

CZUBATRONIC 2400 Release Notes

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

Version 0.9.1 Beta

Release date: 21 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.)
- Capa engines (CAPA96 and Thorsten Czub's Capa 1.32) need their opening book 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.

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

- 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 and the build time of the program file, so two builds of the same beta version can be told apart.
- The DCS Chess logo sits in the bottom-right corner of the console.
- 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.

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\czubatronik.log` (portable edition: `config\czubatronik.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, and 40 moves in 120 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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