, why do games get disconnected? In order for the most people to be able to use NetChess, it was originally designed to use one of the simplest methods of network communication. That method is mailslots. On a quiet network, mailslots are quite reliable. However, if there is a lot of traffic on the net, they become less reliable. NetChess will not lose the connection if one or two messages are lost. If you start losing a bunch of messages, thats another story.

It is strongly recommended that you connect using IP addresses, rather than machine names. This will give you a much more robust network connection.

How will you know if a connection is lost? NetChess sends a heartbeat out every few seconds. If your copy of NetChess does not hear from your opponent at least once in 2 minutes, it will assume you have lost your connection and give you a message. You may also notice the connection is lost because it is taking a long time for your opponent to move. In this case, send him a chat message and see what is happening.

How do I reconnect once the connection is lost? Hopefully you will never have to do this, but if you do, follow these steps:

1. Both players select the Network/Disconnect menu item.
2. Both players save their game with the File/Save menu item.
3. The player playing White needs to copy his .GAM file to the opponents computer.
4. The player playing Black needs to load Whites .GAM file with the File/Open menu item.
5. Both players need to reconnect the network with the Network/Connect menu item. Make sure to select the same color pieces you were playing initially.
6. When prompted to reset the game prior to connecting, choose No.
7. You will now be connected and your boards will match. You're ready to play!

You might also find it helpful to read the page on [possible connection problems](#).

A WORD ON NOTATION:

There are several notation points to be mentioned in regards to the Move Listbox. These points are mentioned for those not familiar with chess recording notation.

If a piece is captured during a move, an 'x' is displayed. So, in Coordinate notation if a piece moves from square e3 to e4, and captures a piece in the process, the move is displayed as: e3xe4.

If an en passant capture is made, it is displayed as a normal piece move, but 'e.p.' follows the notation.

In the case of a pawn promotion, the move notation will be followed by '=Q' if you chose to promote the pawn to a Queen.

Currently there are 4 notations supported by NetChess. They are:

Algebraic

Coordinate

Long Form Algebraic

International Correspondence

REPORTING PROBLEMS OR FEATURE REQUESTS:

NetChess has been in use since 1991. It was heavily Beta tested for several months prior to that. It is believed to be stable and bug free. If you find a bug, please write up a brief reproduction scenario and mail it to:

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It would also be helpful if you would save the game at the point the error occurs and mail me a copy of the game on a floppy.

I do not promise that no bugs exist. I will promise to send you a fix as soon as I possibly can.

If you have features you would like to see, please email them to me. I will add them if they seem worthwhile.

Contacting the Author

Currently, I can be reached at the following e-mail addresses, in order of preference:

ericch@microsoft.com

75461,1640@compuserve.com

ericch@halcyon.com

I can be reached through snail mail at:

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If at all possible, I prefer to correspond through email.

