

CZUBATRONIC 2400 Release Notes

Newest version first. The beta license and the support contact at the end apply to every version.

Version 0.9.14 Beta

Release date: 27 September 2026, Brandenburg

Emulated chess computers (expert)

- Every batch file that starts MessChess now carries `-nowc` (Franz Huber, 2026-09-27): without it the emulator saved the options of our batch files, video none among them, into the machine's ini file of the user's own CB-Emu at exit, and that machine's window stayed away in Arena and in MessChess itself afterwards, our plugin's name stuck too. 0.9.13's batch files did this; the ini files they rewrote are put back the first time 0.9.14 starts with that CB-Emu folder, and nothing of ours is saved into a CB-Emu again.
- MessNew machines (Franz Huber's newer MAME build, the entries marked new in MessChess.lst) get CZUBATRONIC's display-tap plugin too: it speaks both Lua interfaces now. Franz asked why the `ch3008.bat` had none.
- The `IMPORT MESSCHESS` list is sorted by the computers' full names (Franz).
- No clock runs before White's first move, as in the club and in most programs: the first move of the game costs nothing, the clocks start with it (a reader).
- The Mephisto Milano tells its search information. After its move, CZUBATRONIC's plugin presses the machine's INFO key three times on the app's request (a command file the plugin polls, the presses timed in the machine's own frames), and the pages that come by on its LCD, the line it expects, its evaluation with the depth, the positions it searched, are read into the engine display's numbers and the TABLE row: `+0.12` at depth 5 with `1...e5 2.e4 Nf6 3.Nf3` and 14k positions, about twelve seconds after the move, while you think about yours. Pressing INFO during the search ends the search on the MM V, so the pages are read after the move; other machines follow as their keys are worked out, and a machine with no such keys shows its display alone.

Version 0.9.13 Beta

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Saved engines (expert)

- An engine can be saved with its UCI options under a name of your own, the way Arena and Shredder keep engines: `MM5 [level13]`, `MM5 [level16]`, `Schach III [hash, 64plies]`, as many as you like from one file. Set the options in `ENGINE SETTINGS`, `UCI OPTIONS`, and press `SAVE AS ENGINE`; loading a saved engine starts its file, sends its options and shows its name on the display, in the notation and in the PGN. `SAVED ENGINES`, behind `OPTIONS` and in the `ENGINE` chooser, lists them: `NEW` takes an engine file, `USE` starts one, `RENAME`, `REMOVE`, `SET AS STANDARD` remembers one for the next start. In `ENGINE MATCH SETUP` a `SAVED` key beside `BROWSE` picks a saved engine for either side, so a series can be Tacticon against MM5 at level 3. While a saved engine runs, `APPLY` in `UCI OPTIONS` saves the values to it. The everyday keys are unchanged; nothing of this is needed for the bundled engines.
- `CHESS COMPUTERS` in the `ENGINE` chooser: thirteen emulated classics by name (Mephisto III-S Glasgow, MM V, Milano; Novag Constellation Expert; Saitek Analyst D++; Fidelity Designer 2000, 2100, 2265 and 2325 Display; Conchess Plymate Victoria, Amsterdam and Glasgow; Tasc R30), run in the user's CB-Emu (MessChess), whose folder is asked for once. A computer plays at its own level and pace (go infinite, `MOVE NOW` stops it) and shows only its move; a move that took time without any search output is no longer taken for a book move. `ADD TO SAVED ENGINES` keeps computers for matches and for a level of their own.

- `IMPORT MESSCHESS` in `SAVED ENGINES` takes the emulated chess computers of a MessChess (CB-Emu) folder: pick its `MessChess.lst`, choose the machines by name, and each becomes a saved engine with a batch file of its own in CZUBATRONIC's settings folder, carrying the emulator's full path (a batch file that relies on the current directory fails on a Windows where `cmd` is told not to search it). The engine file dialogs list `.bat` and `.cmd` files beside `.exe`.
- The Chess Computers edition, a test build for the readers who asked and not the product page's download: `installer\build_release.ps1 -ChessComputers` packages Franz Huber's MessChess trimmed to the thirteen computers (the emulator, its chessengine plugin, the ROM sets, and one batch file per computer in a form that runs from any folder, made by `tools\make_chess_computer_bundle.py` from a CB-Emu installation) as `_internal\cb_emu`, and `--smoke-test` starts the MM V from it. In that edition `CHESS COMPUTERS` asks for nothing: pick a computer and it plays. The standard build carries none of it.
- An emulated computer runs inside CZUBATRONIC, with no window of the emulator's: every batch file starts MessChess with `-video none -sound none -output console` (files already in the settings folder are brought up to date at start), and the machine's own display is read from the emulator's output lines and shown on the LCD's first row, in view whatever the rows below it show, as the machine shows it: the MM V's `PLAY` at power-on, `E2E4` as your move goes in, `E7E5` as it answers, the Glasgow's running dash while it thinks (Arne, 2026-09-27: the computer's output belongs on CZUBATRONIC's display, "we already made a user interface").
- The character LCDs too: CZUBATRONIC ships a small MAME plugin of its own (`retro_chess_app/data/mame_plugin/czubatronic`, loaded beside the chessengine plugin) that reports the display RAM of the machine's HD44780 controller, so the Mephisto Milano's two rows of sixteen appear on the LCD as the machine writes them, its move under consideration, the opening's name in German, its clocks; the Saitek Analyst's likewise. The bundle carries the plugin in the emulator's plugins folder; for a user's own CB-Emu the batch file names the app's plugin folder beside the emulator's, and nothing in the CB-Emu folder changes. The Tasc R30's graphic LCD holds pixels, not characters, and stays without. Below a computer's display the remaining rows always rotate through CZUBATRONIC's own lines, whatever `ROTATE` says (Arne: the machine's output first, the rest still coming by). The other two views show the machine's display in plain characters: `TABLE`, which has no depths to show for these computers, logs every text the display held since power-on with the time it appeared (`0:04 E2E4`, `0:09 E7E5`, the Milano's two rows joined with a bar), and `RAW LOG` carries the decoded display lines between the protocol lines, each with its time.

From the readers

- A click on a move in the list no longer leaves a blinking caret there.
- The replay status says how to leave: `CONTINUE TO PLAY ON`.
- Statuses too wide for the `SYSTEM STATUS` window go on two lines, broken at a space; the longest ones are shorter (`COACH ON`, `WHITE TO MOVE`, `YOU PLAY WHITE`).
- The setup palette is laid out like a cockpit: titled sections `PIECES`, `POSITION`, `SIDES` and `ENGINE`, the labels in a column at the left and the controls aligned at the right, keys of one height for a touchscreen, `START PLAYING THIS POSITION` at the bottom right. On a small screen or a tablet it is compact, smaller pieces and tighter keys, and if even that is taller than the screen the content scrolls with the console's bar. The twelve piece buttons are two rows of the pieces themselves, the set on the board, white above black; `ERASE PIECE`, `CLEAR BOARD` and `START POSITION` sit under them. The chosen piece is named in `SYSTEM STATUS`.
- `NEW GAME` clears the engine display: the previous game's numbers no longer rotate on it.
- The `-` and `+` keys of a time per move step by a second (tenths can still be typed), and typing or stepping a depth or a time selects that control, as choosing a clock selects the clock.

Version 0.9.12 Beta

Release date: 26 September 2026, Brandenburg

Keys

- The captions printed above the keys, on the deck, under the engine display and under the move list, are drawn as smooth, antialiased text now instead of Tk's pixelated label text (a reader found the old captions unworthy of a professional program), and in a printed face: Bahnschrift, Windows' DIN, with a little letter spacing, like the legends on a chess computer's keypad. Same size, same cream; the keys keep their pitch.

Display

- Figurine notation in the move list: the piece letters are chess glyphs (from Segoe UI Symbol, a Windows font), NOTATION in OPTIONS switches between FIGURINES and LETTERS, remembered. PGN files keep letters either way. The list's columns are tab stops now, so they line up whatever the glyphs' width.
- The SYSTEM STATUS window's caption is printed at the deck captions' size, and its status text a point larger, in a window of the same size (the caption was the smallest text of the program).

Coach

- COACH, a fourth key with an LED under the engine display: while it is on, a move of yours that costs 1.7 pawns or more against the move the engine expected of you is called out on the display (COACH: BAD MOVE, Qh4 LOSES 2.3, BETTER: Nf3); SYSTEM STATUS asks TAKE IT BACK? YES / NO, the COACH key's LED flashes green and the better move flashes as green dots on the board while the question stands, and the engine holds its reply until you answer. No pop-up: the console speaks through its displays and keys.
- YES and NO: two keys under the engine display, the way the old computers answered a question on their display; the coach's question is the first. TAKEBACK and MOVE NOW answer the coach's question the same way. Six keys share the row now (DISPLAY, ROTATE, LIGHT, COACH, YES, NO); the key that lights the LCD reads LIGHT instead of BACKLIGHT. The verdict comes from the engine's own search, so after a book move the coach stays silent. Remembered between starts.

Hints

- HINT shows its move on the board: the move indicator's LEDs (or squares) flash on the from and to squares for a few seconds, and SYSTEM STATUS reads HINT: Nf3, instead of a text panel above the move list.

Analysis

- ANALYZE is continuous analysis of whatever position is on the board: step through the move list with the replay keys, make a move or take one back, and the engine's line on the display follows the position (until now it searched the game's position once, which a replay left behind). The key reads STOP ANALYSIS while it runs. While the analysis runs the engine does not play; HINT shows the first move of its line, and MOVE NOW ends the analysis and lets the engine play.

Engine matches

- PAUSE MATCH holds a match once the move in progress is played (or between the games of a series) and becomes CONTINUE MATCH; no clock time is charged while it waits. STOP MATCH ends the match, and CLOSE appears only when nothing runs, so the two no longer do the same thing. A reader running matches asked for both.
- When a match is over, stopped or finished, the mode from before it comes back: a game against the engine can be continued without switching from Human vs Human first. The engine does not move on its own after a match; your move, or MOVE NOW, starts it.
- During a match, and after it for as long as its game is on the board with the match panel open, the engine display and the status window name the two engines of the match (PIONEERCPP VS TACTICON) instead of the program's own engine; CLOSE hands the board back to it.

Positions

- Positions load from FEN and EPD files and from the clipboard. OPEN accepts .fen and .epd files as well as .pgn: the first position in the file becomes the start position of a new game. In the setup palette, LOAD FEN / EPD FILE and a FEN field (paste or type a position and press SET; PASTE takes the clipboard's FEN straight to the board, COPY puts the board's FEN on the clipboard) put a position on the setup board, where it can still be changed before START PLAYING THIS POSITION. Four CASTLING switches show and set the castling rights: a FEN brings its own, a hand-built position has none until switched on. The palette is sized from its content now, so it fits at any display scaling. A FEN with fewer than six fields is completed; an EPD's operations (bm, id and the like) are ignored.

Version 0.9.11 Beta

Release date: 24 September 2026, Brandenburg

Engines

- ucinewgame is sent to the engine once per game: before the first search after a new game, an opened PGN, a set-up position, an engine change or the next game of a series, followed by isready as the protocol asks. Until 0.9.10 it went before every search, so an engine that keeps a game of its own, such as the emulated dedicated computers run through CB-Emu or MessChess, restarted its game at every move and replayed the whole move list in edit mode; a reader running those engines reported it. A takeback stays within the game: the engine simply receives the shorter move list. Ordinary UCI engines never showed the difference, but they too now see one game instead of a new one at every move.

Version 0.9.10 Beta

Release date: 24 September 2026, Brandenburg

Fixes

- The three keys under the engine display, VIEW, ROTATE and BACKLIGHT, are back. The console scrollbar of 0.9.9 asked for a height of its own, seven centimetres as every Tk canvas does, and that request became the move list's: the list could not shrink below it, so on most windows the keys were pushed out of the panel, the more so with a larger text or after a drag of the grip.
- In the TABLE view of the engine output a long main line wraps under the MAIN LINE column only while that leaves room for a few moves. With a large text in a narrow panel the continuation now goes under the depth column instead of becoming a tower of fragments that read as blank rows.

Version 0.9.9 Beta

Release date: 24 September 2026, Brandenburg

Control deck

- The deck's keys are the controls of a classic chess computer: a small black rounded key of hard, shining plastic with its caption printed above it in cream, the same key as under the display, without the LED. Every key has the same width, so the keys sit on one pitch; a long caption goes on two lines above its key (ENGINE / SETTINGS, PLAY FROM / HERE). One row on a normal window, two at most on a small one: NEW OPEN SAVE SETUP, TAKEBACK HINT MOVE NOW RESIGN FLIP, ANALYZE PLAY FROM HERE, ENGINE ENGINE SETTINGS MATCH BOOK, OPTIONS; one row down to a window 960 pixels wide (the engine match key reads MATCH now, the dialog is still ENGINE MATCH). SCHEME, PIECES, INDICATOR, MODE and ABOUT have left the deck for the OPTIONS key. The DCS Chess logo stays beside the deck at the right. The board and the display get the room. Its dialog holds the scheme, the piece set, the move indicator (LED or SQUARE), the mode (Human vs Engine or Human vs Human), the beep volume and the ABOUT button. Readers of the forums asked for this: settings nobody

changes during play took a row of their own.

- The beep's volume is adjustable there: OFF, QUIET, NORMAL or LOUD; a sample plays when you change it. The default is a little quieter than 0.9.8's.
- The number fields in NEW GAME, ENGINE SETTINGS, POSITION SETUP, the custom game clock and UCI OPTIONS have a big – and + key either side of the value instead of a spin box's tiny arrows, so they work on a touchscreen; the value can still be typed.
- Under the move list four keys like a CD player's, ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■, the same classic chess computer keys as the deck's and no wider than the keys themselves, in place of PREV and NEXT: to the start of the game, one move back, one forward, to the end. A finished game can be reviewed with them straight away; a game in progress is left alone.

Board

- The move indicator's LEDs are small dots of the brightest red on the grid crossings around the from and to squares, one per crossing like a modern electronic board's and with no glow, so they no longer lie over a knight; BOARD LEDS in OPTIONS sets them BRIGHT or DIM.
- The scrollbars are the console's own: a dark recessed channel with a slider of hard black plastic, the same material as the keys, in the move list, the engine output's TABLE and RAW LOG views, the UCI OPTIONS, ABOUT and interview windows. It drags, a click in the channel moves a page, and the mouse wheel works as before. The grey Windows bar was the last thing that broke the illusion of hardware.
- Resting the pointer on the DCS Chess logo (or tapping it) greys the logo out and brings out a key in the middle of it, BUY US A COFFEE, which opens the Buy Me a Coffee page; the ABOUT dialog's SUPPORT DCS CHESS opens the same page.
- Every dialog window has the console's dark title bar now, and the drop-down selectors in the dialogs (the game clock, Pioneer's level, an engine's choices) are in the console's colours instead of Tk's grey.

Engine matches

- A match can be a series: GAMES in ENGINE MATCH SETUP, up to 1000. The colours alternate each game, the ENGINE MATCH panel shows the game count and the score, every game is appended as PGN to one file in the matches folder under CZUBATRONIC's settings folder, and the series gets a line in results.txt there; a dialog sums it up at the end. STOP MATCH ends the series with what has been played.
- The fourth bundled engine can be chosen in the match dialog: the BROWSE button had been drawn over ZUKERTORT. The number fields there have the big – and + keys too.

Remembered between starts

- The window's size, position and maximised state are restored at the next start (fitted to the screen if it changed), so the saved panel split and text size mean something again. The scheme, the piece set, the move indicator and the beep level are remembered too.

Display

- The engine display never has fewer than three rows, whatever the panel's height and text size: its box keeps room for three rows at a readable dot size (64 px), and on a lower box the dots shrink before a row is lost. The + key next to MOVE HISTORY enlarges the text again; a saved wish for fewer display lines than that minimum had left it doing nothing. And a larger text no longer widens the right-hand panel: the two text boxes used to ask for 36 characters' width, which grew with the font and pushed the panel out over the board; they take the panel's width now.

Version 0.9.8 Beta

Release date: 23 September 2026, Brandenburg

Sound

- The beep sounds now. In 0.9.7 it never did, on any machine: the sound call refused to play from memory without waiting, and the program took that as "no sound device". The tone is played from a background thread now, a little longer (90 ms) and louder; a move gives one, check two.

Engines

- A fourth bundled engine, ZUKERTORT: one of playchessgate.com's historical personality engines, the play of Johannes Zukertort recreated from his games on the Pioneer engine technology. Choose it with ENGINE, or as a side in ENGINE MATCH. Like CAPA96 and Tacticon it plays at the explicit depth or time per move from ENGINE SETTINGS; its own Skill Level (800 to 3000) and Style Weight options are set in UCI OPTIONS.

Version 0.9.7 Beta

Release date: 23 September 2026, Brandenburg

Engine output

- ENGINE OUTPUT has three views, cycled with the VIEW key under the box: three keys in the style of the classic chess computers, each a red LED, a printed label and a long thin key. VIEW's label names the current view; the choice is remembered. DISPLAY, the new default, is a dot-matrix LCD in the manner of the classic chess computers: at least 20 columns of 5x7 dots on a grey-green pane, the dots growing with the panel, the rows with the box (drag the grip), and more columns when the box is wide but low. It shows the latest depth's numbers (score, depth/selective depth, time; nodes and speed), then the main line wrapped to the module, page by page, rotating every two seconds and carrying on after the search; a box tall enough for everything shows it all at once. TABLE is the Arena-style line per depth of 0.9.5, now with every depth kept, long main lines wrapped under the MAIN LINE column and a scrollbar like the move list's; RAW LOG the engine's own text, scrolling too.
- The chess clock is one sheet of smoked glass now: the CHESS CLOCK title, both displays with WHITE and BLACK and the control line are printed on one pane of black glass behind one thin metal bezel with rounded corners; the panel's own frame around it is gone. The LCD sits behind the same kind of window. The recess throws its shadow in from the top, the polished edge of the glass catches the light and a soft reflection lies across the upper part: displays behind heavy glass, sunk into the console, instead of flat on the panel.
- The ENGINE box and COMPUTER STATUS are gone: they repeated what the clock's control line, the status bezel and the display already said. The display's top rows now carry the engine and its side (CAPA96 · BLACK READY), whose move and the opening; the search readout follows, fixed under them when the module is tall enough and page by page when it is not. Static, the live search comes first, then whose move, the engine and the opening.
- A panel width dragged in a maximised window no longer squeezes the board in a smaller one: the width in use is the saved preference clamped to what the window leaves for the board, re-applied on every resize. The fonts and the clock grow at 60% of the panel's growth, capped by the panel's height, and the LCD's dots have a maximum size; a wide box gets a wider module instead.
- The upper fascia is a nameplate strip now: a hair lighter towards its upper surface, darker towards the bottom, a fine highlight along the upper edge and a darker lower edge that gives it thickness; the SYSTEM STATUS window is a small piece of smoked glass with a tiny LED behind it. The text-size messages no longer appear there.
- The right-hand panel frames hardware, not sections: the thin rules under ENGINE OUTPUT and MOVE HISTORY, the grip's line and the panel's own border are gone; the clock, the LCD, the LEDs and the keys give the panel its structure.
- Important: the two grips are still there but no longer visible. To make the right-hand panel wider or narrower, move the pointer slowly across the gap between the board and the panel until it becomes a horizontal double arrow, then drag. To share the space between the engine output and the move list, move the pointer across the gap between the display's keys and MOVE HISTORY until it becomes a vertical double arrow, then drag up or down. The manuals have a section on this, "Finding the grips".

- The board's move LEDs are the same LEDs as on the display's keys: a glow, the lens with its dark rim, a shine.
- One chassis: the brown panel around the board is gone, the board is mounted straight into the dark chassis with a hairline of depth, and the clock, the display and the move history sit on that same chassis, no bay of their own. The bottom controls sit on a lower control fascia in the header's material made darker: a fine cool highlight along its upper edge, the shadow of the edge below it, the rest flat and quiet. No frames around sections, only around the physical parts.
- A new piece set, 2D GLOSSY, in the PIECES menu: glossy Staunton pieces with a dark outline, cut from a rendered sheet, scaled by their king like the current set and standing on one baseline; the bishops' heads retouched where the render had drawn a groove from the ball down to the cross. It is the set the program starts with; 2D CURRENT and the others stay in the menu.
- The control panel's keys sit in clusters with a wider gap between them, so a key is found by its group rather than by reading every legend: NEW OPEN SAVE SETUP, then TAKEBACK HINT MOVE NOW RESIGN FLIP, then ANALYZE PLAY FROM HERE PREV NEXT on the first row; the engine keys, the SCHEME, PIECES, INDICATOR and MODE selectors and ABOUT on the second. The clusters follow one another across as few rows as the window's width allows, a cluster moving to the next row whole: two rows in full screen, three in a window of 1300 or 1400 pixels. PREV and NEXT have left the deck for the move list (below). The DCS Chess logo is a little larger now and sits at the right, centred on the rows beside it, with room around it; where the window is narrow, the upper rows run the full width above it.
- The control panel's buttons are keys too: raised caps in the console's colour with the legend printed on them, a lit top edge, a visible front and a shadow on the panel; they lighten under the pointer and sink while pressed.
- The move list is written on a sheet of its own: a surface a shade lighter than the chassis inside a dark recess line, with margins for the text, its colour mixed from each scheme's own so it fits every scheme. Under it sit PREV and NEXT, two small keys with an arrow beside each legend; stepping through a game now shows each replayed move on the board's move indicator, LED or square, which stayed dark in replay before.
- The splash screen carries the DCS Chess logo, big, in its bottom-left corner under the prompt; the living board sits a little lower, clear of the line above the title, brighter and with a soft light across it from the upper left. Closing the program shows a matching card for two seconds: the shutdown sequence (engine stopped, settings kept, goodbye) and the logo; any key or click ends it at once.
- The beep is the console's own: a short plain tone for a move and two for check, instead of the Windows system sound.
- The message boxes are the console's own: a dark panel in the scheme's colours inside a thin bronze rim, a small LED (green for a message, amber for a warning or a question, red for an error) and the title in the section-title gold, the message in cream, and keys like the control deck's. They open centred on the window, stay on top of it and block it until answered; Enter answers with the default key, Escape or the close button with the cancel answer. Until now these were the bright standard Windows boxes.
- Two more keys beside it, their LEDs lit while on: ROTATE (off, the readout is static: the numbers on the first line and the main line below, cut where the box ends) and BACKLIGHT. Backlit, the LCD takes the scheme's colour: amber on WALNUT, green on GREEN, white dots on bright blue on BLUE and GRAPHITE (red is no colour for an LCD). Both are remembered.

Version 0.9.6 Beta

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Display

- The chess clock is a fluorescent display now: every lit segment throws a soft halo onto the glass, the phosphor has a hot centre, and the unlit segments stay as dark ghosts. Until now the digits were flat rectangles in one colour. The colour follows the scheme: amber on WALNUT, red on GRAPHITE, green on GREEN and BLUE.

- The thin vertical line between the board and the right-hand panel is gone. The grip is still there (the pointer becomes a double arrow on it); it just draws nothing.

Engine

- A game clock means the engine plays to the clock. Choosing any game clock switches the engine control to `USE GAME CLOCK`, so the engine searches as deep as its share of the time allows instead of stopping at a fixed depth; choosing `No Clock` brings the previous control back. In `ENGINE SETTINGS` and `SETUP` the `FIXED DEPTH` and `TIME / ENGINE MOVE` choices are greyed while a game clock is selected.

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Panels

- The right-hand panel can be widened: the thin vertical grip between the board and the panel drags to the left, the board yields, and the clock digits and the text of the move history and engine output grow with the panel. On large or high-resolution screens (a Mac display, for example) the panel and its fonts were too small. The width is remembered. The panel's height is the board's, so the engine output and the move history share what is left below `COMPUTER STATUS`: the output keeps its lines as long as the move list has its minimum, then gives lines, and when even the minimums no longer fit the text stops growing (the `+` button says so) rather than the engine output disappearing.
- `ENGINE OUTPUT` is structured the way Arena shows it: one line per depth with depth and selective depth, score, time, nodes and the main line with move numbers from the position searched, the newest line at the bottom, as many lines as the box has room for (drag the grip above `MOVE HISTORY` for more). The lines and the `COMPUTER STATUS` numbers follow the search while the engine thinks; until now they only changed when the move arrived. `RAW LOG` still shows the engine's own text, now the last 60 lines, wrapped at the words.
- The chess clock shows hours: `1:40:59` instead of `100:59`, which the four-digit display had cut into nonsense for thinking times above an hour. The display has six digits now; below an hour it reads `45:59` as before.
- `+` and `-` next to `MOVE HISTORY` change the text size of the move history and the engine output in one-point steps, independently of the panel width; remembered as well.

Version 0.9.4 Beta

Release date: 22 September 2026

Game clock

- Any classical time control: `CUSTOM . . .` in the game clock list (New Game, Position Setup, Play From Here) asks for X moves in Y minutes (0 moves = the whole game), an increment per move, and then A moves in B minutes more (0 = the rest of the game), unused time carrying over. For example 40 moves in 5 minutes then 20 in 2, 60 moves in 60 minutes, or 40/40. The chess clock panel shows the control and the moves to the next time control for both sides, the computer budgets its thinking time from the real moves to the next control, and the saved PGN carries the `TimeControl` tag.
- The preset `40 MOVES / 120 MIN` was in truth 120 minutes for the whole game; it is now `40 MOVES / 120 MIN + 60 MIN`: 40 moves in two hours, then an hour for the rest of the game.

Appearance

- Splash music: J.S. Bach, Cello Suite No. 1 in G, Sarabande, performed by John Michel (a public domain recording), plays while the splash is shown and stops the moment it ends, whether by click, key or timeout. It uses Windows' own media interface, so nothing is installed; on a computer without sound there is simply no music. The

splash now stays for up to ten minutes and shows three classic games in turn (the Opera game, the Immortal game, the Evergreen game).

- New splash screen: instead of pieces bouncing about, a real game runs at speed on a tilted, half-transparent board behind the start-up texts, with the current piece set: Morphy's Opera game (Paris 1858), captures, queen sacrifice and mate, looping.

Controls

- **MOVE NOW** has a second function (Franz): on your own turn the button reads **ENGINE MOVE** and makes the engine play your move; you take the other colour. Press it again after the reply and the engine plays on, so switching sides mid-game or letting the engine make several moves in a row no longer needs **SETUP**. While the engine thinks it reads **MOVE NOW** and interrupts the search as before. **F** does the same.

Panels

- The chess clock panel is always on (Franz). Without a game clock it shows move times: the side to move counts up from 00:00, so you see how long the engine needs at a given depth, the other side shows the time its last move took; under **TIME / ENGINE MOVE** the engine's display counts down from its time per move. With a game clock it shows the clock as before.
- The thin line between **ENGINE OUTPUT** and **MOVE HISTORY** is a grip: drag it down for more engine output (the principal variation and the raw log get room), up for more move list. The setting is remembered.

Engines

- Tacticon updated to the twin build v2.02 (the version with the draw fix). Same engine, same maximum of 7 plies; it is bundled under the same name, so nothing changes in the dialogs.
- Komodo (and any engine that quits when its input is closed) can be added: the UCI check used to write `uci`, `isready` and `quit` in one go and close the engine's input, which made Komodo 14 exit silently, so it was refused with `Engine did not return uciok`. The check now talks to the engine like a game does: `uci`, wait for `uciok`, `isready`, wait for `readyok`, then `quit`, with the same 20 seconds of patience, and it still reports the engine's own error when one dies (a Capa build without its book).
- **UCI OPTIONS** in **ENGINE SETTINGS**: every option the running engine advertises (check boxes, numbers with the engine's range, choice lists, text fields, buttons), for example the Knoch switches of Capa 1.33 or Hash and Threads of a Stockfish. **APPLY** sends the changed values to the engine; they are remembered per engine file in `engine_config.json` and sent again every time that engine starts, including the restart **MOVE NOW** may trigger. **DEFAULTS** puts the engine's own defaults back.

Version 0.9.3 Beta

Release date: 22 September 2026

Fixes from beta-tester feedback

- **MOVE NOW (F)** now also works while the engine is still searching: it interrupts the search, the engine plays the best move it has found so far, and the human-feeling thinking delay is skipped for that move. **CAPA96** cannot be interrupted at all (after a `stop` it stays silent for good), so for it **CZUBATRONIC** restarts the engine and asks for a quick move instead; either way a move arrives within about two seconds. Before, the button only worked once the engine had its move and was merely waiting out the thinking delay; during the search itself it did nothing, with every engine.
- **UCI handling** for other engines (older Stockfish builds and the like): the engine is asked `isready` after `ucinewgame` before the position is sent, it receives the whole game as `position startpos moves ...` so it can recognise repetitions (a bare FEN is sent only when the move list does not lead to the position), and engine output in any character encoding no longer breaks the connection.

- Tacticon: the bundled Tacticon searches to a fixed maximum of 7 plies, which takes it under two seconds; a FIXED DEPTH above 7 or a longer TIME PER MOVE has no effect on it, settings up to depth 7 do. The manual said otherwise; it now describes this. Capa and Pioneer follow the depth and time settings.

Version 0.9.2 Beta

Release date: 21 September 2026

Engines

- Loading a Capa build via ENGINE and BROWSE UCI ENGINE works again. In 0.9.1 the UCI check started the engine from the wrong folder, so a Capa .exe with its book ENGOPEN.TXT beside it was still refused with Engine did not return uciok (the engine had reported runtime error 2, file not found, which the dialog did not show). The check now runs from the engine's own folder. Capa engines need ENGOPEN.TXT next to the program file; if it is missing, the ENGINE dialog now reports the engine's own error (runtime error 2, file not found) and offers to copy the bundled book beside the engine. Capa's book moves light BOOK YES in the computer status: neither Capa build announces them, so a move that arrives without any search output is taken as a book move.
- The UCI handshake waits up to 20 seconds instead of 5 for uciok and readyok. A freshly downloaded engine can take several seconds to start on its first run (antivirus scan, book file), which used to be refused.

Engine matches

- Tournament clock for engine matches: GAME CLOCK in the match setup, for example 40 moves in 5 minutes, then 20 moves in 2 minutes more. Unused time carries over; 0 further moves means the rest of the game in the extra time, 0 first-period moves the whole game in the base time. The chess clock panel shows both engines' times, the match panel the moves to the next time control, and a side that oversteps loses on time (a draw if the opponent cannot mate). The saved PGN carries the TimeControl tag. Pioneer, CAPA96, Capa 1.32 and Tacticon all understand the clock commands.
- Matches at a fixed time per move no longer end with ERROR: WHITE returned an invalid move: none. Capa 1.32 checks its clock only between search iterations, so at 3 seconds per move it may first finish a 12-second iteration and obeys the stop signal only afterwards; CZUBATRONIC now waits for the move it is owed instead of giving up two seconds after asking. The same applied to ENGINE TIMEOUT - MOVE NOT RETURNED in Human vs Engine games. An engine that has really stopped running is reported as such, with its exit code.
- The game clock of the previous game no longer keeps running underneath an engine match (it flagged a side after a few moves: WHITE TIME EXPIRED).

Appearance

- The 2D CURRENT piece set keeps its proportions again: the king is the tallest piece, the pawn the smallest, every piece keeps its shape and is centred in its square. Queen, rook, bishop, knight and pawn are drawn a tenth larger relative to the king, and the king has the queen's base width and is a little taller than her. Previously each piece was stretched into one fixed box, which squashed the king and made the rook the biggest piece on the board.
- The ABOUT dialog shows the version number and the build time of the program file, so two builds of the same beta version can be told apart.

Installer and program package

- The installer is CZUBATRONIC_2400_0.9.2_Beta_Setup.exe, the portable edition CZUBATRONIC_2400_0.9.2_Beta_Portable.zip. The 0.9.1 downloads were replaced several times under the same name on 21 September while these fixes were being made, and some browsers and the web cache kept handing out the first one; from now on every build has its own download link, and the ABOUT dialog shows the build time.

Version 0.9.1 Beta

Release date: 20 September 2026

Fixes from beta-tester feedback

- Windows display scaling of 125 % and non-maximised windows: the move history no longer disappears when a chess clock is active. The window now opens at the size its panels need, that size is also its minimum, and the move history always keeps its space. If a screen is too small for everything, the engine-output area gives way first.
- The title CZUBATRONIC 2400 and the fascia marking PROFESSIONAL CHESS SYSTEM are no longer cut off or overlapping at larger font sizes.
- The SYSTEM STATUS display is sized for its text, so two-line messages such as WHITE PLAYED e4 / 5. BLACK THINKING are shown completely.
- All controls are always reachable: the button rows wrap to the window width: four rows at the standard width, two when the window is maximised. Previously HINT, ANALYZE, MOVE NOW and the MODE selector could lie beyond the right edge of a non-maximised window.

Engines

- Standard engine of your choice: the ENGINE dialog shows the current standard engine and offers Set as standard engine (remember for next launch). The remembered engine is checked at every start; if it is missing or fails the UCI handshake, CZUBATRONIC falls back to the bundled CAPA96 and says so. RESET STANDARD ENGINE TO CAPA96 clears the choice. The setting is stored in %LOCALAPPDATA%\CZUBATRONIC\engine_config.json.
- Engine time per move is entered in seconds (tenths allowed, for example 0.5 or 2.5) in New Game, Engine Settings, Position Setup and Engine Match, instead of milliseconds. The computer-status panel shows it as, for example, CONTROL 2.5S / MOVE.
- Human-feeling thinking time in Human vs Engine games: the computer no longer answers in a quarter of a second at fixed depth. Book moves, forced moves and recaptures come quickly, quiet positions take a few seconds, complicated middlegames longer, and now and then it thinks for a long time; with a game clock it never spends more than its share of the clock on this. MOVE NOW (F) makes it move at once. Engine matches, hints and analysis are not delayed. (Pioneer's calibrated per-level thinking windows remain the base for Pioneer.)

Appearance

- New application icon: a gold knight on walnut, shown in Explorer, the Start menu, the taskbar, the window title and every dialog. CZUBATRONIC also has its own taskbar identity now and is no longer grouped with other windows.
- The ABOUT dialog shows the version number.
- The DCS Chess logo sits in the bottom-right corner of the console.

Installer and program package

- The program is now installed as a folder (CZUBATRONIC.exe plus _internal) instead of a single self-extracting file. This fixes the upgrade error "Setup was unable to automatically close all applications" followed by "DeleteFile failed; code 5": the old single-file wrapper survived Setup's attempt to close a running copy, without a visible window, and kept the program file locked. Starting is faster, and nothing is unpacked into the temp folder any more.
- If an older version is still running when Setup starts, possibly without a visible window, Setup now says so and offers to close it.
- New portable edition: CZUBATRONIC_2400_0.9.1_Beta_Portable.zip runs from any folder or USB stick without installation or administrator rights. While CZUBATRONIC_PORTABLE.txt sits next to the program, settings and the diagnostic log stay in its config folder.

- A diagnostic log is written to %LOCALAPPDATA%\CZUBATRONIC\czubatroni.c.log (portable edition: config\czubatroni.c.log) with startup, shutdown and error information for support requests.
- Closing the window while the engine is thinking is faster.
- The installer is CZUBATRONIC_2400_0.9.1_Beta_Setup.exe. Every build is additionally archived on the build machine under a name with build time and source revision, together with its SHA-256 checksum, so any file can be traced to its exact build.
- The version number is stamped consistently into the installer, the program's file properties, the manuals and the About dialog.

Known beta limitations

- Still unsigned: Windows SmartScreen may show a warning.
- On a Full HD screen at 125 % scaling the panels need slightly more height than the screen offers; the engine output then shows fewer lines while the move history keeps its minimum.
- The limitations listed for 0.9.0 still apply.

Version 0.9.0 Beta

Release date: 11 September 2026

Release status

This is the near-final public beta of CZUBATRONIC 2400. It is supplied free of charge for personal, non-commercial use under the included proprietary beta license. It may not be resold, redistributed, repackaged, rebranded, hosted, mirrored, or commercially exploited without prior written permission.

Self-contained Windows package

The official installer contains:

- Frozen 64-bit Windows application and Python runtime
- CAPA96, Pioneer, and Tacticon UCI engines
- CAPA96 opening data
- All four production piece sets
- Bundled Microgramma display font
- Opening-name database
- Full Thorsten Czub interview source and portrait
- Story of Capa article source
- End-user manual, release notes, and beta license

No Python installation, virtual environment, developer checkout, Downloads folder, or external engine installation is required.

Engines

- CAPA96 is the standard engine loaded at startup.
- Pioneer remains selectable and retains its calibrated Novice-to-Grandmaster ladder.
- Tacticon is bundled as a self-contained UCI engine.
- Other local UCI executables can be validated and selected.

- CAPA96, Tacticon, and external engines use explicit fixed depth, engine time per move, or game-clock allocation rather than unverified strength labels.
- Fixed-depth searches use depth-scaled safety deadlines to accommodate slower engines.
- Opening-book configuration is exposed when an engine advertises a compatible UCI option.

Engine matches

- Compact setup dialog with independent White and Black engine selection
- Pioneer, CAPA96, Tacticon, or browsed UCI engine on either side
- Shared fixed-depth, time-per-move or game-clock condition (for example 40 moves in 5 minutes, then 20 moves in 2 minutes more)
- Normal board animation and SAN notation during matches
- Fixed left-side panel with separate live output for both engines
- Start, stop, and close controls without replacing the normal playing engine
- Legal-move validation and clean process shutdown

Game controls and clocks

- Human versus engine and human versus human play
- Explicit New Game setup for non-Pioneer engines
- No Clock, 15/30 seconds per move, 3 minutes plus 2-second increment, 5/15/30 minutes per game, 40 moves in 120 minutes plus 60 minutes, and any custom control (X moves in Y minutes, increment, then A moves in B minutes)
- Traditional per-move test controls are advisory and do not forfeit at zero
- Whole-game clocks retain normal flag-fall behavior
- Embedded seven-segment clock remains visible through theme changes
- Correct automatic engine start when playing Black
- Stale searches are discarded safely when starting another game

Board and game workflow

- Legal chess through python-chess, including castling, en passant, promotion, mate, stalemate, repetition, and insufficient material
- New game, custom position setup, takeback, resign, board flip, hints, analysis, and Move Now
- Position setup now shows selected side-to-move and play-as choices, correct engine controls, game clock, legality validation, and an explicit `START PLAYING THIS POSITION` action
- Starting a custom position immediately triggers the engine when it owns the selected side to move
- PGN open/save with custom starting FEN support
- Clickable move history, previous/next replay navigation, and Play From Here
- SAN move notation and live engine telemetry
- LED or full-square move indicators
- Responsive board and piece scaling

Appearance

- Walnut, Blue, Green, and new Graphite ABS-plastic schemes

- Four selectable 2D piece sets
- Refined 1980s product fascia and built-in system-status display
- Warm electronic display typography and seven-segment clock treatment

About, interview, and credits

- Complete Impressum and creator responsibility statement for Arne Baillière
- Engine history for Capa, Pioneer, and Tacticon
- Full unabridged Thorsten Czub interview in a magazine-style reader
- Thorsten portrait in the interview masthead
- Separate Story of Capa article
- Computer-chess producer tribute and artwork credits
- DCS Chess supporter link
- Copyright, beta-license, redistribution, resale, repackaging, and warranty notices

Known beta limitations

- The installer is currently unsigned, so Windows SmartScreen may display a warning.
- Arbitrary engine-specific UCI option editing is not exposed.
- PGN replay follows the main line.
- All piece sets are 2D.
- Engine behavior and telemetry depend on each engine's UCI implementation.

Support and contact

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