

Komodo 8 is champion in chess tournament

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Komodo won. This computer chess champion holds the top slot in computer chess rankings. The recent win was in last month's Season 7 of the Thoresen Chess Engines Competition, a computer chess tournament.

The Thoresen Chess Engines Competition is organized and maintained by Martin Thoresen in cooperation with Chessdom Arena. The goal is to give viewers a live broadcast of chess played between computer chess engines created by different programmers. One season is divided into several stages and lasts about three to four months.

Sebastian Anthony of *ExtremeTech* said the Komodo software "can reach an Elo rating as high as 3304—about 450 points higher than Kasparov, or indeed any [human](#) brain currently playing chess." (Elo was named after physics professor and chess player, Arpad Elo. It is a rating system for calculating relative players' skill levels in games like chess.) Komodo started in 2007 as a joint project by programmer Don Dailey and chess grandmaster Larry Kaufman.

Looking back on its origins, Kaufman said that at the start it was called "Doch" as an abbreviation for "Don's Chess", but, he said, "we learned that this name is not suitable in the German language." Kaufman suggested the name 'Komodo.'" The Komodo dragon is an unusually large lizard, and, said Kaufman, "dragon" suggests the Dragon Sicilian, "a popular [fighting](#) opening." Komodo improved at a fairly rapid clip, and Komodo 4 was their first commercial release, in November 2011. Komodo 6 was the last engine on which Dailey was the main programmer. He died in 2013. Mark Lefler, author of chess program "Now," was introduced as the new member of the Komodo team. The latest version, Komodo 8, is for Windows, Linux, Mac and Android, for \$59.96. Komodo 8 is promoted as a substantial improvement over Komodo 7a. Gains are in improved search, evaluation, time management and more efficient use of multiprocessing.

Analyzing the nature of Komodo 8, Anthony commented that "Kaufman is very good at evaluation—the value of a particular position of chess pieces—rather than depth (thinking dozens of moves ahead). Likewise, Komodo relies more on evaluation than depth, which results in it playing

an interesting, highly positional style. Seemingly, given Komodo's universal ranking as the top chess program, this evaluative technique seems to be working out quite well."

The Komodo site points out that Komodo is a chess engine and not a [chess](#) GUI. "Komodo requires the use of a third-party GUI. "The Komodo web site suggests a few GUIs which are available, some of them open source and of very [high](#) quality."

More information: — tcec.chessdom.com/

- www.computerchess.org.uk/cchl/4040/
- komodochess.com/
- www.inwoba.de/bayes.html

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