



COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen

Poll Position

At this time I am in Ohrid (Macedonia) as chief arbiter of the European Individual Championship. This tournament is also a qualification tournament for the World Chess Championship 2001. It is a very strong tournament with 202 players, among them 147 Grandmasters. 46 of them will qualify for the World Championship. 5 of the participants are already qualified by FIDE and three of them are on the FIDE reserve list. It means that 51 will definitely play.

In this championship the games were played according to the new time limit that was decided by the FIDE board during its meeting in Teheran 2000: 40 moves in 75 minutes, then 15 moves for the remaining moves with an increment of 30 seconds or each move from move 1. The rounds were finished after about four and a half hours, but the majority of the games were finished within three and a half hours.

After 9 rounds I polled the players about the time limit. There were 127 players who responded.

The first question was: the time limit in this tournament is:

Very good	Good	No opinion	Bad	Very bad
13 (10.24%)	35 (27.56%)	10 (7.87%)	35 (27.56%)	34 (26.77%)

Although 54% of the players considered this time limit bad or very bad, I expected an even larger majority to be against it.

The second question was: Which time limit do you prefer:

1. The time limit of this tournament	33 (25.98%)
2. Fischer modus: 40 moves in 100 minutes, then 20 moves in 50 minutes, then 10 minutes for the remaining moves with an addition of 30 sec from move 1	53 (41.73%)
3. 40 moves in 2 hours, then 20 moves in 1 hour, then 30 minutes for the remaining moves	27 (21.26%)
4. Another time limit	14 (11.02%)

These figures can be interpreted many ways, but I was quite surprised that 68% of the players who answered preferred a Fischer modus. From the 69 players, who responded that the time limit used in this tournament was bad or very bad, 44 preferred the Fischer modus of option 2.

The main complaint about the time limit was, that the players had no time at the end of the first period to relax, smoke a cigarette or to go to the bathroom. In many cases they had only 15 minutes on their clock and they had the feeling they were again or still in Zeitnot. Another remark was that the game was devaluated to a rapid game.

Another remarkable opinion was that chess must be considered as a sport with all consequences. As in other sports, there should not be time for relaxation. The players should be always under pressure.

Another important item was the tiebreak-system. The pairings were made with a Swiss system based on ratings. In this case it was quite logical to use the ratings also for tiebreak matches and final standings in the event of an equal score. There were 13 rounds in this tournament and I proposed to the President of the ECU, Boris Kutin, to use the average ratings of the opponents less the two lowest rated players as criterion. It turned out that after the 13th round, 21 players were shared the same 4 places as well as the 3 reserve places. I suggested the following tiebreak matches.

7 players should get a bye in the first round. The other 14 players should play 7 matches. These matches produce 7 winners. The highest ranked player should qualify for the World

Championship. The other 6 players should play matches. The winners should qualify for the World Championship and the 3 losers are the reserves.

During a players meeting after the 13th round it turned out that the reserve places were very much a topic of dispute and the players agreed that the ECU President should appoint the eventual reserve players. The consequence was that 21 players were fighting for 4 places. The schedule was as follows: 11 players received a bye in the first round. 10 players played matches for 5 places. The winners of these matches and the players who got a bye in the first round played 8 matches in the second round. The winners of the second round played 8 matches and finally the winners of the third-round matches qualified for the World Championship. Each match consisted of 2 games with 15 minutes for each player and an increment of 10 seconds per move. In the event that the score was equal, the players played one game with white having 6 minutes and black 5 minutes at the start without an increment. In case of a draw, black qualified for the next round. Before these sudden death games there was a drawing of lots for colors. The winner had the right to choose colors. Remarkably, everyone who won the toss chose black. Apparently they were very self-confident that they would be able to make a draw. In a few games there were minor incidents.

From this point, all reference to the Laws of Chess shall mean those enacted and in effect as of 1 July 2001.

Question Sir, Thank you for your recent reply to my question regarding the "mating material required" subject. You asked me where I found the rule which I stated. It is found in the FIDE section of the *United States Chess Federation's Official Rules of Chess*. As you are probably aware, we in the USA often run Sudden Death time controls. Though I found the ruling in FIDE's section for Blitz rules, I felt that the spirit of the rule could allow it to be analogously applied to all controls, including Sudden Death, not just Blitz or Rapid controls.

Also, I must admit that my example was faulty. Therefore, same question, only the rook pawn has not been so far advanced i.e., perhaps it is still on its original square, but the opponent's King still has the queening square under control. For instance, let's suppose that white's King has just captured a promoted pawn on g1. Black has a pawn on h7, and King is close by. Black advances his h7 pawn, punches the clock, and white's flag falls. It is incredible to me that black should win this game on time.

A more incredible position would be in a K + P endgame, where all the pawns are blocked, and each player's king is behind his own pawns, and neither player, even with the worst play, can make progress, i.e., there are no legal moves in which a pawn can be moved, and neither side's King can penetrate the position, even if the opponent was cooperative. I remember this latter situation being discussed in the USA, quite a while back, but I don't remember the outcome.
Terry Winchester (USA)

Answer a. To be honest, personally I am not very happy with the USCF rules, because on different points they are different from the FIDE rules. In the past I have received several questions from chessplayers who told me that they were confused. For example, I have already mentioned in one of my previous *Notebooks* that to claim a win on time, the player has to show a complete scoresheet. This is not written in the FIDE Laws of Chess, either in the "old" or in the "new" ones.

b. If in the position White: Kg1, pawn h7, Black: Kh8 Black's flag falls, the game is lost.

The reason is simple. Black still has mating material.

c. Your last example is a different case. For this I quote Article 9.6 of the Laws of Chess:

"The game is drawn when a position is reached from which a checkmate cannot occur by any possible series of legal moves, even with the most unskilled play. This immediately ends the game."

Question Hi Geurt, firstly congratulations on a very informative and well-conducted column. Keep up the great work. I have a question for you regarding the use of Article 10.2 (see below). My understanding is that this rule applies in the event where a person who has the material advantage has decided that they would win by allowing their opponent to lose on time rather than by forcing the win via mate. My question is whether a player who has a winning position (for example K+R+Q vs. K+R) but does not have sufficient time to force the mate can also apply it. If

he offers a draw but the opponent refuses (wanting the win on time) can the player with the superior position claim the draw? What is your opinion? **John Mazziere (Australia)**

Answer I quote again (a part of) Article 10.2: "If the player, having the move, has less than two minutes left on his clock, he may claim a draw before his flag falls. If the arbiter agrees the opponent is making no effort to win the game by normal means, or that it is not possible to win by normal means, then he shall declare the game drawn. Otherwise he shall postpone his decision."

You refer in your question to a winning position. As an arbiter I do not know what a winning or better position is. I know positions that cannot be won by a player. For instance: White: Kb1 Rc2 Black: Kh8. I understand that Black cannot win this position and White probably can win this position. Suppose Black has less than two minutes and he claims a draw, I shall order the players to continue the game. Suppose the continuation is as follows: 1...Kg8 2. Rg2, Kf8 3 Rf2 Ke8 4 Re2 Kd8 5 Rd2 Kc8 6 Rc2 Kb8 7 Rb2 Ka8 8 Ra2 Kb8 9 Rb2 and so on. At a certain moment Black's flag falls. What is your opinion? Does White win the game? I do not think so. In my opinion White was making no effort to win the game by normal means, i.e. to checkmate the opponent's king. I shall declare the game drawn.

Question How is the law regarding claiming a draw when in the last two minutes of a game usually interpreted? At one time the law said if you were clearly winning you could claim a draw rather than flag. Now it seems to say if your opponent can't win you can claim a draw. This change of wording makes a huge difference. Could you elaborate on how this is interpreted? **Phil Boyle (Canada)**

Answer This is more or less the same question as the previous one. I have a question for you: Where is it written that the player who is clearly winning may claim a draw? The answer: There is no any article in the Laws of Chess where this is written. An arbiter should never give his opinion about a position and never make a decision based on any judgment about the position. It is my modest opinion that there are no changes in the Laws of Chess regarding the essential point of this Article.

Question In the May 16 *Notebook*, you say that a pre arranged draw should be scored 0-0. So why did you not put this into action during the Istanbul Olympiad, e.g., Hungary vs. China in the last round of the Women's Olympiad and Russia v England in the Men's - many other examples possible. Can you really be unaware these results were decided before play began? **D. Bryson (Scotland)**

Answer Yes, I am unaware that the results of these matches were pre-arranged. It means that nobody informed that there were contacts between the teams involved before the rounds started. It happens very often that during the game (even a few minutes after the start of the round) the captains start to speak to each other and inform the players to agree to draws. I am not happy with these kind of agreements, but according to the regulations of team matches the captains are allowed to do so.

Question Dear Geurt, At a recent county match in England involving teams of 16 players each, the boards were set up alternately so that players from the same team would sit on the same side, rather than the sets all facing the same way as is usually the case in tournaments. Two minutes before the match was due to begin, the arbiter announced that all clocks must face the same way so that he could have a clear view of all the clocks in the match. When this was queried, he pointed to a rule that stated that in tournaments the arbiter should determine the placing of the clocks. He also refused players the option of turning the board around so that players with the black pieces could choose which side of the board the clock would be on, whilst still keeping all the clocks facing the same way. He maintained that there was no such rule about the player with the black pieces choosing where the clock should be placed. And so it was that our team sat down with the clocks all on the left, and the opposition had them all on the right. This ruling, if it was indeed correct, does not seem fair. Should rules intended for tournament play to be invoked for match play? **Paul McMahan (England)**

Answer Let me start saying that the arbiter was completely right deciding where the clocks were to be placed. See Article 6.4 of the new Laws of Chess. By the way, this is the same text as in the "old" Laws of Chess. And it makes sense, in my opinion, to place the clocks so that the clocks are also facing the same way. Especially in Zeitnot the arbiter can see in one glance where there are problems. You referred to the old Laws of Chess, where the abovementioned Article is a part of

the Tournament Rules. In the new Laws of Chess we replaced "Tournament Rules" by "Competition Rules". This covers all kind of competitions: tournament, matches, team competitions, et cetera.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, Those questions are about the new Laws of chess coming into force July 1st 2001. I have once more questions about the infamous "inverted queen" problem. In all those cases a player promotes a pawn and instead of exchanging it for a queen, exchanges it for an inverted rook or any other illegal queen substitute. The arbiter, who is monitoring 120 players, does not see anything before it is too late. We are far from the ideal situation of one arbiter supervising two players.

Is such a promotion considered an illegal move or an incomplete move? The move is incomplete because the player pressed his clock before actually making a move correctly. The Laws of Chess do not explicitly limits the number of incomplete moves allowable during a game whereas the number of illegal moves will be limited to three per game. Also each illegal move carries an automatic two-minute penalty while in case of incomplete moves the penalty is left to the discretion of the arbiter.

If numerous moves have been played before the discovery of the inverted queen by an arbiter, do we have to return back to the position just before the promotion? This is the case if we treat the case as an illegal move. This doesn't look good because it could actually be favorable to the player who promoted illegally, if he has made a blunder after the promotion.

Is a mate delivered by a move of the inverted queen considered a mate with a legal move that immediately terminates the game?

Is a stalemate delivered by a move of the inverted queen considered a stalemate with a legal move that immediately terminates the game? The difference with the previous case is that it is usually in the offender's interest (I assume beginning players who sometime stalemate without realizing it despite a decisive superiority) to replay the move that has caused stalemate and he could replay it because he did not promote correctly! That is getting a reward for violating the Laws of Chess.

Does each further move of the inverted queen constitute an illegal move by itself and does a player have the right to claim a win after the third move of the inverted queen? More generally, if a player makes two illegal moves the position will be set back as it was before the first illegal move took place and the second illegal move will no longer be part of the game history. In this case do we count two illegal moves and impose a penalty of four minutes or do we forgive the illegal move that is no longer part of the game history?

I have learned on the Internet that GM Shirov had been declared lost in a blitz game when he promoted a pawn and left it as a pawn on the eights rank. The opponent patiently waited until Shirov moved the pawn backward (as a Queen could do) and claimed a win by illegal move that was granted by the arbiter. Was it really necessary to wait that long? Why not claiming immediately after the completion of the move that left the unpromoted pawn on the eights rank?

Finally, do you know any place from which I could download a FIDE endorsed Swiss Dubov pairing program? **Pierre Dénomée (Canada)**

Answer I think it makes sense to quote Article 6.13.b:

A player may stop the clocks only in order to seek the arbiter's assistance, for instance when promotion has taken place and the piece required is not available. Intentionally we gave in the Laws of Chess the example that the clocks may be stopped when a player needs a Queen. I would also like to quote two other Articles of the Laws of Chess. First of all I draw your attention to Article 4.7: When, as a legal move or part of a legal move a piece has been released on a square, it cannot then be moved to another square. The move is considered to have been made when all the relevant requirements of Article 3 have been fulfilled.

And let us go to one of the Articles of Article 3 and especially Article 37.e: *When a pawn reaches the rank furthest from its starting position it must be exchanged as part of the same move for a queen, rook, bishop or knight of the same colour. The player is not restricted to pieces that have been captured previously. This exchange of a pawn for another piece is called 'promotion' and the effect of the new piece is immediate.*

It is clear that the not all requirements are fulfilled when a player does not exchange the pawn for

another piece or even leaves the pawn on the board. In my opinion it is not an illegal move, but an illegal action, that can disturb the opponent. And also for an illegal action the arbiter may give a penalty.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, Wonderful work! And now, three limit cases. What are match results? (a) Player A makes his third illegal move (Article 10.3), player B has bare King (Article 9.6); (b) Player A moves his pawn to a8 and says 'Queen and mate' just before flag falls. -A doesn't change the pawn for a Queen; (c) Blitz game. W: Ka1, pawns a6, d4 // B: Ke6, h3. White moves the incorrect move: 1. Kd5*, Black replies : 1.... a7. White stops the clock claiming the win because Black made an illegal move – from an impossible position. **Laura Nogueira (Belgium)**

Answer I like the way you formulate your questions: short and to the point.

(a) You refer to Article 10.3. This is part of the Quickplay finish rules. This Article is in the latest version moved of the Laws of Chess moved to Article 7 and will apply to all phases of a normal game. Well, you are right to refer to Article 9.6. Player A loses the game (0 points), but B does not win the game, because he cannot checkmate his opponent and receives only half a point. Result of the game: ½-0 or 0-: ½.

(b). See the previous question and answer. The move does not fulfill all requirements of Article 3. The verbal message: “Queen” is not enough. The flag fall is decisive for the result of the game.

(c) Am I right that white played the illegal move Ka1-d5 and black answered h3-a7? Of course both moves are illegal. Apparently Black did not stop the clocks after White's illegal, but made an illegal move himself. Black lost the right to claim the win by making a move. When Black completed his illegal move White could claim the win.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I was re-reading Jan Timman's *Het Smalle Pad*, in which he describes his famous game against Velimirovic, Rio de Janeiro 1979, and he says that the arbiter told him that there is an exception to the 50-move rule for K + 2N vs. K + pawn. In those positions, there is a 100-move rule. Is this so? I have tried to look it up in the FIDE rules, but found nothing about this exception. **Harm de Oude (Holland)**

Answer In 1979 the 50-move rule did exist as well, but at that time there were exceptions for some endings. Since 1992 these exceptions have not existed anymore. For all positions we have now one rule, without no exceptions.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, As a member of the Tribunal of arbitration of the Swiss Chess Federation and President of the Board of Appeals of the Geneva Chess Federation, I am particularly interested in the FIDE Laws of Chess. I hereby would like to make some comments on the new Laws of Chess which have been adopted by the FIDE Congress in Istanbul and which will come into force from July 1st 2001. I would also like to discuss about chess arbitration, in particular the arbiter's duty to intervene in case of violation of the Laws of Chess.

I have noted that Article 4.6 has been amended and provides that: "A player forfeits his right to a claim against his opponent's violation of Article 4.3 and 4.4, once he deliberately touches a piece." I do not quite understand this new rule. Indeed, in case of violation of the "touch move" rule, the arbiter who constantly observes the game, as you correctly pointed out in one of your recent article at ChessCafe.com must automatically intervene and impose the appropriate sanction on the offending player, which is, in that case, to impose the obligation to move the touched piece on any legal square possible.

Therefore, I do not see when this rule can be applied. I suppose that this article can only be applicable if the arbiter fails to notice the violation of the "Touch move" rule.

Furthermore, this new article suggests that the arbiter shall only intervene in case of violation of the Laws of Chess under claim from a player against his offending opponent. This approach is clearly wrong. I strongly believe that the arbiter must always intervene automatically in case of any violation of the Laws of Chess. If he/she does not do so then he/she violates his/her duties set forth under article 13.1.

The arbiter should in no way whatsoever tolerate any violation of the Laws of Chess; therefore he/she is bound to intervene automatically in case of any violation of the rules of Chess. Moreover, the obligation that the arbiter shall observe the games would make no sense if he/she

would not be able to intervene in case of violation of the Laws of Chess.

It should be pointed out that in many countries, for example in Switzerland, chess is officially considered a sport. In every sport, the arbiter intervenes automatically in case of violation of the rules of the game; therefore, chess should not be an exception. This principle of automatic intervention of the arbiter in case of any violation of the rules is fundamental and should be clearly stipulated in the Laws of Chess.

Unfortunately, the amendment to Article 13.6 that provides: "The arbiter must not intervene in a game except in case described in the Laws of Chess." does not go in this direction. I consider this amendment to be a mistake which will only bring confusion to the arbiters who will no longer know when they have to intervene and when they do not have to intervene. Moreover, many arbiters will be reinforced into their misconception and belief that they shall only intervene in case of violation of the Laws of Chess in case of litigation.

FIDE should give details about this point and should clearly explain when the arbiter shall intervene in case of violation of the Laws of Chess. **Guy Säuberli (Switzerland)** Member of the Tribunal of Arbitration of the Swiss Chess Federation

Answer To touch a piece and to play another piece is a clear violation of the Laws of Chess. When the arbiter sees this, he must immediately intervene and punish the player who acted in this way. If the arbiter does not see this violation, the opponent may claim and it is the duty of the arbiter to find out what happened. He may ask the player whether he did what his opponent claimed, he may ask witnesses, etc.

You refer to Article 13.6:

The arbiter must not intervene in a game except in cases described by the Laws of Chess.

This Article also says in my opinion that the arbiter must intervene in cases of violation of the Laws of Chess, but the arbiter should for instance keep silent when a player can claim a draw, but shall announce "mate" when a player mated his opponent and neither player sees this.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, In a recent tournament with the new FIDE time limit, with digital clocks, the arbiter, afraid of a clock error, forced to the players to write both times every five moves. I think this is very bad for the concentration of the players, who have a new thing to remember, and I would like to know your opinion about this. Can an arbiter do this? Do you think it is a good idea? **Luis Fernandez Sales (Spain)**

Answer The answer is very short. The arbiter has no right to force the players to write the times. If he is afraid that the clocks are wrong, he or an appointed assistant should do this.

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

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