

Chess GUI with support for electronic chessboards

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Abstract

Why yet another chess GUI?

Many GUIs support electronic chessboards, but do not use the full potential that chessboards with piece recognition offer. They could be much better used for training or analysis of games and positions. Read more in chapter **14 Analysis mode** on page 51.

Another feature is the extended engine support. Read more in chapter **19 Extended engine support** on page 62.

So the focus of BearChess is more on exploiting the possibilities of the chessboards than being just another GUI. Of course, you not need an electronic chessboard to use BearChess.

The first version of BearChess supports the chessboards from Certabo and the boards connected via Millennium ChessLink.

As you can see from the version number, this software is still under development. There are still some functions that are not fully implemented and there are certainly still many bugs. But BearChess has now reached a level where it can be used and feedback from other users is welcome.

Some functions are marked with a *. These functions are still under development.

I am a professional programmer and write the software in my spare time and it is free. I am not an employee of Inventhio Srl trading (Certabo) or Millennium 2000 GmbH. If something does not work, Certabo or Millennium is not responsible for it.

Send errors, comments, suggestions for improvement or requests to lars@solanosoft.com.

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1 Quick start

- Simply unpack the file BearChessWin.zip into a new folder.
- Start BearChess with a double-click on BearChessWin.exe
- Connect your electronic chessboard to your computer.
- Set all chessmen to their start position.
- Configure the electronic chessboard connection (**10 Electronic chessboards** on page 30).
- Connect to the electronic chessboard.
- Load a chess engine (**4.1 Install a new engine** on page 14)
- Start a game and make your first move on the electronic chessboard.

2 Introduction

BearChess offers among others the following functions:

1. Play with Certabo chessboards.
2. Play with Millennium chessboards via ChessLink modul.
3. Play against human beings or UCI engines.
4. Analyze your games or trainings with the help of electronic chessboards.
5. Use multiple chess engines at the same time for playing and analyzing.
6. Support for Polyglot and Arena opening books.
7. Save and load your games
8. Individual chessmen and board fields.

BearChess follows the design of Single Document Interface (SDI). You can place different windows, e.g. chess engine output or chess move list, anywhere on your Windows desktop. If you close them or exit BearChess, the position is saved and set to the same position when reopening.

2.1 Modes

BearChess is running in different modes. The current mode is displayed in the lower left corner.

- **Easy playing** This is the mode in the beginning. You just can simply start making your moves on the screen or on your electronic chessboard, almost without regard to the chess rules. In addition to support you can start chess programs or load opening books. But these only give hints, but do not play as opponents. This mode is automatically set if you are not playing in another mode. It is similar to the analyze mode but let you more easily start a new game from any position.

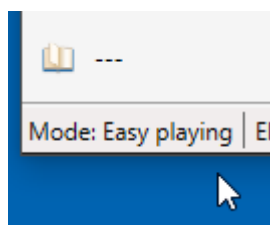


Figure 1: Easy playing

- **Playing a game** This is the mode if you play against a chess engine or another player. Only valid chess moves are allowed and the game is time controlled.

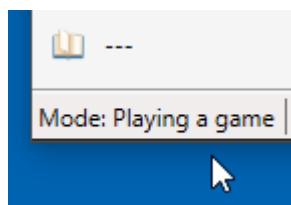


Figure 2: Playing a game

- **Analyzing** If you select this mode you can make any chess moves or place the pieces as you like, almost without regard to the chess rules. This mode is recommended to analyze a game or positions. Try different variants on the board and let several chess programs analyze the positions simultaneously.

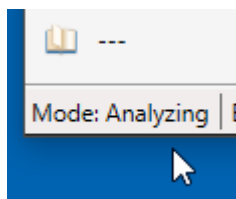


Figure 3: Analyzing

- **Setup Position** Build up a new starting position on the chessboard. It is easiest to set it up on the electronic chessboard.

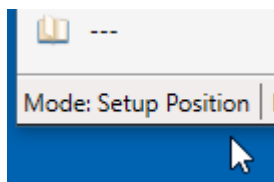


Figure 4: Setup Position



3 Main window

The first start of BearChess shows the following main window:



Figure 5: Main window

Two buttons are active:

-  rotates the board.
-  is an easy way to play a game. Read more in chapter **13 Easy start or restart of a game** on page 47.

3.1 Actions

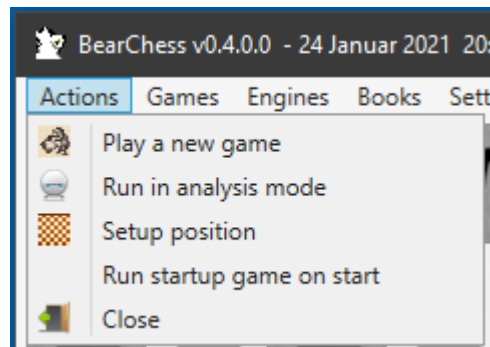






Figure 6: Actions

-  **Play a new game** opens a new window to select opponents and time control (see chapter 11.1 **Select opponent** on page 42).
-  **Run in analyze mode** allows you to analyze games or positions with support of several chess engines (see chapter 14 **Analysis mode** on page 51)
-  see chapter 15 **Setup position** on page 53.
- **Run startup game on start** immediately starts a new game when you start BearChess. For more information read chapter 11.8 **Configuration for startup game** on page 44.
-  **Close** exits BearChess.

3.2 Games

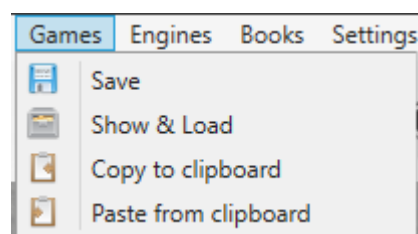






Figure 7: Games

-  **Save** your current game.

-  **Show & Load** opens a new window in which you can see and load all your previously saved games.
-  **Copy to clipboard** copy the current game (PGN) to your clipboard.
-  **Paste from clipboard** loads a game (PGN) from your clipboard.

All games are saved in a database file. Read more on chapter **17 Games** on page 57.

3.3 Engines

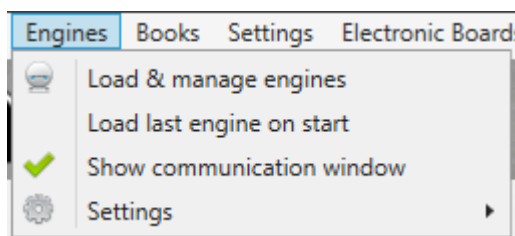



Figure 8: Engines

-  **Load & manage engines** opens a new window in which you can install, load or configure your chess engines.
- **Load last engine on start** if you always want to load immediately an engine when you start BearChess. It has no effect if you have activated the option "Run startup game on start".
- **Show communication window** opens a new window where you can follow the communication between BearChess and chess engines. It is useful to detect any problems in communication.
- **Settings** to configure if you want to see more information from the engine, e.g. nodes per second.

Read more on chapter **4 Install, Configure and Load a chess engine** on page 13.

3.4 Books

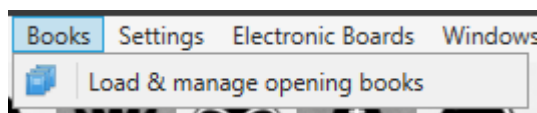



Figure 9: Books

-  **Load & manage opening books** opens a new window in which you can install or load your opening books.

BearChess can handle Polyglot and Arena opening books. Read more on chapter **5 Load and Manage Opening Books** on page 18.

3.5 Settings

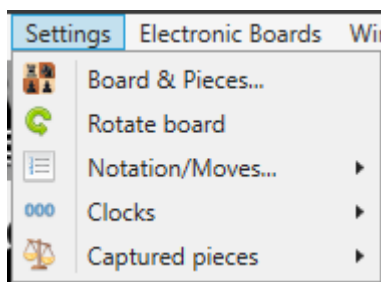







Figure 10: Settings

-  **Board & Pieces** opens a window where you can change the appearance of the chessboard and the pieces. Read more on chapter **6 Configure Board and Pieces** on page 21.
-  **Rotate board** if the board on the screen should automatically rotate for your color.
-  **Notation/Moves** opens a windows where you can change the appearance of the notation, e.g. figurine or letters.
-  **Clocks** switches between large and small clocks.
-  **Captured pieces** shows the captured pieces window at startup or on demand.

3.6 Electronic Boards

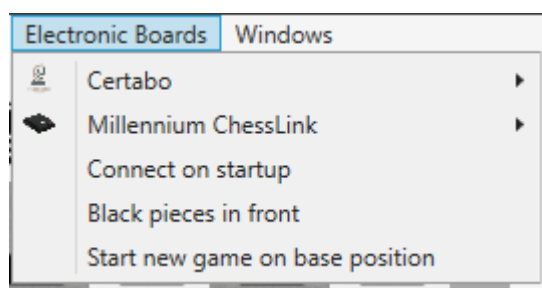




Figure 11: Electronic Boards

-  **Certabo** opens a window where you can configure and connect to Certabo chessboards. Read more on chapter **10.1 Configure Certabo boards** on page 30.
-  **Millennium ChessLink** opens a window in which you can configure chessboards connected to Millennium ChessLink and connect to them. Read more on chapter **10.2 Configure Millennium ChessLink** on page 36.
- **Connect on startup** tries to connect on to the last connected chessboard when BearChess is started.
- **Black pieces in front** assumes that you have placed the black chessmen in front of you.
- **Start a new game on base position** recognizes when you reset all the pieces to the base position during a game. In this case, a new game will be started automatically.

3.7 Windows

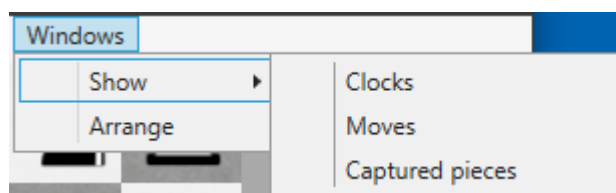


Figure 12: Windows

- **Show** brings clocks or move list windows to the foreground if they are currently not visible.

- **Arrange** auto arrange all windows to fit on your screen and not overlapping.
- **Captured pieces** shows the captured pieces. Either all or as a difference.

4 Install, Configure and Load a chess engine

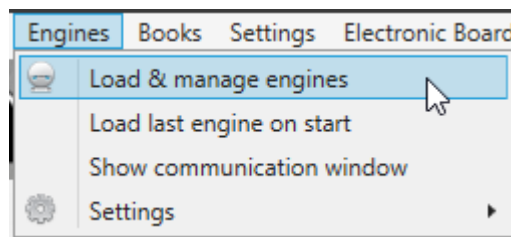


Figure 13: Open Load And Manage UCI Engines window

BearChess does not include a chess engine. Click on "Load & manage engines" to install and configure one. "*Install*" means to make a chess program BearChess known, not to install it on your computer. BearChess supports any UCI engine.

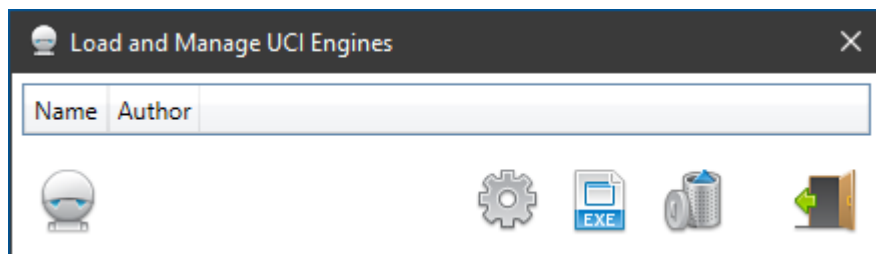








Figure 14: Load And Manage UCI Engines

-  Load selected engine
-  Configure selected engine
-  Install a new engine
-  Uninstall selected engine
-  Close the window

4.1 Install a new engine

To install a new engine click on  and select an UCI engine file, e.g. the latest Stockfish exe file. Or you just drag & drop the exe file onto the button.

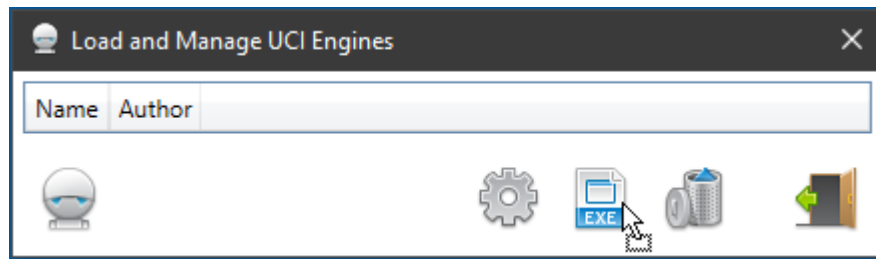


Figure 15: Drop an engine file

If the file detected as UCI engine, confirm your selection. Next, a configuration dialog box appears where you can configure the engine and give it a name.

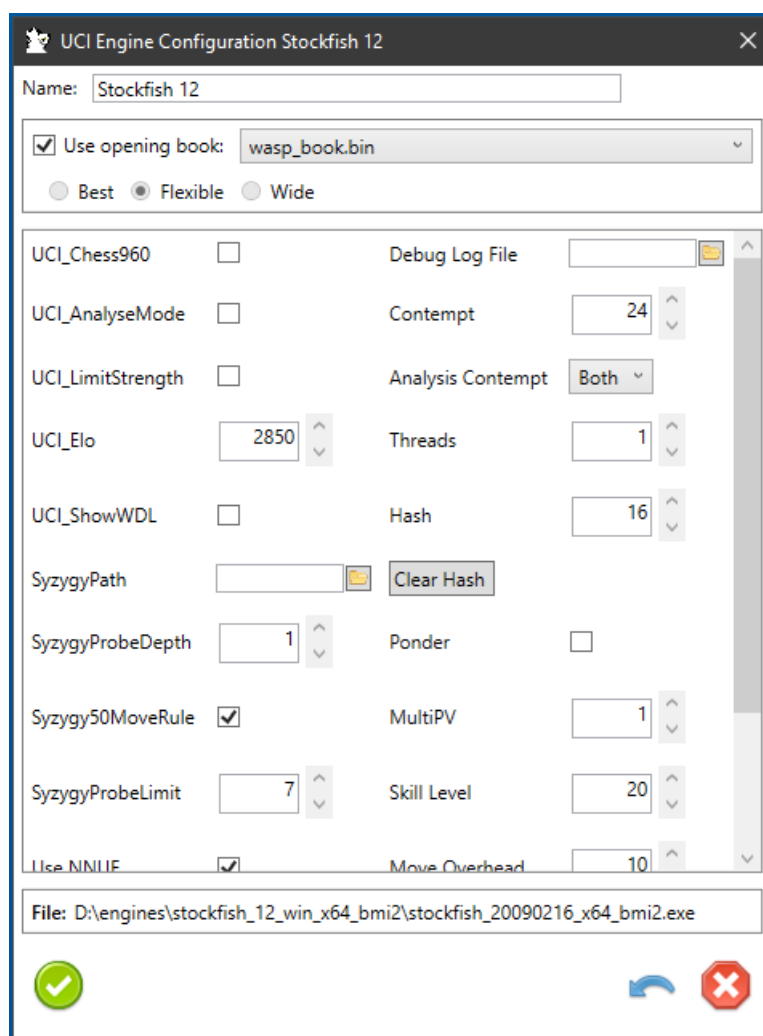






Figure 16: Engine configuration

The name is freely assignable, must be unique across all engines. But this way you can install the same engine several times with different configurations. The configuration values, names and possibilities are given by the engines. The first time these are the default values.

-  Accept the changes
-  Reset to default values
-  Cancel

The small  button opens a file or directory selection dialog, depending on the configuration name (file, path, dir).

The configuration type 'button', e.g. 'Clear Hash', works only if the engine is loaded.


4.1.1 Use opening book

Some engines comes with there own opening book and you have an option to use them or not. You can also tell BearChess to use an opening book before the moves are calculated by the engines. You can configure how BearChess determines the book move.

- **Best** Always chooses the best move
- **Flexible** Selects one of the best moves
- **Wide** Selects any book move

Look at chapter **5 Load and Manage Opening Books** on page 18 how to install an opening book.

4.2 Configure an engine

To change the configuration of an installed engine click on 

The same configuration dialog box as during installation is shown where you can configure the engine or just change the name.

4.3 Additional configuration for an installed engine

If you want to save the same program with a different configuration, e.g. an additional configuration with adjusted Elo strength, you can save the configuration under a different name.

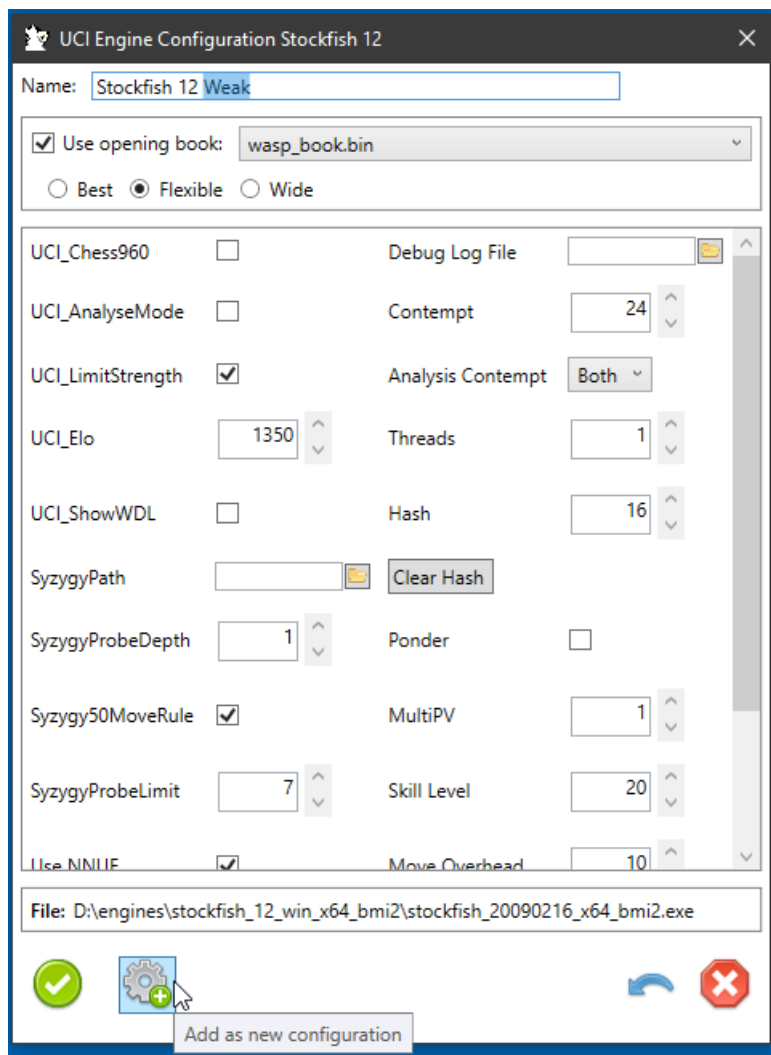



Figure 17: Save as new configuration

Click on  to save the configuration with a new name.

4.4 Load an engine

To load an installed engine, select an engine and click on  or just double-click.

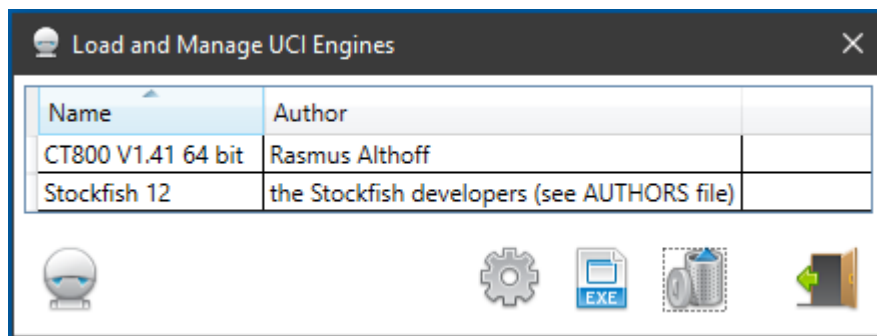


Figure 18: Some installed engines

5 Load and Manage Opening Books

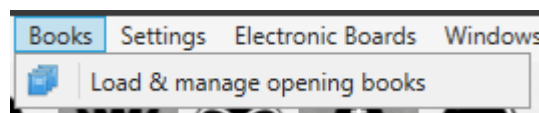


Figure 19: Open Load and Manage Opening Books

BearChess does not include opening books. Click on "Load & manage opening books" to install one. "*Install*" means to make an opening book BearChess known, not to install it on your computer. BearChess supports Polyglot and Arena opening books.

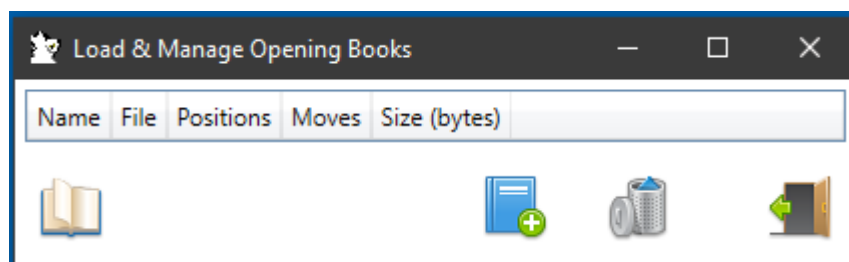



Figure 20: Load and Manage Opening Books

- Load selected book
- Install a new book
- Uninstall selected book
- Close the window

To install a new opening book click on  and select a book file. The file extension for Polyglot books is **bin** and for Arena is **abk**.

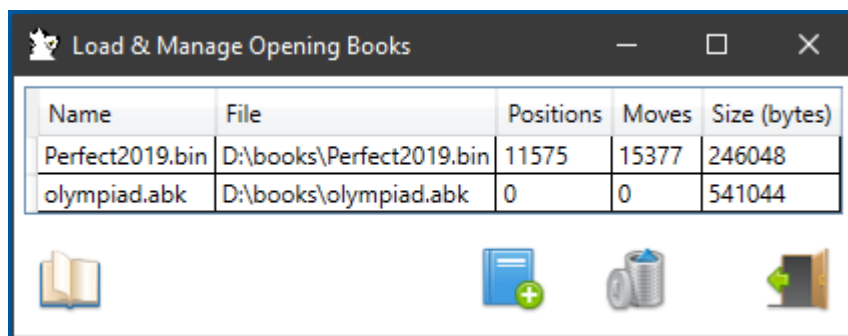



Figure 21: Some installed books

To select an opening book click on  or just double-click. A new window opens and shows the current possible moves found in the book.

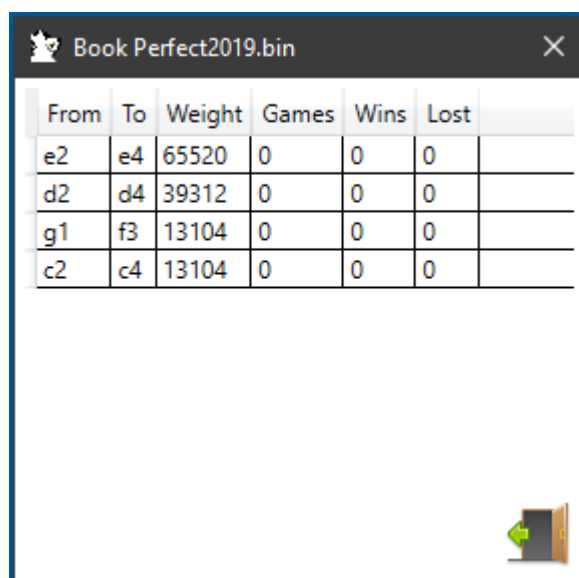


Figure 22: Loaded opening book on base position

You can load more than one book. Every book has their own window and is synchronized with the current position on the chessboard.

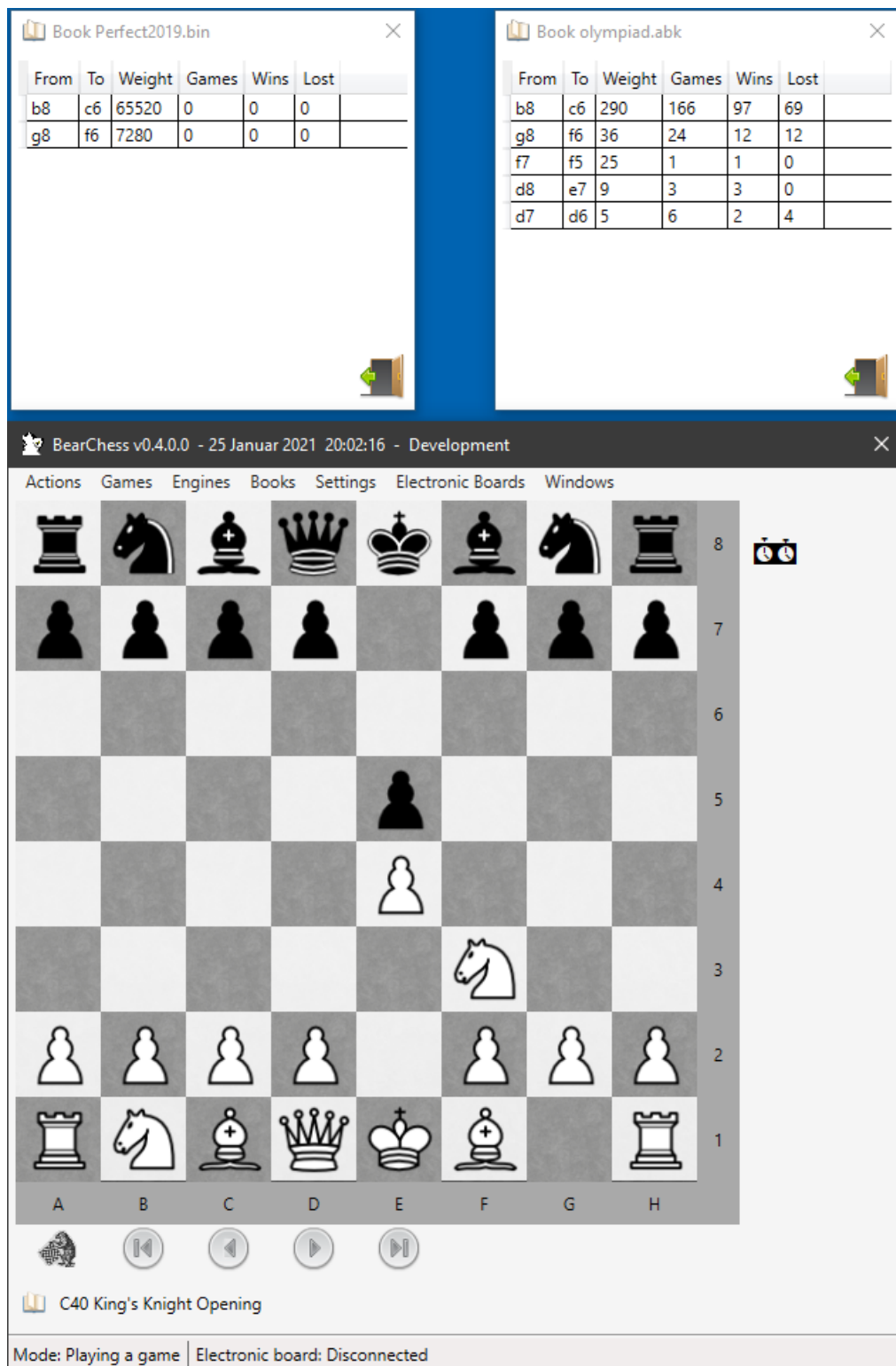


Figure 23: Loaded opening books

* So far, the possibilities are still very limited with the opening books. This will improve in the next versions.

6 Configure Board and Pieces

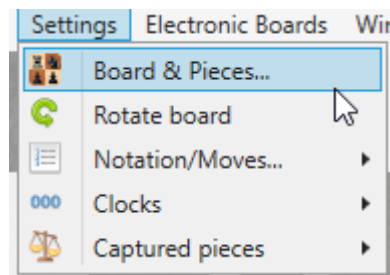


Figure 24: Open window to configure board and pieces

To change the appearance of BearChess select "Board and Pieces". A new window opens where you can configure it. BearChess comes with one set of pieces and board colors.

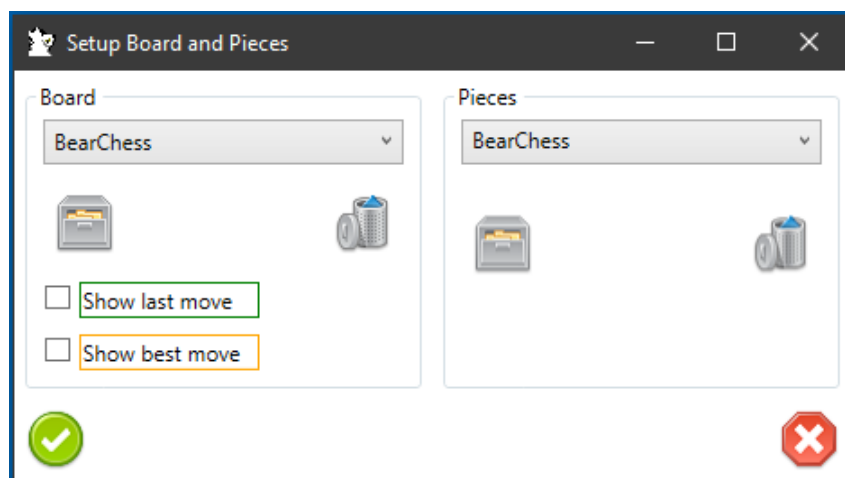






Figure 25: Setup board and pieces

-  Install new board colors or pieces
-  Uninstall board colors or pieces
-  Accept the changes
-  Cancel

If the options "Show last move" and "Show best move" are activated, the last move and the currently best analysis move of an engine are marked on the board.



Figure 26: Last move




Figure 27: Currently best move

6.1 Install new board colors and pieces

BearChess uses png files for board colors and pieces.

6.1.1 New board colors

Click on  to select a directory where the files are located. BearChess accepts `w.png` or `white.png` for white fields and `b.png` or `black.png` for black fields.

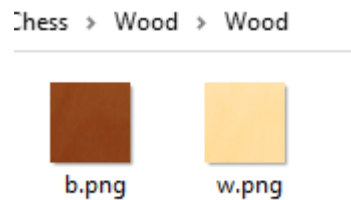


Figure 28: Example for wood fields

If BearChess find both files inside the directory it builds an empty chess-board to confirm your choice. A name for your board is required.

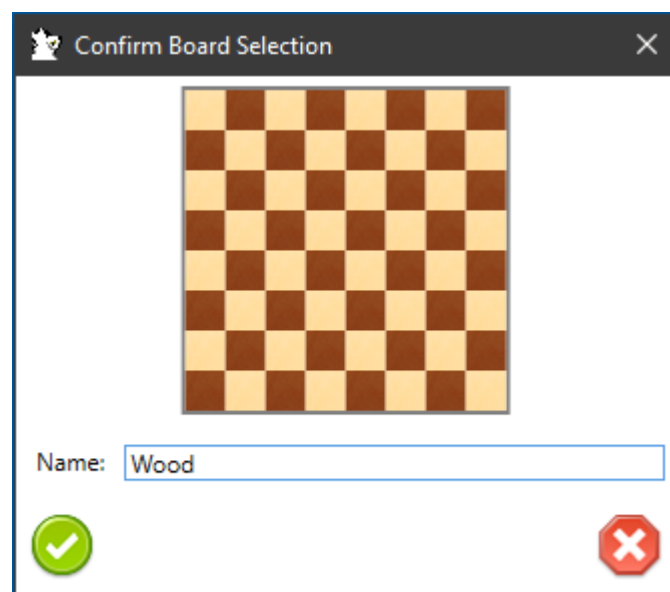


Figure 29: Confirm new board

6.1.2 New pieces

There are two ways to install a new set of pieces. One png file for each piece or one png file with all pieces inside.

Click on  to select a directory where the files are located.

Important: The png files must have a transparent background color, oth-

erwise they would paint over the fields. BearChess accepts following names for the different pieces:

- **White king:** KingW.png, WhiteKing.png, wk.png
- **Black king:** KingB.png, BlackKing.png, bk.png
- **White queen:** QueenW.png, WhiteQueen.png, wq.png
- **Black queen:** QueenB.png, BlackQueen.png, bq.png
- **White rook:** RookW.png, WhiteRook.png, wr.png
- **Black rook:** RookB.png, BlackRook.png, br.png
- **White bishop:** BishopW.png, WhiteBishop.png, wb.png
- **Black bishop:** BishopB.png, BlackBishop.png, bb.png
- **White knight:** KnightW.png, WhiteKnight.png, wn.png
- **Black knight:** KnightB.png, BlackKnight.png, bn.png
- **White pawn:** PawnW.png, WhitePawn.png, wp.png
- **Black pawn:** PawnB.png, BlackPawn.png, bp.png

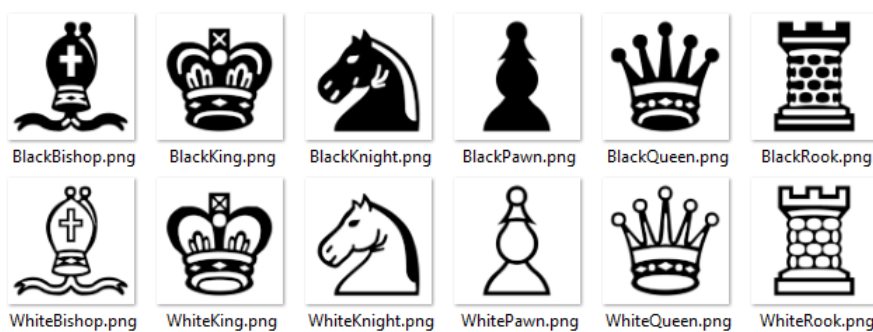


Figure 30: Example one png file for each piece

If BearChess find all files inside the directory it builds an piece set to confirm your choice.

If BearChess find only one png file inside the directory it assumes that this file contains all pieces at once.



Figure 31: One png file with all pieces

The png must have the pieces in the order and colors shown above. If you have one png file for all pieces, you can just drgp & drop the png file onto the open file dialog icon. It avoids the effort of having to have a separate directory for each file.

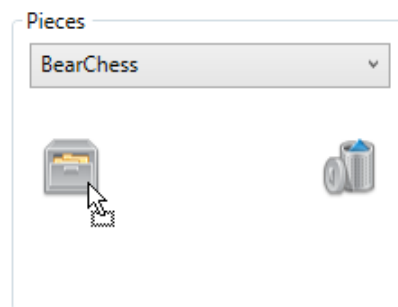


Figure 32: Drop new pieces

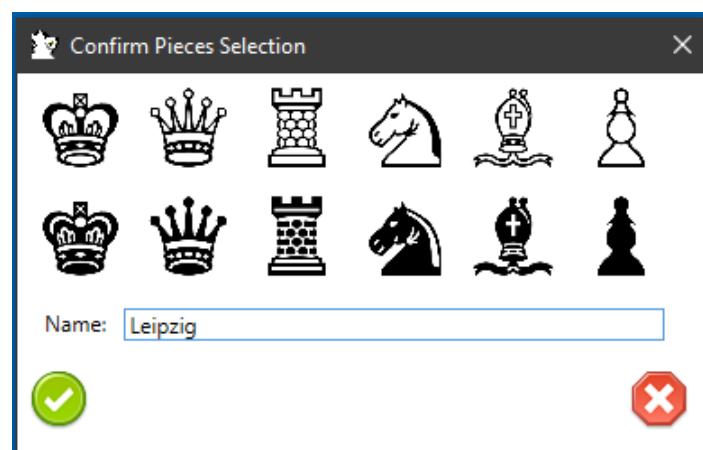


Figure 33: Confirm new pieces

BearChess builds an piece set to confirm your choice. A name for your set is required. Now you can combine your boards with your pieces.



Figure 34: Combine board and pieces

7 Configure Notation and Moves

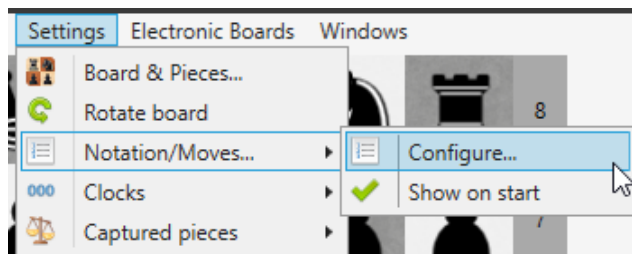


Figure 35: Opens a window to configure notation and moves

BearChess can display moves in different ways.

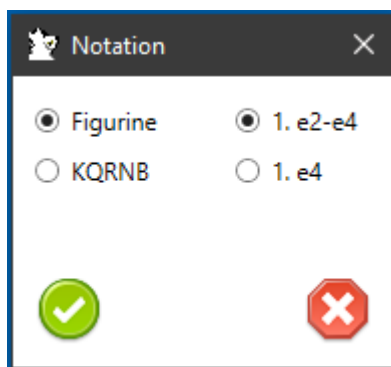


Figure 36: Configure notation and moves

In long and short notation and with symbols or letters for the chessmen.

8 Configure clock style

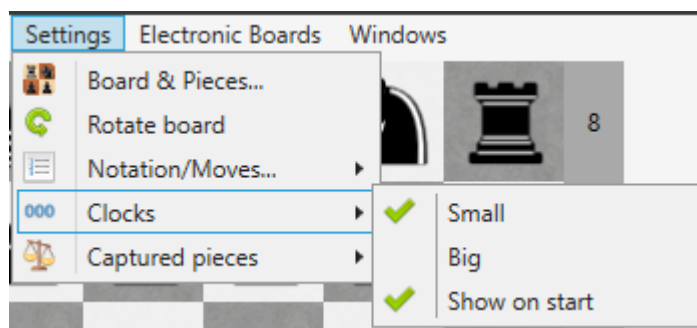


Figure 37: Configure clocks

BearChess offers two different clocks: small and big

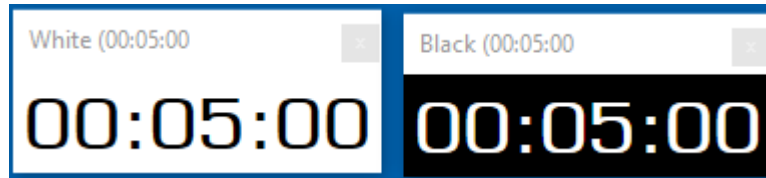


Figure 38: Small clocks

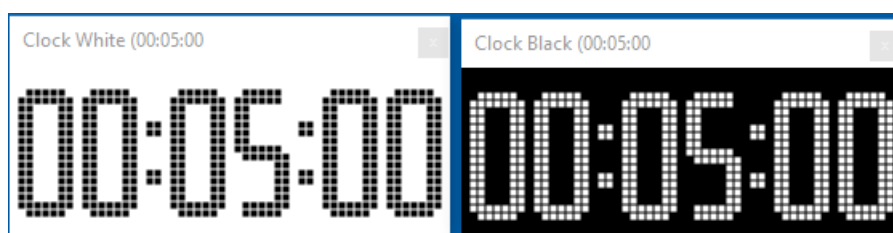


Figure 39: Big clocks

9 Show captured pieces

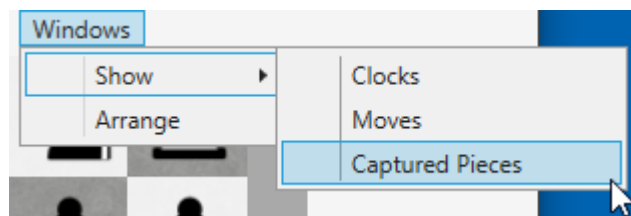


Figure 40: Show captured pieces

Opens a window that shows the captured pieces.

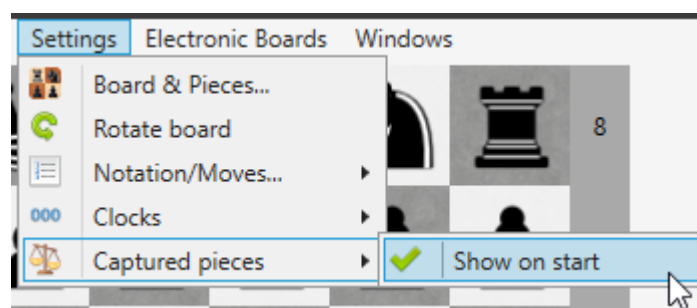


Figure 41: Show captured pieces on start

You can configure this window so that it is displayed at startup.

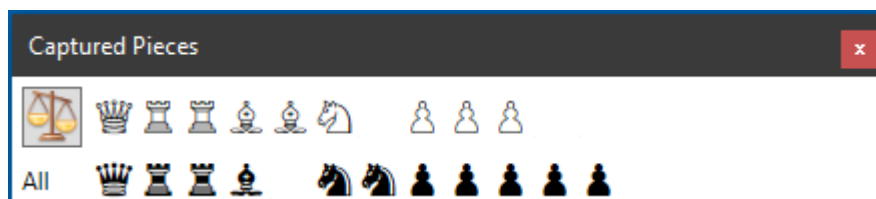


Figure 42: Show all captured pieces

Figure 42 shows all captured pieces. Black is one queen, one knight a two pawns ahead.



Figure 43: Show captured pieces as difference

Figure 43 shows the same information as difference.

The button  switches between both views.

10 Electronic chessboards

BearChess supports two electronic chessboards: Certabo boards and Millennium boards via the ChessLink module. Both boards communicates via an USB port as Serial COM port or via Bluetooth. Which COM port is used is not the same for all computers and can change over time, especially if you have more than one COM port available on your computer.

10.1 Configure Certabo boards

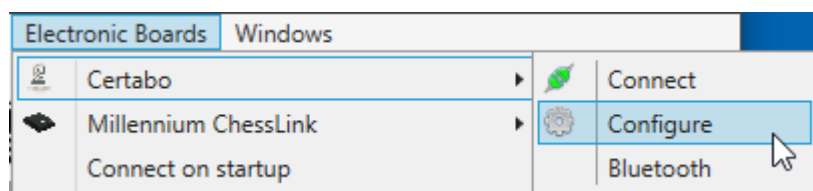


Figure 44: Open a window to configure Certabo boards

Certabo requires two configuration steps. The used COM port and a calibration to detect the chess pieces. If your PC supports Bluetooth and you own the bluetooth module from Certabo, you can also connect to the Certabo board via Bluetooth. If you want to do this, check the option "Bluetooth" first, before opening the configuration windows.

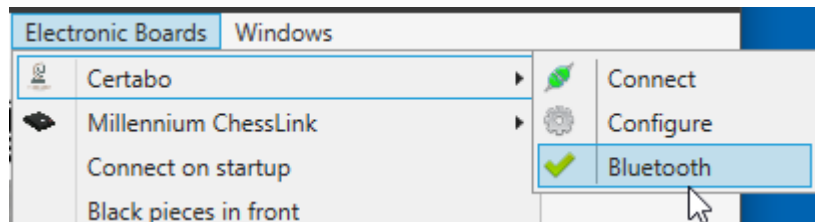


Figure 45: Search for Bluetooth

Read chapter **10.1.1 Configure Bluetooth** on page 34 for more information.

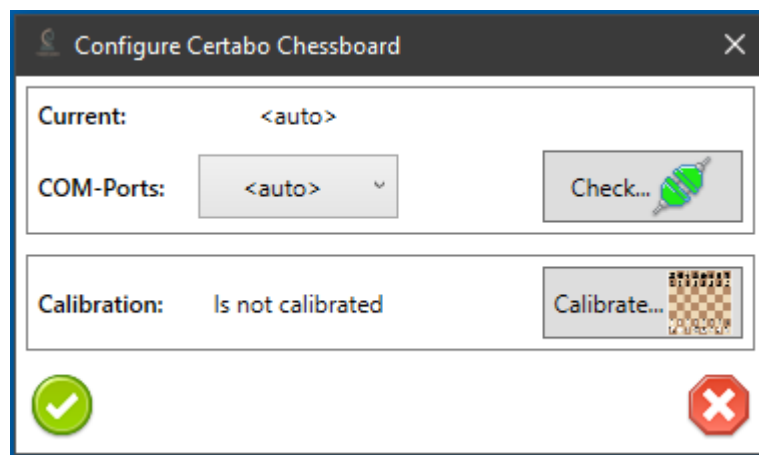



Figure 46: Configure Certabo boards

Select the COM port (BT for Bluetooth) if you know them or let the <auto> selection. Click on  to verify your selection.

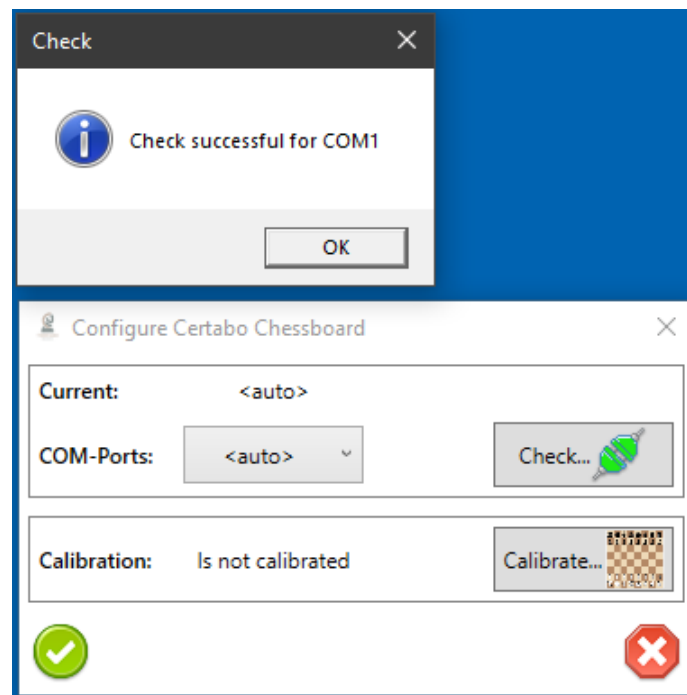


Figure 47: COM port successful detected

If you select an invalid COM port, you will receive the following error message:

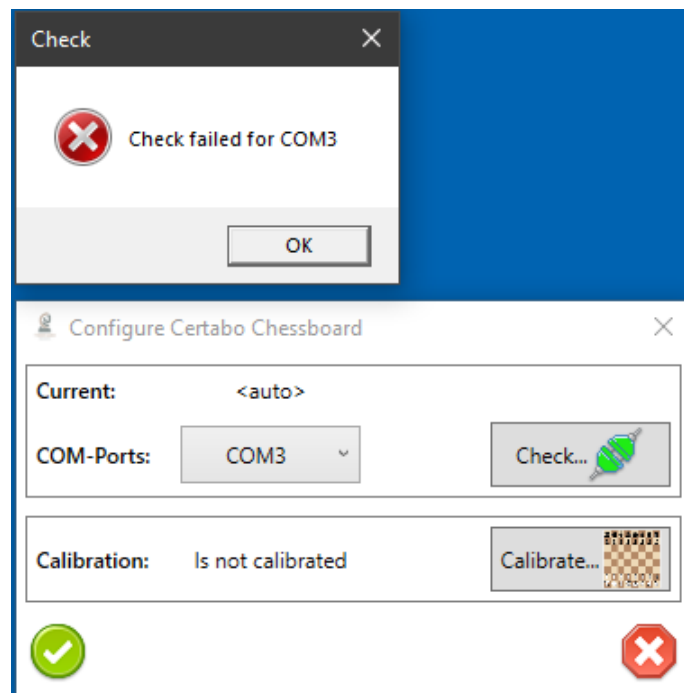


Figure 48: Invalid COM port

If you select <auto> and no board is found, you will receive the following error message:

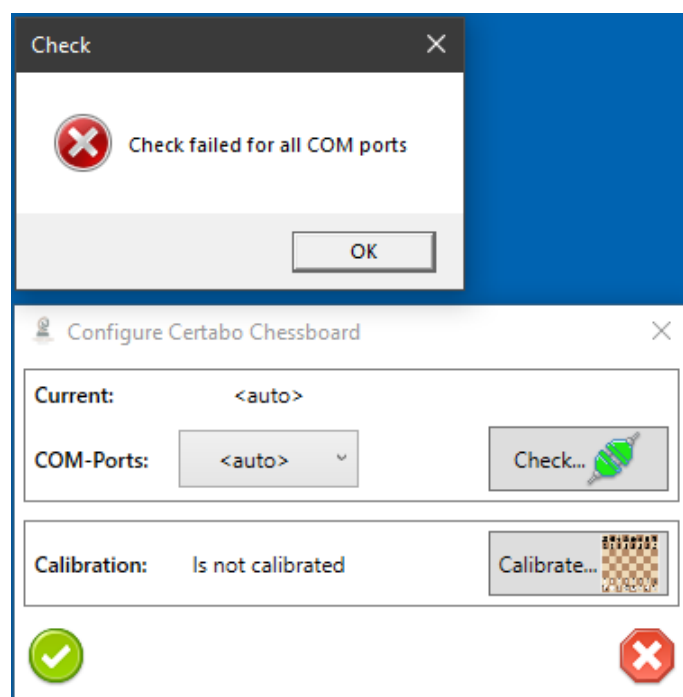


Figure 49: No board found

Hint: You can always use the selection <auto>, but if you have more than one COM port available, it can always take some seconds until the right one is recognized.

10.1.1 Configure Bluetooth

If the "Bluetooth" option is set, the following window will be displayed for a short time if you open the configuration dialog.

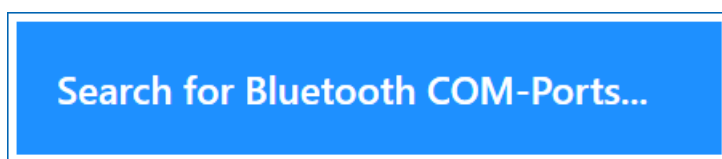



Figure 50: Search for Bluetooth

During this time or if you connect to the first time, Windows may ask you to connect to the module. In this case, confirm this.

10.1.2 Calibration

At the first start, BearChess needs a calibration to identify your chessmen. A new calibration is only required if you use another set of chessmen.

Click on  to open the calibration dialog.

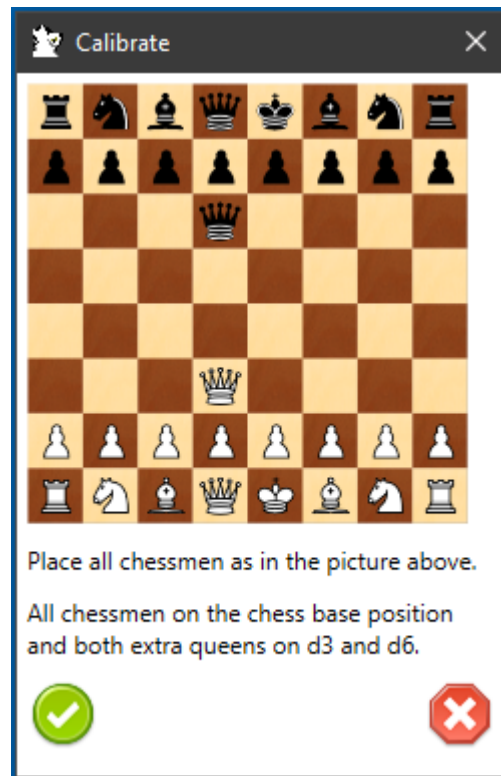


Figure 51: Calibrate base position

If all pieces are on the right position click the accept button. When a calibration is running, you will see the chessboard LEDs flashing each row. Please wait until all LEDs are off and the confirm dialog appears.

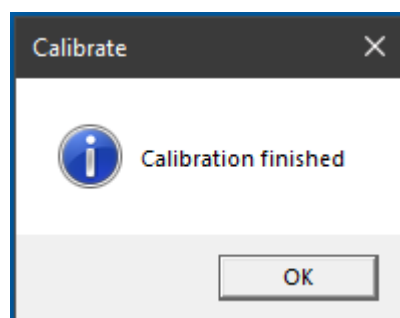


Figure 52: Calibration finished

Hint: If the calibration never seems to end, check that the chessmen are correctly placed in the middle of the squares.

10.1.3 Connect

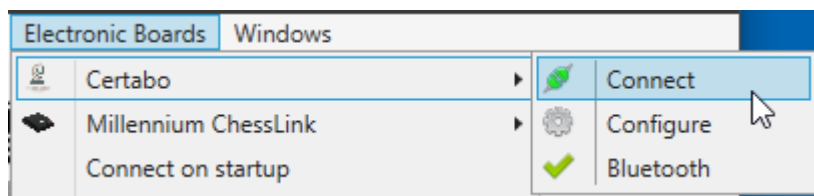


Figure 53: Connect to Certabo

When the configuration is complete, you can connect to your chessboard. In the lower right corner a new button appears, which allows you to easily connect or disconnect your board. The current status is also written.

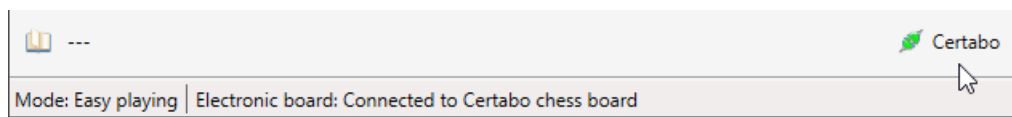


Figure 54: Connected

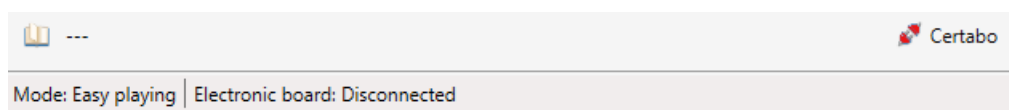


Figure 55: Disconnected

10.2 Configure Millennium ChessLink

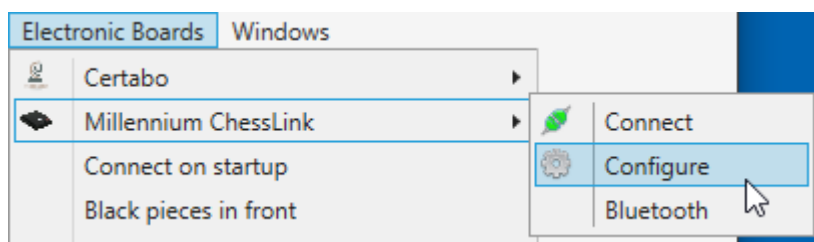


Figure 56: Open a window to configure Millennium boards

For your Millennium ChessLink you may need to configure the COM port used. You can also change how the LEDs should light up.

If your PC supports Bluetooth, you can also connect to the ChessLink module via Bluetooth. If you want to do this, check the option "Bluetooth" first, before opening the configuration windows.

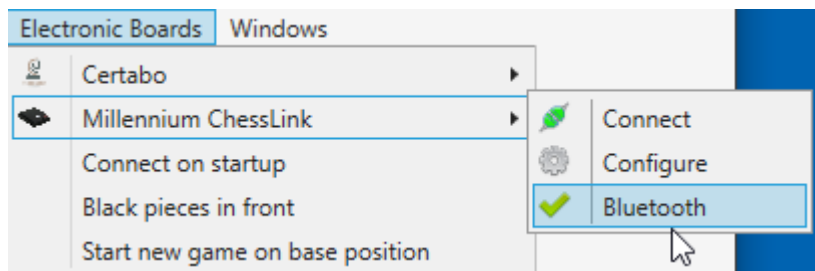


Figure 57: Search for Bluetooth

Read chapter 10.2.1 **Configure Bluetooth** on page 40 for more information.

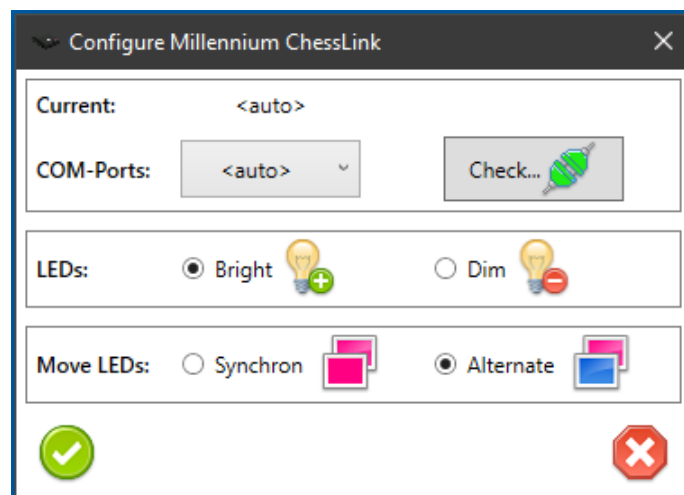



Figure 58: Configure Millennium ChessLink

Select the COM port if you know them or let the <auto> selection. Click on  to verify your selection.

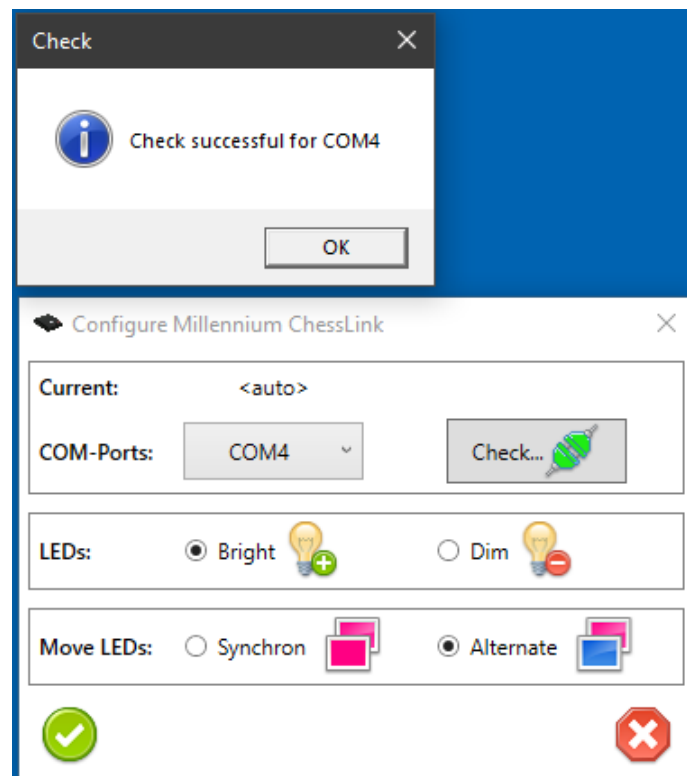


Figure 59: COM port successful detected

If you select an invalid COM port, you will receive the following error message:

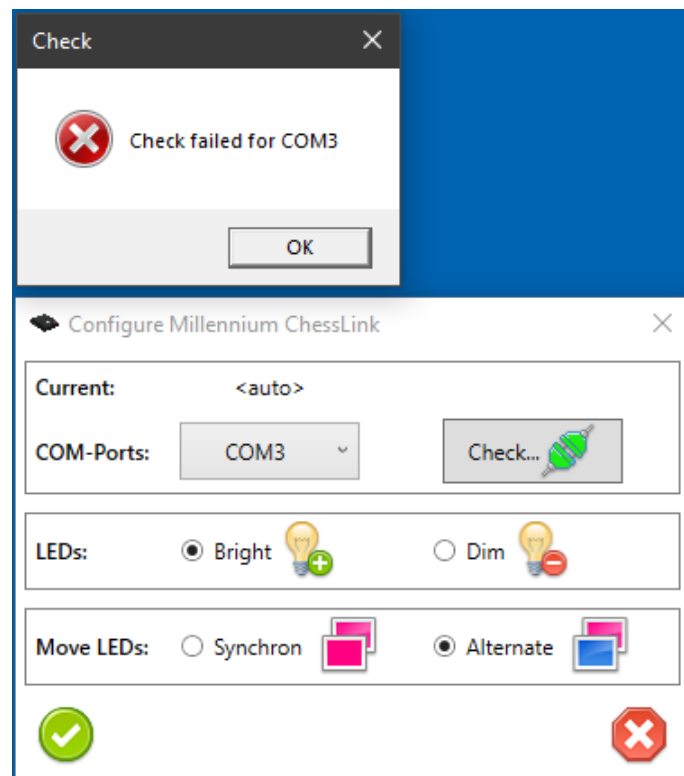


Figure 60: Invalid COM port

If you select <auto> and no board is found, you will receive the following error message:

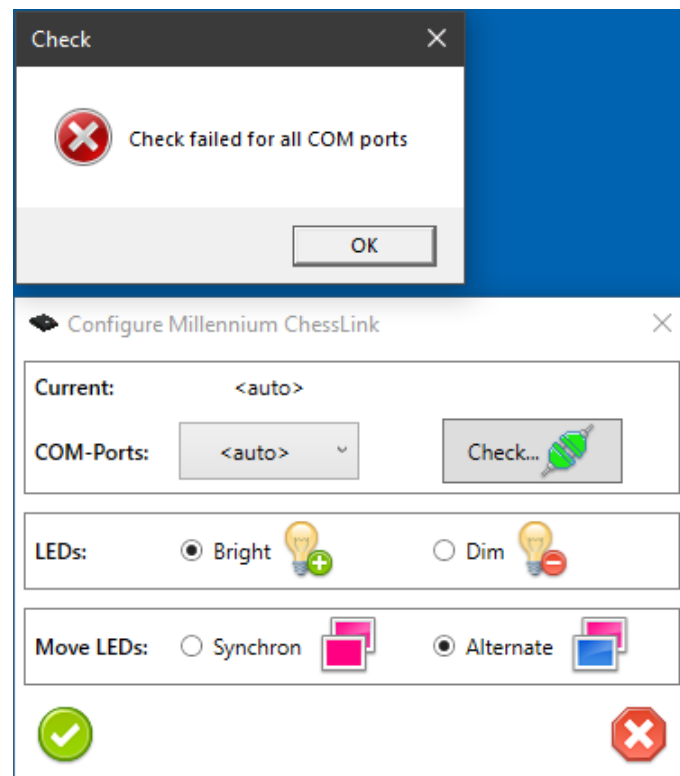


Figure 61: No board found

Hint: You can always use the selection <auto>, but if you have more than one COM port available, it can always take some seconds until the right one is recognized.

You can change how the LEDs should light up. The brightness and whether the LEDs should flash alternately or synchronously when indicating moves.

10.2.1 Configure Bluetooth

If the "Bluetooth" option is set, the following window will be displayed for a short time if you open the configuration dialog.

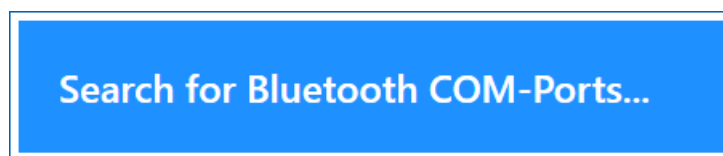


Figure 62: Search for Bluetooth

During this time or if you connect to the first time, Windows may ask you to connect to the Millennium ChessLink module. In this case, confirm this.

10.2.2 Connect

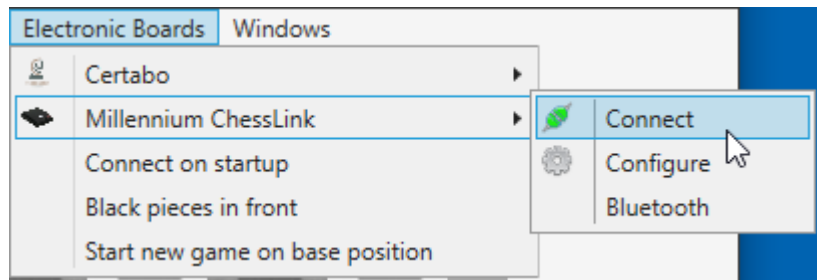


Figure 63: Connect to Millennium ChessLink

When the configuration is complete, you can connect to your chessboard. In the lower right corner a new button appears, which allows you to easily connect or disconnect your board. The current status is also written.

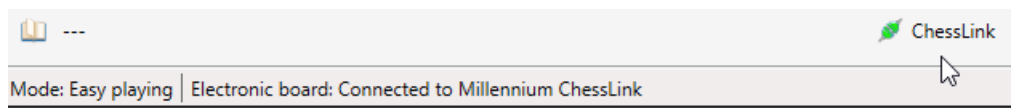


Figure 64: Connected

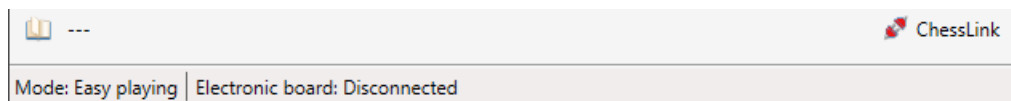


Figure 65: Disconnected

11 Play a game

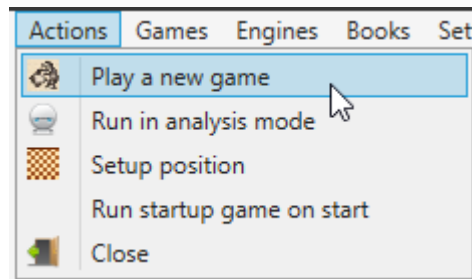


Figure 66: Opens a window to play a new game

If you start a new game you can select the opponents and the time control.

11.1 Select opponent

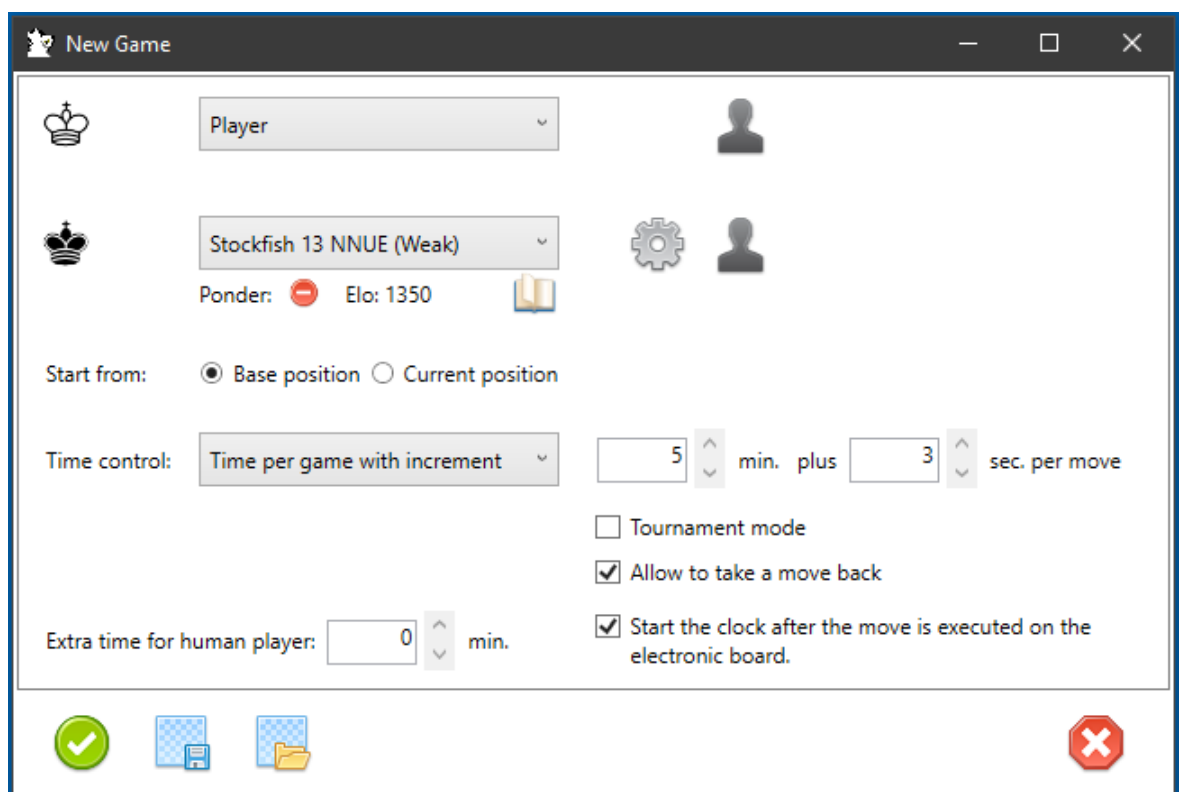










Figure 67: Play a new game

Select the opponents for white  and black . "Player" means a human opponent. You can select "Player" for white and black if you want to play a game against another human opponent on your chessboard. You can select an engine for white and black if you want to play a pure engine match.  is a shortcut to select "Player".

Hint: You cannot use an electronic chessboard for a pure engine match.

 opens the engine configuration dialog. This is the same dialog as for load and manage engines. However, all changes are only used for this game and are not saved permanently.

Below the engine selection, there are up to three information which gives you a quick overview of the current engine configuration.

- **Ponder** if the engine supports pondering, the icons  and  shows the current state.
- **Elo** if the engine supports allows to restrict the Elo performance, the current value is shown.
-  for "yes" and  for "no" shows the current state of using an opening book.

11.2 Start from

Select your start position. The default is the base position, but you can start from any position on the board.

11.3 Time control

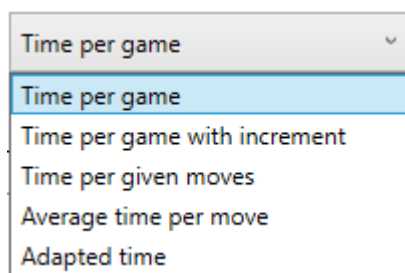


Figure 68: Time control

- **Time per game** limits the entire game to the given minutes.
- **Time per game with increment** limits the entire game to the given minutes but give extra seconds for every move.

- **Time per given move** limits the game for moves in a certain time frame, e.g. 40 moves in 60 minutes.
- **Average time per move** requires the engine to execute the moves in an average time of seconds or minutes.
- **Adapted time** gives the program the same average time in which the player makes his moves.

11.4 Tournament mode

If you play in tournament mode, no auxiliary information (score, best line) is displayed by the engine.

11.5 Allow to take a move back

It is worth activating this option for a training session or when playing against a strong engine. If you are using an electronic chessboard, just take back the last move. The LEDs show you the next previous move. Follow them until you make the right move.

If you are not using an electronic chessboard, you can use the move controls below the board.



Figure 69: Move controls

11.6 Extra time for human player



Add extra minutes for human opponents.

11.7 Start the clock after the move is executed on the electronic board

Avoids a time gap to execute the moves of the engines on the board.

11.8 Configuration for startup game

For your convenience, you can configure and save a game definition that will be used if you have the "Run startup game at startup" option turned on. Read more in chapter 16 **Run startup game on start** on page 56.

-  Saves the definition.
-  Loads the definition.

12 Move list

The move list shows all moves of your game.

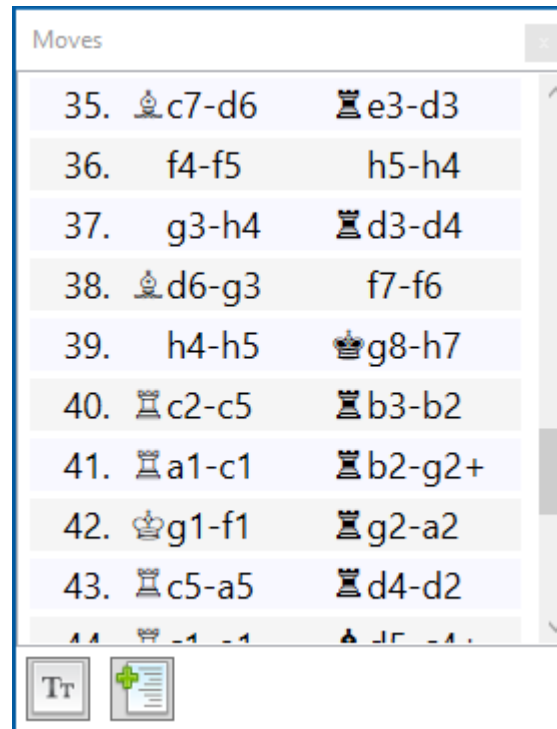



Figure 70: Simple move list

When you play against an engine BearChess collects more information.  expands the move list and shows the value and best move calculated by the engine.

Moves			
35.	c7-d6	0.53	b3a3
	e3-d3	0.12	a3a4
36.	f4-f5	0.17	f7f6
	h5-h4	0.12	a1e1
37.	g3-h4	0.39	d3d4
	d3-d4	0.13	h4h5
38.	d6-g3	0.26	b3f3
	f7-f6	0.25	c2e2
39.	h4-h5	0.11	
	g8-h7	0.02	c2f2
40.	c2-c5	-0.02	
	b3-b2	0.38	c5c3
41.	a1-c1	-0.03	h7h6
	b2-g2+	0.63	g1f1
42.	g1-f1	-0.26	g2a2
	g2-a2	0.07	c1c2

Figure 71: Move list

expands the move list and shows the value and the full best move list calculated by the engine.
















Moves		
 e8-e3	0.01	e8e3 c7d6 h5h4 g3g4 e3e6 d6e5 e6g6 g4g5 f7f6 c2c5 d5f3 e5c7 b3d3 a1^
35.  c7-d6	0.53	c7d6 b3a3 a1a3 e3a3 c2c8 g8h7 c8c5 a3a1 g1f2 a1a2 f2e3 a2a3 e3d2 a3a
 e3-d3	0.12	e3d3 a3a4 h5h4 g3h4 d3d4 b4b5 a6b5 a4a5 d4a4 c2c1 b3c3 c1e1 c3c6 a
36. f4-f5	0.17	f4f5 f7f6 a3a4 d3d4 a1c1 d5e4 c2c4 d4c4 c1c4 e4f5
h5-h4	0.12	h5h4 a1e1 g8h7 c2f2 d3d4 d6e5 d4d3 f2f4 h4g3 f4h4 h7g8 e5g3 d5c6 f5
37. g3-h4	0.39	g3h4 d3d4 d6g3 b3f3 c2f2 f3f2 g1f2 d4d3 f5f6 d3f3 f2e2 f3f6 e2d3 d5g2
 d3-d4	0.13	d3d4 h4h5 g8h7 c2f2 b3h3 f2f4 d4f4 d6f4 h3h5 f5f6 h5f5 a1f1 f5f6 f4c7 f
38.  d6-g3	0.26	d6g3 b3f3 c2f2 d4d3 f5f6 d3a3 a1a3 f3a3 f2f5 d5e4 f5g5 g7g6 h4h5 a3a
f7-f6	0.25	f7f6 c2e2 d4d3 a1c1 d3f3 e2f2 b3a3 f2f3 d5f3 c1c4 a3a2 g3d6 a2d2 d6g5
39. h4-h5	0.11	h4h5 g8h7
 g8-h7	0.02	g8h7 c2f2 d5f3 a1f1 f3h5 f2f4 d4f4 f1f4 h5e8 f4h4 h7g8 h4d4 e8b5 g1g2
40.  c2-c5	-0.02	c2c5
 b3-b2	0.38	b3b2 c5c3 d5e4 g3f4 e4f5 a1f1 f5e4 c3g3 b2e2 f1f2 d4d1 f2f1 d1d5 g3e3
41.  a1-c1	-0.03	a1c1 h7h6 g3f2 d4d3 c5a5 h6h5
 b2-g2+	0.63	b2g2 g1f1 g2a2 c5c3 d5e4 c3e3 h7h6 c1c8 h6h5 c8c7 g7g5 f5g6 h5g6 c7
42.  g1-f1	-0.26	g1f1 g2a2 c5a5 d4d3 f1g1 a2a3 a5a3 d3a3 g3d6 a3f3 c1a1 d5c4 a1c1 c4
 g2-a2	0.07	g2a2 c1c2 a2a3 c2c3 a3a2 c3c2 a2c2 c5c2 d4b4 f1e2 b4b3 c2c7 d5f3 e2d
43.  c5-a5	-0.25	c5a5 d4d3 f1g1 a2a3 a5a3 d3a3 c1c5 a3d3 c5a5 d5b7 a5c5 d3d4 g1f2 d4
 d4-d2	2.58	d4d2 c1e1 d5c4 f1q1 c4b5 e1e6 b5c6 h5h6 c6d5 a5d5 d2d5 h6q7 h7q7 e

Figure 72: Full move list

13 Easy start or restart of a game



The button  is an easy way to play a game. If your not active playing a game, the following dialog appears:

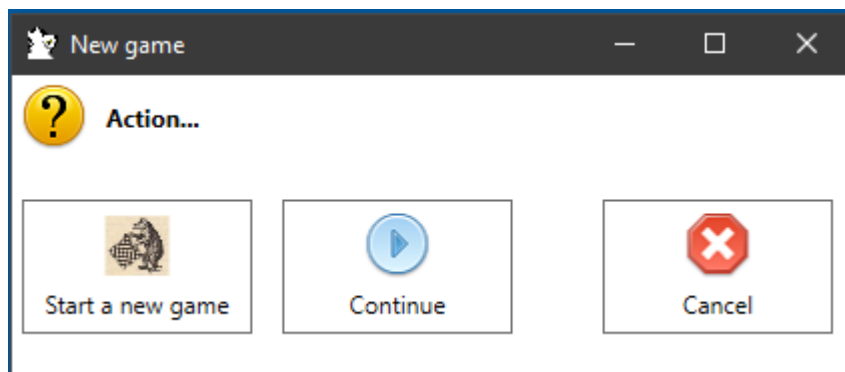






Figure 73: Start a game

- **Start a new game** opens the new game dialog (see **11.1 Select opponent** on page 42)
- **Continue** enables the continuation of a game, e.g. just loaded from the database (see **13.0.1 Continue a game** on page 49.)
- **Cancel** the dialog.

If your playing a game, the following dialog appears:





Figure 74: Reset to base position

-  opens the new game dialog (see **11.1 Select opponent** on page 42)
-  restarts the game with the current opponents and time control.
-  stops the current game.
-  continues


13.0.1 Continue a game

If you want to play a game and continue on another day, you can do the following:

- Save the game into the database and close BearChess.
- Open BearChess and load the game from the database on another day.
- Press the button  and choose "Continue" .

The game will continue with the same settings of opponent and timing control, setting the clock to the same time as you saved the game.

Electronic chessboard

If you use an electronic chessboard, connect to the board **before** you load the game from the database. When you click on  "Continue" the following window appears.

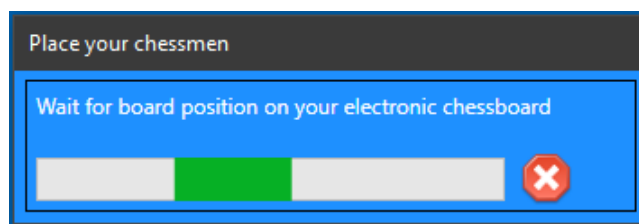


Figure 75: Waiting

Now, place all chessmen to the right position. BearChess will recognize it and continues automatically.

13.1 Influence of BearChess in engine games

Chess engines generally do not have the ability to give up or to recognize a draw, e.g. by repeating moves. In a match between two engines BearChess checks the moves and the current rating. If a draw is detected, e.g. by a move repetition or insufficient material, the game is ended.

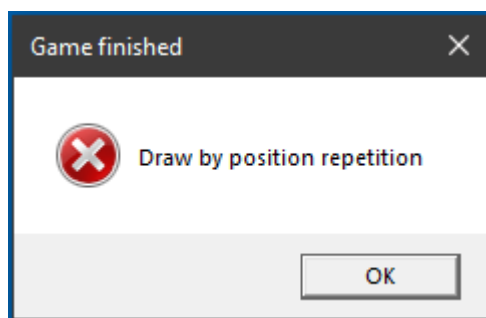


Figure 76: Draw by repetition

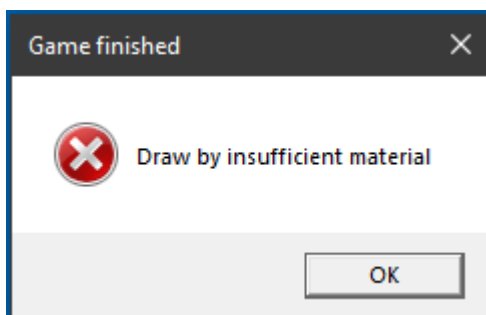


Figure 77: Draw by insufficient material

If both programs give at least a -4 or +4 in their scores over several moves, the game is finished.

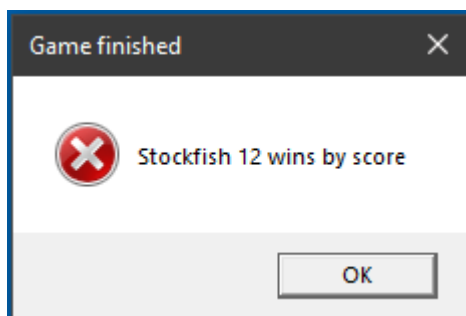


Figure 78: Won by score

14 Analysis mode

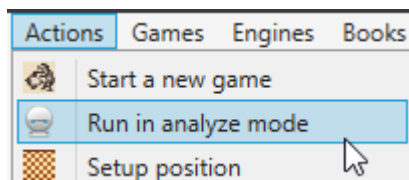


Figure 79: Analysis mode

One outstanding feature compared to other GUIs is the analysis mode. The idea behind it is how a player analyses his games or interesting positions. The figures are quickly rearranged or moves are made that do not always conform to the rules.

For example, the player does not want to go back the last three or four moves to try out a new variant. He sets up the new position directly on the board. Or you are more of a beginner and want to practice a typical endgame, e.g. king and pawn against king. You then want to know quickly if this move leads to a win or if the opponent can draw.

You can achieve all this with the analysis mode.

14.1 With electronic chessboard

You get the biggest advantage if you have connected an electronic chessboard with a piece recognition. Connect your electronic chessboard before you start the analysis mode.

When you start the analysis mode, you will be asked to select a supporting analysis engine.

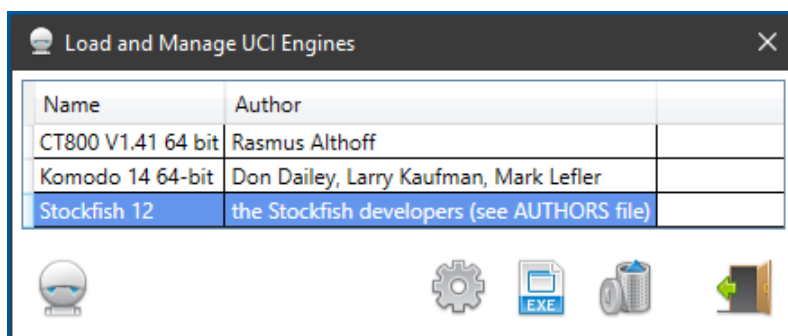


Figure 80: Selection for an analysis engine

The engine immediately starts to analyze the current position. If you want, you can add more engines.

Now you can remove or add figures or make moves on your chessboard as you like. The engine window shows immediately the current analysis. The current color results from which figure was moved last. To change the color, simply lift a figure of the current color and put it back in its place. The analysis will then start for the other color. Especially in endgames it can be important to know which color is on the move. Think of the king and pawn versus king endgame.

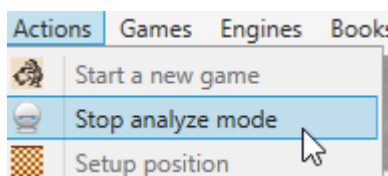


Figure 81: Stop analysis mode

14.2 Without electronic chessboard

You can also use the analysis mode without an electronic chessboard. If you do not want to start from the base position, you should first set up the desired position via Setup position.

When you start the analysis mode, you will be asked to select a supporting analysis engine.

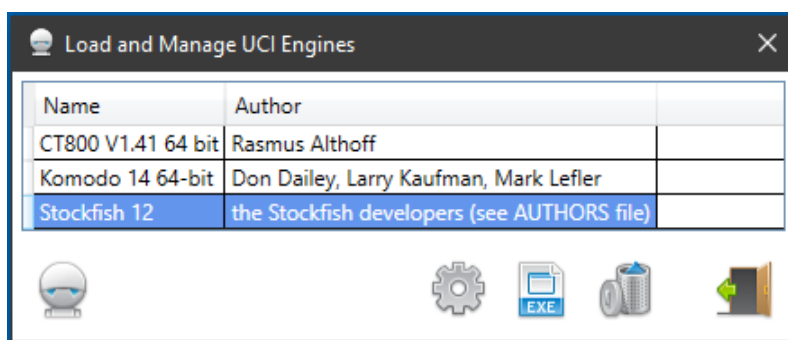


Figure 82: Selection for an analysis engine

The engine immediately starts to analyze the current position. If you want, you can add more engines.

You can rearrange individual figures by clicking on the figure and then on the target field.

If you press the right mouse button on a field, a context menu appears.

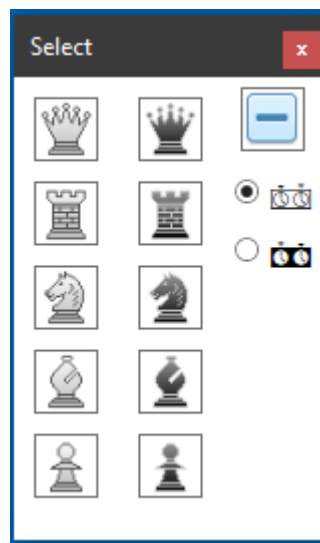



Figure 83: Analysis context menu

Click on one the figure to place in on the selected field. If the is a piece on the field, the button  removes it from the board. With the two clocks symbol can you switch the current color.

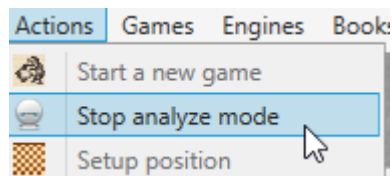


Figure 84: Stop analysis mode

15 Setup position

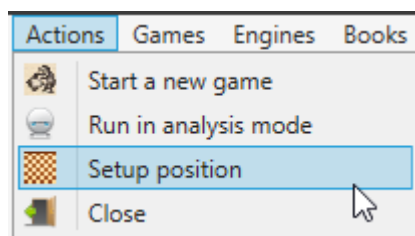


Figure 85: Opens a window for position setup

Setup a new position is very easy. You can do it with or without the support of an electronic chessboard.

15.1 With support of an electronic chessboard

First connect to your electronic chessboard before you run the setup. This is important, because the further behaviour of the program depends on it. The small board starts with the current position.

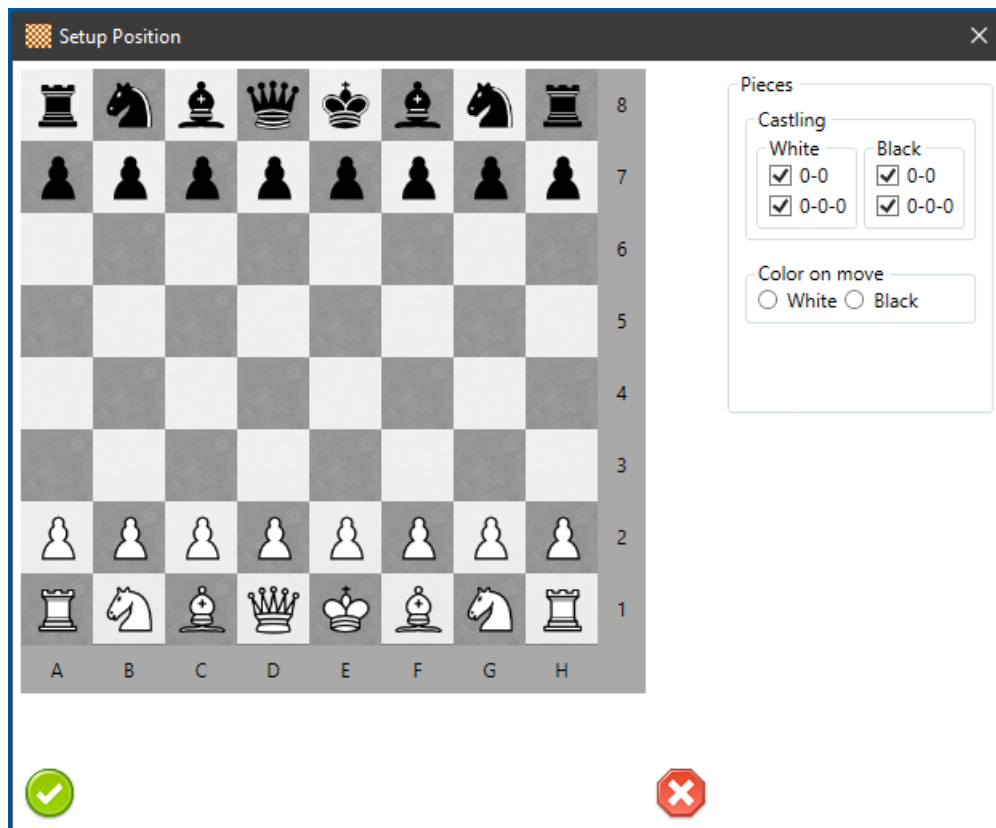


Figure 86: Setup a new position with an electronic chessboard

Now you can also give the electronic chessboard an arbitrary position, which is immediately displayed on the small chessboard. Don't forget to set the castling rights and current color.


Castling

White	Black
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0-0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0-0
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0-0-0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0-0-0

Color on move

☒ White ☐ Black

Figure 87: Castling rights and current color

With the button  the new position is placed on the chessboard.

* It is not completely checked whether the position is valid. This also applies to castling rights.

15.2 Without support of an electronic chessboard

First ensure you are **not connect** to your electronic chessboard before you run the setup. This is important, because the further behaviour of the program depends on it.

The small board starts with the current position.

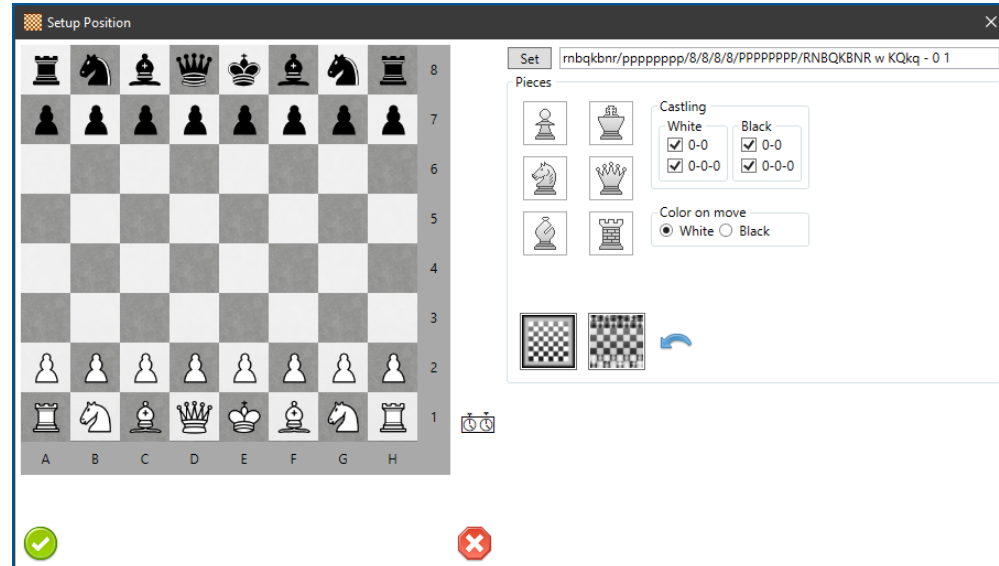


Figure 88: Setup a new position without an electronic chessboard

The input box shows the fen position. You can insert a new position in the input field and click on "Set" to place it on the small board.

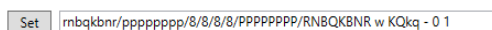


Figure 89: FEN input box

To place a piece on the board, select the corresponding icon. The desired color is not important here.



With a left click on the small board you place a white piece, with a right click a black piece. If you click on field with a piece on it, you remove it. Don't forget to set the castling rights and current color.

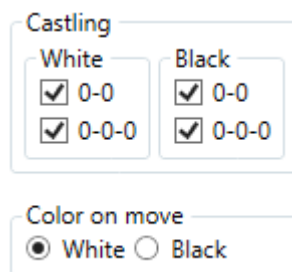






Figure 90: Castling rights and current color

There are three buttons to quickly set the base position or empty the board.

-  Remove all pieces from the board.
-  Put all pieces on their base position.
-  Reset to start position.

With the button  the new position is placed on the chessboard.

* It is not completely checked whether the position is valid. This also applies to castling rights.

16 Run startup game on start

If you start BearChess and want to start a game immediately, chapter **11.8 Configuration for startup game** on page 44 describes how to configure and save the definition.

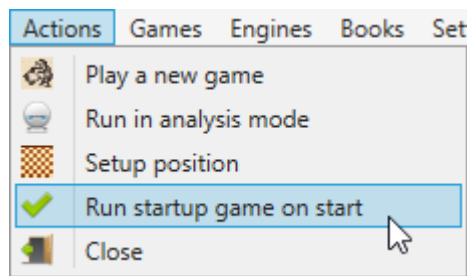


Figure 91: Run a game on startup

This is like turning on a chess computer that is immediately ready to play.

17 Games

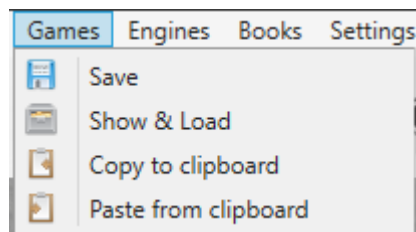
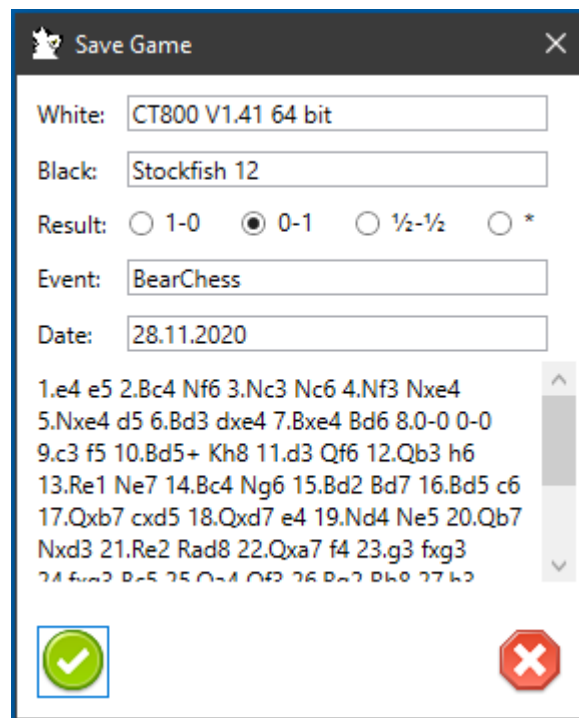


Figure 92: Games

17.1 Save

BearChess stores all games in a database file. When you save a game for the first time, you must first select a database file.

The save dialog is prefilled with the known data. But you can correct them before saving.



Save Game

White:

Black:

Result: ☐ 1-0 ☒ 0-1 ☐ 1/2-1/2 ☐ *

Event:

Date:

1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Nf6 3.Nc3 Nc6 4.Nf3 Nxe4
5.Nxe4 d5 6.Bd3 dxe4 7.Bxe4 Bd6 8.0-0 0-0
9.c3 f5 10.Bd5+ Kh8 11.d3 Qf6 12.Qb3 h6
13.Re1 Ne7 14.Bc4 Ng6 15.Bd2 Bd7 16.Bd5 c6
17.Qxb7 cxd5 18.Qxd7 e4 19.Nd4 Ne5 20.Qb7
Nxd3 21.Re2 Rad8 22.Qxa7 f4 23.g3 fxg3
24.fxe3 Bc5 25.Qc4 Qf3 26.Bc3 Bb8 27.b2

☒ ☐

Figure 93: Save a game

* Currently BearChess does not support comments or variants in the PGN notation.

17.2 Show and load

BearChess stores all games in one PGN file. The current name is shown in the title bar.

Games on: C:\tmp\bearchess.db

White	Black	Event	Site	Round	Result	Date	Moves
CT800 V1.41 64 bit	Stockfish 12	BearChess			0-1	25.09.2020	1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.g3 c5 4.⋮
Stockfish 12	Stockfish 11 64	BearChess			1-0	25.09.2020	1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.⋮
Stockfish 12	Booot 6.4_x64	BearChess			1-0	25.09.2020	1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.⋮
CT800 V1.41 64 bit	Stockfish 12	BearChess			0-1	07.12.2020	1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 N
Colossus 2008b	Shredder 13 x64	BearChess			0-1	09.12.2020	1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Be2 Nf
Wasp 4.0	Shredder 13 x64	BearChess			1/2-1/2	10.12.2020	1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 exd
Wasp 4.0	Shredder 13 x64	BearChess			1/2-1/2	10.12.2020	1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 ex
Player	CT800 V1.41 64 bit	BearChess			1-0	30.12.2020	1.e4 d6 2.Nf3 c5 3.d4 cxd4

Figure 94: Games window

If you double click on a row, the game is displayed on the board.

- Create a new games database.
- Open an existing games database.
- Delete selected game.
- Import games from a PGN file ^{*}.
- Copy selected game into clipboard.
- Filter games that correspond to the current board position ^{**}.
- Delete all games from the database.
- Close the window.

^{*} The import is very slow. It will be improved in the next version.

^{**} Currently BearChess does not support a search function.







18 Engine window

Each loaded engine is listed in the engine window.



Figure 95: Two loaded engines

If the engine allows to configure its ELO number, it appears under the name.

-   Pause the engine or continue.
-  Add a info line.
-  Remove a info line.
-  Close the engine. Not visible if you play a game.
-  Opens the configuration dialog.

If you have configured that currently the best move should be displayed, the analysis of the topmost engine is taken.

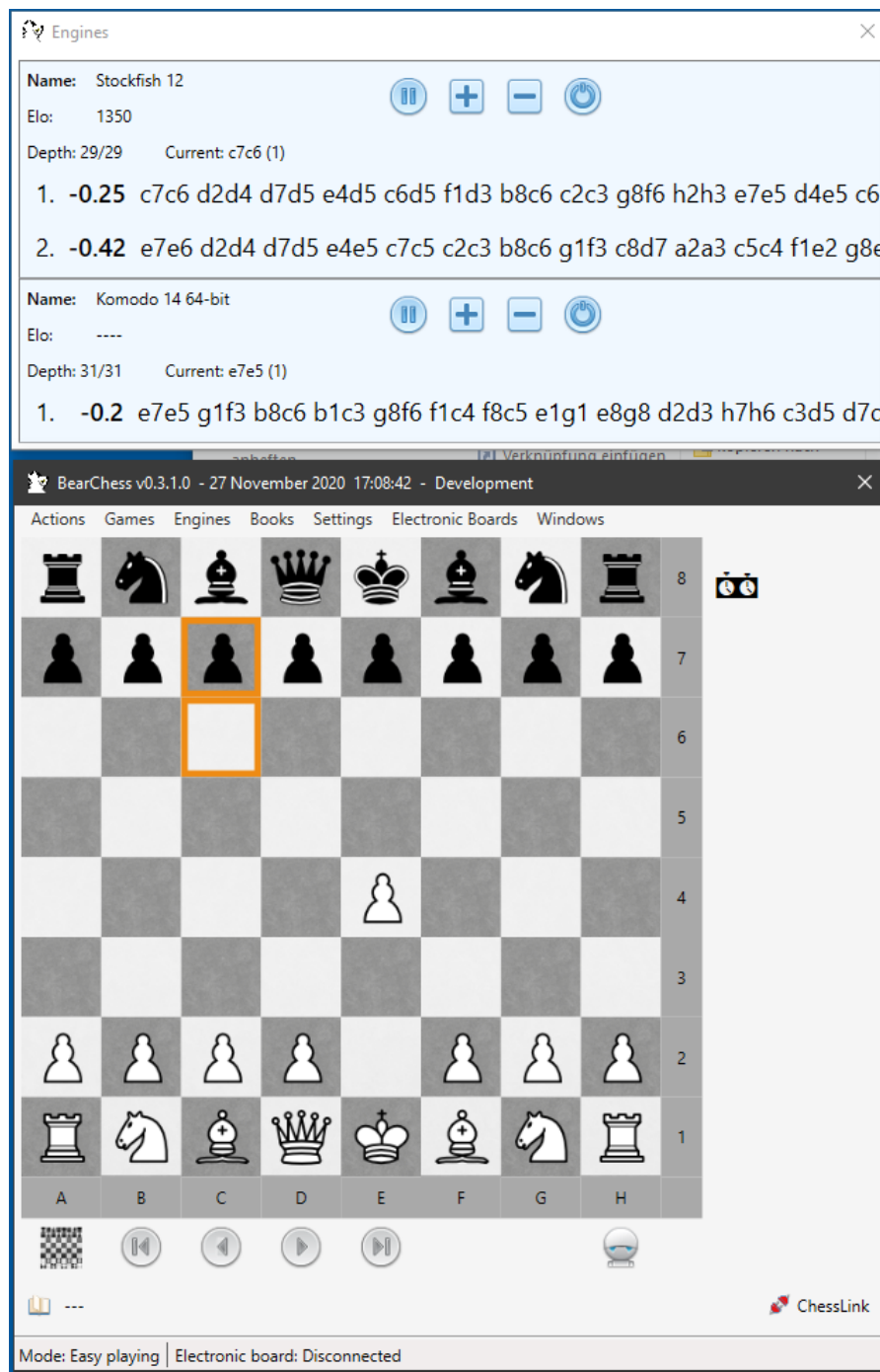


Figure 96: Two loaded engines

19 Extended engine support

Another outstanding feature compared to other GUIs is the extended engine support. You can load one or more engines at any time to assist you in a game against another engine or another player.

1. Start a new game against an engine.
2. Load a second engine for assistant.

The following figure gives you an example. You play a game against Stockfish and Komodo gives hints for the next best move.



Figure 97: Play against Stockfish with support from Komodo

Even if you are not playing a game and are on mode "Easy playing", just load some engines and make your moves.

20 Important To Know

20.1 Certabo: Calibration

For the first time, the engine assumes that all chessmen are on their initial position and the extra queens on d3 (white queen) and d6 (black queen). You can also perform the calibration without extra queens. But this has an effect on the transformation of a pawn into a queen.

20.2 Certabo: Pawn conversion to a queen

If you have performed the calibration without extra queens and are performing a pawn conversion with a extra queen on your board for the first time, the program needs a few seconds to identify the new piece. Please wait until the LEDs are off. The new piece code is stored. There is no delay next time.

21 Trouble shooting

21.1 The chess moves are not or not correctly displayed

- Check the correct COM port in the configuration dialog.
- Reconnect to the chessboard.
- Check the position of the chessmen. Moves are only accepted if the chessmen are on the correct square. Fields with missing or wrong figure light up.

22 Known Issues

- **Setup position** It is not completely checked whether the position is valid. This also applies to castling rights.
- Some windows may overlap for the first time, e.g. the clocks for white and black.
- If you want to play an engine match with the same engine for black and white you have to install the engine twice with a different name.
- **Show captured pieces** cannot handle if one color has more than one queen.
- The reaction to changes on the chessboard is sometimes slow.

23 Next Steps

The next release will be more of a bug fix and revision of existing features before any major feature additions.

24 Changelog

24.1 Version 0.4.2.1 =>0.4.2.2

- Fixed a bug running additional engines in a game.

24.2 Version 0.4.2.0 =>0.4.2.1

- Fixed bug in number conversion that crashes the program.

24.3 Version 0.4.1.0 =>0.4.2.0

- Bluetooth support for Certabo chessboards.
- Playing games in tournament mode.
- Minor fixes.

24.4 Version 0.4.0.0 =>0.4.1.0

- Using a database file instead PGN.
- Allows you to continue a previously saved game.
- Extended information in the move list window.
- Extended information in the engines window.
- Minor fixes.

24.5 Version 0.3.3.0 =>0.4.0.0

- New time configuration "Adapted time".
- Implementation of the "Start the clock after the move is executed on the electronic board" time setting.
- Bluetooth support for Millennium ChessLink.
- Recognizing the base position as a new start of a game.
- Configuration of a startup game.
- Changing the behaviour of "Easy playing" mode
- Correction and extension of the evaluating of UCI configuration values.
- Correction at the start of a new game (Engine was not started).
- Correction if the engine starts with white.
- Minor fixes.

24.6 Version 0.3.2.0 =>0.3.3.0

- Support of opening books for engines.
- Opening book: When castling, the correct squares are displayed.
- Improvements and bug fixes in "New Game" dialog.
- Minor fixes.

24.7 Version 0.3.1.1 =>0.3.2.0

- Show check and mate signs in move list.
- Show captured pieces.
- Save configuration for "Black pieces in front".
- Improvements in the configuration chessmen.
- Improvements to install a new engine.

24.8 Version 0.3.1.0 =>0.3.1.1

- **Hotfix** Error at pure engine match.
- Improvements in the handling of UCI configuration values.

24.9 Version 0.3.0.0 =>0.3.1.0

- Improvements in the calibration for Certabo chessboards.
- Fixed an error on pawn conversation.
- Fixed an error on position setup via electronic chessboard.