

Rob's Guide to Recording Your Games

I have been very surprised to see how many players leave their scoresheet lying around after their game has finished. Keeping track of your games is admittedly a bit of a chore (though one I enjoy), and you won't get a lot of value from the exercise until you have played quite a few games.

The first thing I do when I get home after a match (usually while eating my 'supper' – I leave home too early to eat beforehand), is to enter my game online. I quite often just use the Analysis feature in Chess.com, with the engine switched on. I do more detailed analysis later – e.g. comparing with Master games, but this first cut allows me to correct any mistakes in the scoresheet (we all make them!), and also to remember the end of the game, if I went below five minutes on the clock and stopped recording.

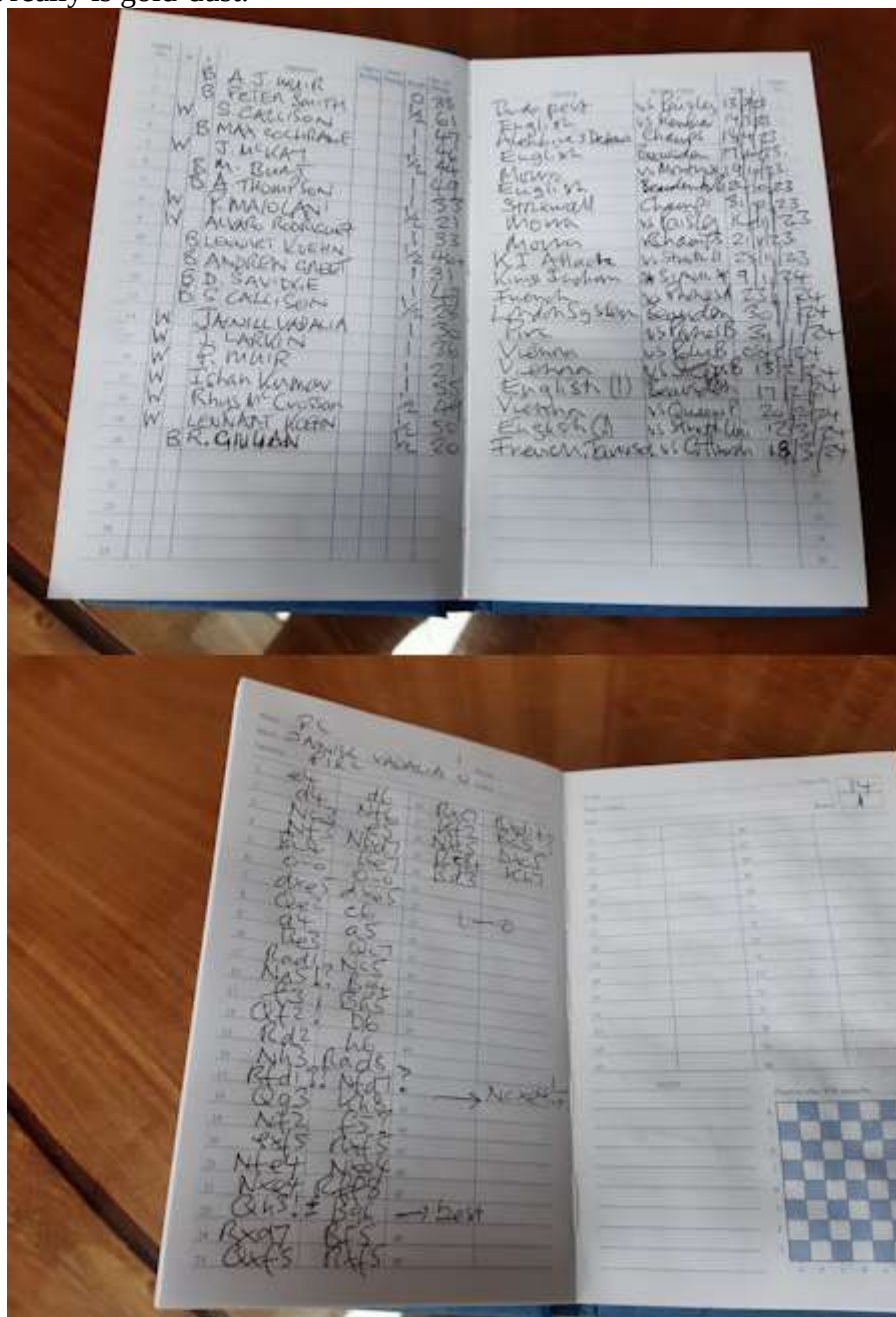
Paper.

For some reason, I started recording games right from the very beginning. Obviously, back then in the Dark Ages, the only option was on paper, so I took my scoresheet home, and copied it into a book. I am now on volume 21! (Some books are 50 games, some 100).



Score books like this are available from <https://chess.co.uk/>, amongst many other suppliers. I recommend getting a hardback version that will last longer.

Even if you decide to keep an electronic version of your games database, I still recommend keeping the paper version as well, as a back up, should you lose your data, or Chess.com cease to exist (unlikely?!). It really is gold-dust.



Electronic.

The software used by all chess professionals is [ChessBase](#). While I accept that it is expensive, it comes with a reference database of millions of games, going back as far as 1475! – although serious recording of games in bulk seems to start around 1837.

You can create your own databases of games as well. I recommend creating a database of games as White, and a separate one where you played Black. This means that you can examine the openings ‘tree’ for a selection of games – e.g. all your games where you played the Caro-Kann.

There are far too many features to go into here, but there are plenty of videos on YouTube to show you how to do things.

Snapshot of my database MyGames Black:-

The screenshot shows the MyGames Black software interface. At the top, there's a menu bar with 'File', 'Home', 'Statistics', 'Games', 'Players', 'Opening Keys', and 'View'. Below the menu is a toolbar with various icons for clipboard operations, board display, filtering, editing, and tournament management. The main area is a table of chess games with columns for game number, white player, black player, result, moves, ECO, tournament, date, and VCS status.

Text	Games	Players	Tournaments	Annotator	Sources	Teams	Game Tag	Openings				
Num...	White	Elo W	Black	Elo B	Result	Moves	ECO	Tournament	Date	VCS	R	
525	Giulian,R		Colston,R		1/2-1/2	20	C05	vs Giffnock	18.03.2024	vCs		
524	Callison,S		Colston,R		1/2-1/2	28	D02	Bearsden Championships	30.01.2024	vcs		
523	Savidge,D		Colston,R		0-1	47	C02	vs Phones A	23.01.2024	s		
522	Greet,A		Colston,R		0-1	31	E97	Bearsden (SIMUL)	09.01.2024	s		
521	Koehn,L		Colston,R		1/2-1/2	46	A07	vs Strathclyde Uni	28.11.2023	vs		
520	Thompson,A		Colston,R		0-1	33	D00	Bearsden Championships	31.10.2023	vcs		
519	Burt,M		Colston,R		0-1	49	A36	vs Bearsden B, GL	24.10.2023	vCs		
518	Cochrane,M		Colston,R		0-1	46	A22	vs Bearsden B, DL	17.10.2023	vcs		
517	Smith,P		Colston,R		1/2-1/2	61	A14	vs Renfrewshire	14.03.2023	s		
516	Muir,A		Colston,R		1-0	38	A52	vs Paisley	13.03.2023			
515	McIntyre,J		Colston,R		0-1	25	A29	vs Phones	22.02.2023			
514	Mollison,J		Colston,R		1-0	37	A12	vs Dalmuir Chess.com	07.02.2023	vcs		
513	Watt,D		Colston,R		0-1	57	C02	Bearsden Championships	17.01.2023	vcs		
512	Madhavan,S		Colston,R		1-0	50	C11	Hamilton Open	08.01.2023	vcs		
511	Keenan,A		Colston,R		0-1	35	A06	Hamilton Open	07.01.2023			
510	Nisbet,A		Colston,R		1/2-1/2	21	D02	vs East Kilbride	15.12.2022			
509	Murdochy,S		Colston,R		0-1	31	A52	vs Cathcart	29.11.2022	s		
508	Watson-McFie,J		Colston,R		0-1	42	C00	vs Renfrewshire	15.11.2022			
507	Davies,A		Colston,R		1-0	32	A52	vs Hamilton	27.10.2022	vcs		
506	Goodall,A		Colston,R		0-1	15	B00	Bearsden Championships	25.10.2022			

As you can imagine, it took quite a long time to key in nearly 1,000 games from my earlier career with Dudley, Imperial College, Hampstead etc.!

Free Alternatives

Chess.com offers a 'Library' facility. This is well described in this [YouTube video](#). The same principles apply, and while you can organise your libraries however you wish, separating them by colour remains a strong recommendation.

There are other free databases too.

Whatever you use, you can also export individual games in the PGN format, which will give you a security copy.

Conclusion

Keep your games! The benefits of doing this might not be apparent straight away, but if you have a long career in chess, which I hope you do, you will benefit from the time devoted to this.