



COLUMNISTS

## An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen

### Touché

**I HAVE JUST RETURNED** from Varna (Bulgaria). In this beautiful city the 6<sup>th</sup> World University Chess Championship was organised. FIDE appointed me as its representative and I was there as a kind of observer. I was very happy when I saw that the popular time limit of 40/100, then 20/50 and finally G/10 (with 30 seconds per move being added throughout) was being used. In a championship like this, there are players with the GM title but there are also players without any rating. It means there are very experienced players and players who are using an electronic clock for the first time.

In almost every round there were some problems after the first four hours of play. It seemed that a player would overstep, at least according to the clock, but the scoresheets would show that 40 moves - sometimes more – had been completed. The reason was immediately clear to me: during the game some players did not press the clock and their opponents would make a move, sometimes immediately. And although the organisers informed the players several times that they had to complete their moves by stopping the own clock, these "incidents" occurred right to the end.

I did not have a lot to do in this event; it was a good opportunity to work on the draft of the Laws of Chess. After reading all the comments, I prepared a final draft, I sent it to FIDE and FIDE mailed it to all federations. The final draft is also available on the FIDE website: [www.worldfide.com](http://www.worldfide.com). For some articles I published several variations (Article 6.10, 10.2(!), C4).

**Question 1** Dear Mr. Gijssen, I have two questions for you: I have a question about the article B.01 5.5 of the FIDE handbook that is about which time controls are acceptable for international title tournaments.

*B.01 5.5: The speed of play must not exceed 46 moves in two hours at any stage of the game except that a sudden death (quickplay finish) final time control of at least 30 minutes may be used in a tournament with games lasting at least seven hours. (GA '93) With electronic clocks, the speed of play must not exceed 46 moves in 2 hours at any stage of the game and an additional time of at least 15 seconds for every move from move 1 may be added. (GA '93) The rate of play of 40 moves in two hours followed by all the moves in one hour is permitted for title results. However, only one such result can be used in support of a title application. (GA '93)*

It looks like the official FIDE rate of play of 40 moves in 100 minutes, followed by 20 moves in 50 minutes, followed by all the move in 10 minutes with the addition of 30 seconds after each move is not legal for FIDE title tournaments: The length of the game is not guaranteed to be at least 7 hours, so no quick-play finish is possible (in fact there is never any quickplay finish when 30 seconds are added after each move) and there is no guarantee that the rate of play will not exceed 46 moves in two hours at any stage of the game: in fact when a player has exhausted his final 10 minutes he must play the rest of the game at the rate of 240 moves in 2 hours which is much more than what is allowed. Is a norm realised at the official FIDE time control valid?

**Answer** I remember very well the negotiations between the producer of the DGT clocks and the FIDE President, Mr. Campomanes, during the match Karpov – Timman in Apeldoorn (The Netherlands) in September 1993. At that time it was decided that in the future, electronic clocks should be used in chess tournaments. A few months later there was the FIDE Congress in South America, where some decisions were taken regarding the electronic clocks. See the regulations cited by you above. These decisions were taken although there were not many experiences with electronic clocks. We have the same situation in the Laws of Chess. There are only two Articles in the Laws of Chess where the electronic clocks are (implicitly) mentioned: Article 6.2 (a paragraph about the time delay mode) and Article 8.4: *If a player has less than five minutes left on his clock and does not have additional time of 30 seconds or more added with each move, then he is not*

*obliged to meet the requirements of Article 8.1 (i.e., to write the moves).*

After a lot of experience in tournaments with the new time limit, it is time to change the regulations. I will send your questions to the Chairman of the Qualification Commission.

After the Olympiad in Elista 1998 many norms were recognised with the FIDE time limit.

Some final remarks: Using the FIDE time limit the players make more or less 40 moves in 2 hours in the first session and 20 moves in 1 hour in the second.

**Question 2** I have another question: is the rate of play of 40 moves in 100 minutes with the addition of 30 seconds after each move followed by all the moves in 60 legal for a game of chess?

*Article 6.2: When using a chess clock, each player must make a certain number or all moves in an allotted period of time and/or may be allocated an additional amount of time after each move. All this must be specified in advance. The time saved by a player during one period is added to his time available for the next period, except in the 'time delay' mode.*

What is not clear is whether or not the additional amount must be the same for every time control. I have noted that the DGT clock cannot be programmed to use a different increment in each time control, which cast a doubt upon the legality of such time control. **Pierre Denommée (Canada)**

**Answer** I do not see any reason why this time control should be illegal. I have spoken with many grandmasters about time limits. Generally they are quite satisfied with the Fischer modus. But many of them prefer the following time limit: 40 moves in 2 hours, then 20 moves in 1 hour (all quite traditional) and then 10 minutes for the remaining moves (or 15 minutes) with an additional 30 seconds for each move. This option is at the moment not available on the DGT clock, but in the near future it will be.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, First of all I wish to congratulate you on your column. In my opinion it is of enormous help for all chess arbiters (and players too). Unfortunately, only a few arbiters in my country have computer access to the internet and knowledge of the English language. We'll be glad to translate our articles into Serbian and distribute them to all arbiters (and/or reprint in our chess revue), if you don't mind. I have two questions for you, both of them are concerning Article 8 of the Laws of Chess.

*Note: All material appearing at **The Chess Café** is copyrighted and may not be reprinted or distributed without the express, written consent of **The Chess Café**.*

**Question 1** Player A made his move. At that moment, player B had 6 minutes left on his clock. Now player B started thinking about his response, so when he made his move he had less than 5 minutes left. What should the arbiter do: require player B to write the previous move of player A or not? (My personal opinion is that arbiter should react flexibly. It is not the same situation if B has 4 minutes for 2 moves, or 20 seconds for 10 moves.)

**Answer** It is not only a matter of flexibility, it is completely according to the Laws of Chess. At the moment a player has less than five minutes left on his clock he is not obliged to write the moves (Article 8.4) and a player may reply to his opponent's move before recording it (Article 8.1).

**Question 2** Player A made his move and player B responded before recording it (as per Article 8.1). Almost at the same time player A made another move, so B had to write two moves of A and one of his own. Is he required to do this immediately, or may he do this at any time before he makes his another move? **IA Branislav Suhartovic (Yugoslavia)**

**Answer** I quote Article 8.1: *A player must record his previous move before making another.* This means that he has to write player A's first move and his previous move. He may make his next move and then he may write Player A's second move, even after he (Player B) has made his second move.

**Question** When playing speed chess, G/7 or less, do you have to announce checkmate? I would like to know where to find the rules for speed chess: **M. Wayne (USA)**

**Answer** The term speed chess is not usual. Games where all moves must be made in a fixed time less than 15 minutes are called Blitz games. In Appendix C of the Laws of Chess you can find the

Laws of Blitz Chess. Article 5 of the Laws of Chess says: *The game is won by the player who has checkmated his opponent's king with a legal move. This immediately ends the game.* Well, to make it clear that a player checkmated his opponent and that the game is finished, it is wise to inform the opponent that he has been checkmated, after the fact, not before.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, In your *Flying Rooks* column [See The Chess Café Archives for August] Thorsten Schaller asked what should be ruled in a blitz game when a player grabs a piece to mate his opponent, but oversteps the time limit before he can complete his move. The answer wasn't too difficult in this case, but what if the 'mating' player had only one legal move with the touched piece?

This situation won't occur too often, but it reminds me of a blitz game where I grabbed the last pawn of my opponent, touched the piece with which it was to be removed and overstepped the time limit at that moment, just before completing the move. If I hadn't overstepped the time limit, I would not have had the right to play another move and my opponent would have had no mating potential, and the game would have been (at least) drawn. I mean, if you do not have the right to play another move, the move 'feels' completed. What is your opinion? **Frits Fritschy (The Netherlands)**

**Answer** As long as a move has not been made, i.e., the piece was moved to another square and the hand had released this piece, it is impossible to claim something as mate or stalemate or no mating potential of the opponent. And therefore my opinion is that in the situation you described above, the player simply overstepped the time and lost the game. It is quite funny that you wrote that the move 'feels' completed before the move even was made.

This reminds me of an incident in the recent played Schuhplattler tournament in Munich. In a game neither player wrote the moves, because each had less than five minutes on the clocks. Hort touched a Rook with the intention of moving it, but at that moment his flag fell. It was his 42<sup>nd</sup> move. I said immediately: "Stop" and told Hort that he may not make his move but he had to place his Rook on the original square, in this case on b6. He did so, both players wrote the moves and I restarted Hort's clock. And then Hort started to complain that he had to move the Rook on b6, even though another move would finish the game immediately. After quite a long thought, Hort moved the Rook and his opponent, Nana Ioseliani, was lucky to achieve a draw (and also a [male] GM norm.

**Question** Dear Mr. Geurt Gijssen: I always read your column with great interest, and you have previously answered some questions posed by me in a very satisfactory way. My current question does not have anything to do with the rules of chess per se, but rather with the seemingly mysterious "moves" behind the working out of chess ratings at the higher most level.

Many years ago a chess magazine published some formulae aimed at calculating or working out the ratings of chess masters. I wonder if those formulae have been changed or what, since according to my figures Viswanathan Anand must have a higher rating than that of Vladimir Kramnik. Since you presumably hold an official position at FIDE, you might have access to those official calculations?

On the face of it Anand's results have been significantly superior to those of Kramnik during the last five years or so, but then why on earth is Kramnik still holding the world's number two position at the ranking list ahead of Anand? According to my calculations, Anand's rating is at least 20 points higher than that of Kramnik. This is highly mysterious to me, as it seems that they are prearranging ratings with commercial purposes (as though they were trying to make the forthcoming Kramnik vs. Kasparov match more attractive to the public). If those in charge of working out the ratings really believe that Kramnik must be rated higher than Anand, why don't they publish the figures or the calculations that should prove that fact and explain everything?

Maybe I am wrong in my calculations or have somehow overlooked certain data, or else whom are they trying to deceive? Do you remember when Gata Kamsky horribly crushed Kramnik in a match some years ago? Curiously, that didn't seem to affect Kramnik's rating at all; nor did Shirov's win over Kramnik a few years ago do it. Is Kramnik's rating supposed to be protected or ensured against defeats? **Gabriel Velasco (Mexico)**

**Answer** Let me start to tell you that the only "functions" in FIDE I have is to be a member of some commissions. I am not a member of the board of FIDE. I am not a member of the Executive

Council, and so on. And in principle anyone who would like to be a member of any commission has the possibility to be nominated.

Every six months FIDE publishes a rating list. And I can assure that all professional (top) players have made their calculations regarding their new ratings, and not only their own ratings, but also the ratings of other players. If for instance according to player A, player B has a too high rating, player A will immediately ask for clarification. I have to admit, that it happens quite often that the published ratings are not correct and I have discovered some reasons why this is so. A short list:

1. A federation did not send in the rating report on time. I know for instance that some rating reports have been sent to FIDE 4 or 5 months after tournaments were finished.
2. Occasionally the federation does not send the rating report to FIDE, perhaps to protect their own players, who scored badly.
3. Sometimes a report is sent twice and FIDE calculates this tournament twice. This happens for instance when an arbiter sends the report to FIDE and the federation does it several months later.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, first of all I'd like to say I appreciate very much your answers because they are very clear! My question (from a friend): We are playing and a position that has just been repeated 2 times, is now going to be repeated for the third time but with a difference: White's Knights have swapped positions: can I claim a draw? I hope I have explained in the correct way the situation. **Massimo Luise (Italy)**

**Answer** Yes I understand your question completely. You can claim a draw in this situation. See Article 9.2: Positions are considered the same, if the same player has the move, *pieces of the same colour occupy the same squares*, and the possible moves of all the pieces of both players are the same.

If I remember correctly, Fischer was of the opinion that in the situation you describe the positions are different. And therefore he wanted the king Knights and king Rooks to be distinguished.

**Question** In a recent blitz tournament, the following situation arose: In the final moments of a game, Player A made a move and said "Pat" at the same moment his flag fell. Player B replied "It would be pat if it were my turn to play, but you are out of time therefore you lost, I don't have to play". Player A eventually agreed, was the interpretation of the Player B correct? There were quiet a few pawns left on the board (all blocked). **Jean-Pierre Grenier, (Canada)**

**Answer** First of all, let me explain to the readers, who are wondering what 'pat' means. It is stalemate. I understand that player B was 'stalemated'. Article 5.2 says:

*The game is drawn when the player to move has no legal move and his king is not in check. The game is said to end in 'stalemate'. This immediately ends the game.*

The last sentence is essential. At the moment the stalemate position is on the board, the game is over. Anything that happens afterwards, for instance a flag fall, is not relevant. The interpretation of Player B is wrong. It was a draw.

*Have a question for Geurt Gijssen? Perhaps he will respond to it in a future column. Send it to [hwr@chesscafe.com](mailto:hwr@chesscafe.com). Please include your name and country of residence.*

Copyright 2000 Geurt Gijssen. All Rights Reserved.



[\[The Chess Cafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Reviews\]](#) [\[Bulletin Board\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)  
[\[Endgame Studies\]](#) [\[The Ninth File\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)  
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About The Chess Cafe\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2000 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.  
"The Chess Cafe®" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.