

Chessmaster history

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chessmaster>

<https://chessprogramming.wikispaces.com/Chessmaster>

Chessmaster was first released as **Chessmaster 2000** in **1986** by Software Toolworks, Inc., a software and computer game publisher located in Los Angeles, co-developed by its founder Walt Bilofsky¹ and Michael E. Duffy, with a chess engine by David Kittinger, loosely based on MyChess II published by the same vendor since 1984. CM 2000 was released for various 8- and 16-bit home computer platforms based on 6502, Z80, 68000 and 8086 processors, such as Amiga, Apple II, Atari 8-bit, Atari ST, ZX Spectrum, Commodore 64, Amstrad CPC, Macintosh, and DOS PCs. The PC version was a rewrite in C based on the 6502 assembly version, which also went into Novag's dedicated Constellation some years before, as mentioned by Larry Kaufman in the USOCCC 1986 tournament report.

Novag's programmer Dave Kittinger also was the programmer of the three PC software entries under the name "Chessmaster". As they employ a version of the rather dated "Constellation" program they were not expected to be competitive with the dedicated units, except for "Chessmaster 2000 Apple" which employed extensive technology to run at high speed.

Sargon 3

After a deal with Fidelity Electronics in **1988**, *Software Toolworks* continued the Chessmaster series for Apple computers with a Sargon III based program by Kathe and Dan Spracklen, market as **Fidelity Chessmaster 2100**. PC versions of CM 2100 were based on a Kittinger program.

Chessmaster 3000

The *Chessmaster 3000* was released in **1991** for MS-DOS and Windows 3.x PCs, as well for Apple Macintosh, based on a Kittinger program as confirmed by John Merlino and mentioned in CCR 5.1.

Kittinger's first program for personal computers was incorporated into the popular program Chessmaster 2000 developed by Software Toolworks. Kittinger's program was then modified and used in some of the versions of Chessmaster 2100 and Chessmaster 3000.

Fernando Villegas recalled Michael E. Duffy and Andrew Iverson working on the engine, which does not necessarily imply they had an own one developed from scratch, but interfacing the Kittinger engine to the GUI.

The King

With the release of **Chessmaster 4000 Turbo** in **1993**, The King by Johan de Koning became the CM engine until the present, with annual, biennial and triennial releases for major Windows versions until *Chessmaster XI* in 2007, incorporating the **The King 3.50** with a parallel search able to support multiple processors. The King Version **3.12** has become a WinBoard engine within the **ChessMaster 8000** and newer versions. Some versions were also made available for Mac OS computers, and the Xbox Live Arcade.

Releases

- 1986: Chessmaster 2000 - based on MyChess II by David Kittinger
- 1989: Fidelity Chessmaster 2100 -based on Sargon III by Kathe and Dan Spracklen
- 1991: Chessmaster 3000 - Kittinger program
- 1993: Chessmaster 4000 Turbo - The King by Johan de Koning
- 1995: Chessmaster 4000 - The King 2.0
- 1996: Chessmaster 5000 - The King 2.x
- 1997: Chessmaster 5500 - The King 2.55
- 1998: Chessmaster 6000 - The King 2.6D or 2.61
- 1999: Chessmaster 7000 - The King 3.x
- 2000: Chessmaster 8000 - The King 3.12a, 3.12c, 3.12d
- 2002: Chessmaster 9000 - The King 3.23
- 2004: Chessmaster 10th - The King 3.33
- 2007: Chessmaster XI - The King 3.50

Endgame Tablebases

Chessmaster **9000** and later versions support their own compact 3-5-man Endgame Tablebases designed by Johan de Koning, which can be generated with the *Final Endgame Generator* (FEG) via the Windows Command Prompt Tablebase researcher Marc Bourzutschky further created some theoretically important six piece EGTBs in 2003.

Companies

Software Toolworks was founded in 1980 by Walt Bilofsky, who was one of three programmers who designed and created the Chessmaster in the mid 80s. In 1994, *Software Toolworks, Inc.* was merged to Mindscape in conjunction with the acquirement by Pearson PLC with Michael E. Duffy and David Grenewetzki involved, in 1998 sold to The Learning Company, in the same year bought by Mattel and renamed to *Mattel Interactive*. In 2000, The Gores Group carves out the re-renamed *Learning Company* from Mattel, and the *Game Studios* of The Learning Company was sold to Ubi Soft - all employees were given the opportunity to become employees of their most well-known studio, Red Storm Entertainment.