



## COLUMNISTS

## An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen

### And the Talks Go On...

There are still a lot of talk about the European Chess Championship in Ohrid. This is, of course, not very surprising, because the tournament was very strong and also very important. The importance was related to the qualification for the World Championship. And as everybody in the chess world knows, the prize fund of this tournament is very good.

As I have already mentioned in my previous column the new time limit is: 40 moves in 75 minutes, then 15 minutes for the remaining moves with an addition of 30 seconds from move 1. I agree with many players who mentioned that it was better to organise some tournaments with this time limit before Ohrid. It was clear to me that several chessplayers did not understand the consequences of this time limit. Some of them, for instance, stopped writing moves at the moment they had less than 5 minutes. And although I mentioned the regulations in the players' meeting before the start of the tournament, they were not aware of this Article of the Laws of Chess. In one case it caused even a little incident. When I informed the player about this Article, he apologised.

When I was at home even during the holidays, I was still thinking about the time limit of this event and the problems we had. The majority of the problems occurred at the end of the first period. Flags felt at move 39 or time was not added and the scoresheets showed 40 or even 41 moves; time was not added after move 40 and the clocks showed only 39 moves. In my opinion it is very simple to avoid all these problems: instead of several sessions, have only one: **Let us say that the players receive at the start 2 hours for the whole game with an additional 30 seconds per move from move 1.**

Another point is the pairings. During the tournament none of the chessplayers asked me any question about the pairings. Apparently they were not unsatisfied about the pairings. Only GM Nijboer remarked that he was not very happy that the pairings were based on ratings. In his opinion it was better to make the pairings from round 5 based on Buchholz. And he is probably right. However, the problem is that there is at the moment, except for the Olympiad, no Swiss pairings system and program based on Buchholz and authorised by FIDE. I intend making a proposal to develop such a system at the next FIDE Congress in Greece. There were also no comments about the fact that compatriots could play against each other in all rounds of the tournament, even in the last round.

In reaction to what I wrote in my previous *Notebook* I received the following from Stewart Reuben:

*Dear Geurt, In your latest column you asked whether my question about Dubov was related to my question about the European Championship. My comment, not question, about computerisation of Dubov, was intended to be for the benefit of Mr. Dénomée and we both answered about Mr Krause's experimental work.*

*You may find a little statistical work I did on the European Championship interesting. I do not have the rating performances of all the players. If I did have, then it would be possible to investigate each player separately. The table you presented is for groups of players, with the all-important group being across the middle.*

*I investigated each player who drew all three of his first three games. Here there is no doubt, those who stayed in the bottom of the second half were severely disadvantaged relative to those in the top half in terms of the strength of their opponents in the first four rounds. Whether this evened out over 13 rounds I have no idea.*

*Many players qualified for the World Championship from the European Championship. The data suggests those players were severely handicapped by their rating. I had predicted this possibility before the event and recommended the Dubov Pairing System be used. I am sure we all agree: No pairing system should be used which we know is biased against certain players. The problem is*

that one tournament proves nothing and, anyway, the analysis so far carried out makes no pretence of being statistically definitive. **Stewart Reuben**

**My comment** It is not a problem for me to send you all the data. You will find in the data all TPRs. And I am quite interested in your investigations. I looked for the players who started with three draws. In the table below you will find the players who did so. I found 23 players and as you can see 8 of them qualified (names are bold) and 4 played tiebreak games (players who scored 7.5).

Starting #	Name	Score	R <sub>c</sub> *)	Starting #	Name	Score	R <sub>c</sub>
<b>24</b>	Ehlvest	<b>8.0</b>	<b>2542</b>	<b>28</b>	Zvjaginsev	<b>8.0</b>	<b>2539</b>
<b>29</b>	Baklan	<b>8.0</b>	<b>2525</b>	<b>36</b>	Tiviakov	<b>8.5</b>	<b>2552</b>
39	Najer	7.5	2524	52	Galkin	7.5	2502
<b>53</b>	Pigusov	<b>8.0</b>	<b>2504</b>	<b>54</b>	Asrian	<b>8.0</b>	<b>2537</b>
58	Huzman	7.0	<b>2515</b>	<b>81</b>	Volkov	<b>8.0</b>	<b>2548</b>
105	Yegiazarian	7.0	<b>2545</b>	<b>107</b>	Gdanski	<b>8.0</b>	<b>2530</b>
111	Tischbieriek	4.5	2483	122	Savchenko	7.5	2598
127	Smirnov	6.0	2503	131	San Segundo	7.5	2563
132	Kantsler	5.5	2558	147	Izoria	6.0	2552
155	Ermenkov	6.5	2561	157	Podgaets	5.5	2552
166	Hillarp-Person	5.0	2502	192	Stojanovski	6.0	2560
198	Thorfinnson	6.0	2511				

\*) R<sub>c</sub> = average rating of the opponents.

I think there was another problem in this tournament. Several players had already told me before the start of the tournament that +3 (that is, a score of 8 points) is sufficient to qualify for the World Championship. And they made up their minds how to achieve this. Against a strong opponent, they tried to make a quick draw, against a weaker opponent (an opponent in the second half of the field) they played for a win.

The last round was very remarkable. All players with 7.5 points, except Beliavsky and Conquest, drew within 10 minutes, because in doing so they qualified. Players with 6.5 and 7 points were fighting for a win to qualify for the World Championship or at least for the tiebreak matches the next day.

I was not very happy with the fact that this tournament was at the same time a qualification tournament for the World Championship and a tournament for the title of European Champion. There were several players who were already qualified for the World Championship: Azmaiparashvili, M. Gurevich, Krasenkov, Short and Van Wely. They could play very relaxed, keeping only the title and the prize fund in mind. And they also had a huge influence on those who might qualify and those who might not. For example, the last round Short-Miles game won by Short. If Miles had won the game, he had the possibility of qualifying for the tiebreak matches. It is, in my opinion, better if it is possible to find sponsors for these events, to organise two separate tournaments: a qualification tournament for the world Championship and a tournament for the European Championship. I repeat, if it is possible to find sponsors for these two events.

Finally I would like to mention that in each event players who were in the second half of the field always have more problems finishing near the top of the final rankings. It is not so strange that strong players qualify in a tournament like this. I am sure this is not the end of the discussions.

**Question** Dear IA Gijssen, In at least two recent Australian events, an incident like this has occurred: Player A was clearly losing on the board and had lots of time left but Player B was very short of time. While A's clock was running, A stood up, and walked away from the playing table without making any move. In one instance, A also shrugged his shoulders and put his scoresheet in his pocket. A did not, however, leave the "playing area" in either case. Later, A returned to the table and started making moves, B having in at least one case assumed that A was resigning. In both cases B noticed A's return, and B won the game.

It seems to me that both cases (particularly the one with A putting his scoresheet away) could create a reasonable belief that A was giving up the game (although in an unusual way), and therefore violated Articles 12.5 "It is forbidden to ... annoy the opponent in any manner whatsoever." Do you agree? **Kevin Bonham (Australia)**

**Answer** I agree with you that the behaviour of the players was not correct. It is even clear that

they are wrong according to the Laws of Chess. For this I quote Article 8.2: "*The scoresheet shall be visible to the arbiter throughout the game.*" And a scoresheet in a pocket is not visible for the arbiter. There is more. In my opinion they tried to mislead their opponents in an unacceptable way. But the question is how to penalise them, because they lost already their games? More than an official warning is in my opinion not possible. By the way, since 1 July 2001 we have a new Article 8.7: "At the conclusion of the game both players shall sign both scoresheets, indicating the result of the game. Even if incorrect, this result shall stand, unless the arbiter decides otherwise."

**Question** During the last Young Masters Tournament in Lausanne there was a case, which made me think about the new Laws of Chess and its application. The situation was as follows: the tournament was played according to the new FIDE time limit (i.e., after each move, 30 seconds were added). A game was finished and won by player A. After the game he delivered a scoresheet on which the last moves (about 15) were not correctly written, but only marked by lines.

My question is: Since a move can only be played before the previous move has been written, the played move is more or less illegal because it was not completed according to the Laws of Chess.

To make only a line instead of writing the move in a correct way decreases the thinking time of the opponent, who wrote all the moves in the correct way. And this is especially important when the game finished by a flag falling.

I have given the matter and the possible solutions some thought:

1. The game is lost for the player who overstepped the time or was checkmated.
2. The same as 1, but the player who did not write the moves correctly should be warned.
3. The game shall be restarted at the point where one of the players stopped writing the moves, the clocks should be adjusted and the player who stopped writing the moves should be penalised.
4. The same procedure as in 2, but without penalty. **Michel Piguet (Switzerland)**

**Answer** I believe that the arbiters were somewhat derelict in their duties when they discovered after the game that one player did not write all the moves. Furthermore I have a question: did the chief arbiter inform the players before the start of the tournament that they had to write all the time the moves? If he did not do so, you should not blame the players for their mistakes. You made a proposal regarding penalising a wrong player. Personally I am against making such a list of penalties for all kinds of misbehaviour. In my opinion it is up to the arbiter to decide what kind of penalty he should give for misbehaviour in each individual case.

**Question** A piece touched must be moved or captured. Children often take a piece in their hands, for example a knight, and with that piece they touch another piece. They want to capture that other piece. Suddenly they realise that capturing is a very bad idea. If I want to apply the rules strictly, should I allow taking the move back?

If a person has a right to claim a draw or a win, but touches a piece instead, does he still have the right to claim a draw or a win? He has the right before making his own move. Is touching a piece already making a move?

By the way I once observed the following situation: A player made an illegal move. His king was checked by his opponent's rook. The opponent showed this by picking up the rook and moving it along the line in which it checks the king. And he said "check". I hope this is a valid way of claiming a win and the opponent is not entitled to make a move with the rook.

I also have a suggestion for making the rules more clear. According to the rules, a move is completed after pressing the clock. However a move is considered to be made after releasing the piece. Although in words the difference is small, in practice it is a major difference. I would prefer calling it finishing a turn and having made a move. I think this is clearer. People sometimes claim the right to take back a piece because 'the move is not yet completed'. **Jeroen Makkinje (Netherlands)**

**Answer** 1. If a player touches an opponent's piece with one of his own pieces, he has to take this piece if possible. He intended to take this piece. There is in my opinion no other explanation for the conduct of the player. The arbiter should be strict and order the player to take this piece. However, as I have explained many times before, the arbiter should be flexible when (very) young players are involved. The arbiter has also a task as a teacher.

2. Making a move means, moving a piece from one square to another one and releasing this piece.

Regarding draw claims Article 9.4 says: *“If the player makes a move without having claimed the draw he loses the right to claim, as in Article 9.2 or 9.3, on that move.”* It is very clear that touching a piece, even with the intention to play this piece, is not sufficient to lose the right to claim a draw.

You asked also about claiming a win. In which situations can the player claim a win? The only case is in my opinion when a player oversteps the time. And after touching a piece a player can still claim. Even after he has moved a piece, a player still has the possibility of claiming a win if his opponent has overstepped the time.

3. You wrote: a player made an illegal move. His King was checked by his opponent's Rook. You wrote further that the opponent claimed a win due to this illegal move. To claim a win after an illegal move is only possible if this illegal move is the third one in the same game. But such cases are very rare. I am virtually certain that no arbiter has declared the game lost due to a third illegal move in the same game. If I am wrong, please let me know.

The only other case that a player can claim a win after an illegal move by his opponent is in a Blitz game. Let me quote Article C3 of the Laws for Blitz games: *“An illegal move is completed once the opponent's clock has been started. However, the player is entitled to claim a win before making his own move.”*

4. I do not see any need to change the text of the Laws of Chess. The difference between “making a move” and “completing a move” is in my opinion very clear.

**Question** Dear Mr Gijssen, I am rather puzzled by a question put by David Borensztajn (Brazil) and answered by you in your July column on the matter of a player writing his move before making it.

Briefly, the situation was that player A (White) was present at the start of a tournament game but his opponent B (Black) was not. A wrote down his (intended) move but did not play it on the board and the question was is this allowed because A could change his mind and play a different move. You replied (in effect) that it was permissible for the move to be written down but not played but that the move should have been sealed so that it could not be changed. My problem with this is that, as the game was a tournament game, I assume that a clock was being used and that White's clock had been started in accordance with Art.6.5. If so, A could write down his intended move and could later change it if he wished but not so often as to amount to using notes - see your discussion of the matter in your columns of October 1998 and December 1998. (It's hardly likely that the "notes" prohibition could apply on move 1 anyway.) But, not having made a move on the board, A could not stop his clock and start his opponent's clock - see Art.6.8a. - So why he would write the move and not play it is a mystery.

In this situation, I cannot see any FIDE Law that would allow A's intended move to be sealed, thus committing him to play that move. Moreover such a course would be inconsistent with the player's right to change his intended move. This would be the case whether or not a clock was being used. **Denis Jessop (Australia)**

**Answer** I wrote in the previous Notebook: *“There is nothing written in the Laws of Chess that the player should not to make the move, but should only write it down.”* In my opinion this is very clear. My next sentence was: *“On the other hand it is not unreasonable that the move should only be written down, but in that case the move should be sealed. Then it cannot be changed.”*

It probably would have been better to say: On the other hand, **in some circumstances**, it is not unreasonable that the move should only be written down, but in that case the move should be sealed.

Let me explain. There are some players with a very extensive opening repertoire. For instance Jan Timman plays 1. e4, 1. d4, 1. c4 and 1. Nf3 with White. It is always a surprise for his opponent what Jan might play. Although I agree that a player may not be able to prepare himself in a few minutes, it can be an advantage to know what a player has played on move 1 in the absence of his opponent. And with modern technology, it is very easy to inform the opponent about White's first move. A spectator in the playing hall may call to the absent player, but even the player himself can be informed about the first move via the Internet. This is the reason why I wrote that it is not unreasonable.

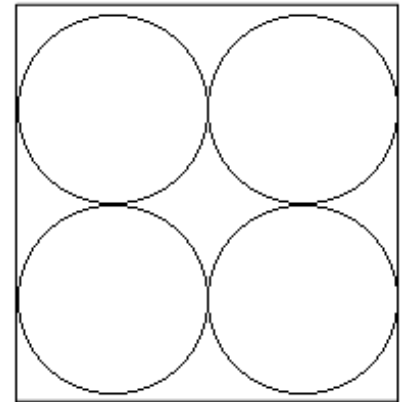
I like to mention a rule used in the Dutch national competition. When a player of a team is not present at the start of the game, the captain has the right during the first hour after the start of the match to replace him. The opponent of the absent player has the right to seal his move and to start the clock of the absent player. If the absent opponent shows up, the player has to make the sealed move, but, if the captain decides to replace the absent opponent with another one, the player who sealed the move has the right to play another move.

I remember a story of one of the matches between Kasparov and Karpov. Kasparov played white, he was on time and Karpov was not present at the start of the game. At the scheduled time I started Kasparov's clock, but he did not make a move. After Karpov's arrival he made his move. Some journalists wrote that Kasparov was very fair to wait for Karpov, but I was also told that Kasparov wanted to see Karpov's reaction after he had made his first move. I do not know the truth, but the story is interesting.

**Question** When the chess pieces are provided by the organiser in an important tournament what set is the most popular to use (brand name & availability)? What problems have you encountered with players refusing to use a particular set of pieces? **Mark Knerr (USA)**

**Answer** It is very difficult to give you the name of a brand. I can give you some sizes. At this moment the squares of the chessboards used in top tournaments are 5.5 cm x 5.5 cm. The King is 9.4 cm high. And you know probably that four pawns must just fit in one square. In the following drawing you see one square and the four pawns.

I remember two cases, that a player had problems with the pieces. In the final GMA Qualification Tournament in Moscow 1990 Seirawan did not like the typical Russian pieces provided by the organisers, but unfortunately no other pieces were available. The other case was before the match Kasparov – Karpov in Seville 1987. Karpov did not like the Knights. They were too luxurious. I replaced them by simpler Knights.



**Question** Geurt Gijssen, I was recently playing in a tournament with a time control of 40 moves in 120 minutes, followed by the rest of the moves in 60 minutes. As we entered the second time control, my opponent was winning, but with about five minutes remaining on my clock, I

succeeded in simplifying into an endgame that I thought was a theoretical draw. Not knowing exactly what to do, I just walked over and asked the tournament arbiter if I could claim a draw. He informed me that I could only do so when I had less than two minutes remaining on my clock. Therefore, at that time, I stopped the chess clock, and officially requested my claim for the theoretical draw. Two arbiters conferred about my request, and I remember them looking through a binder. Their response was that my claim had been considered, and that their decision would be announced at the end of the game, if still applicable. I was not subjected to any time penalty, and my claim was confirmed to be appropriate after the game. Back to the game, in all the time scramble excitement, I played very fast, and blundered into a loss.

My question is twofold: First of all, where can players like me find the contents of that binder that the arbiters were consulting? And secondly, if I know I have a valid theoretical draw claim, then would it not make more sense for me to play at a more reasonable pace in the last two minutes, avoiding any blunders and ensuring the proper draw? **Aris Marghetis (Canada)**

**Answer** 1. Really, I do not know in what binder the arbiters were looking at. The only thing that comes to mind is that they were reading the Laws of Chess. There is no list of positions, which are considered a draw. And I am sure that they were reading Article 10 of the Laws of Chess (Quickplay Finish).

2. The response of the arbiters that you may not claim a draw with five minutes remaining on your clock was completely correct, because Article 10.2 says that with only 2 minutes remaining such a claim is possible.

3. What I have written many times before, I will repeat: As an arbiter I do not know what theoretical draws are. I know some positions in which neither player can win, for instance K vs.

K, K + N vs. K, K + B vs. K + B with the Bishops on the same-coloured squares. At the moment one of these positions appears on the board the game is draw. And the reason is very simple: a checkmate cannot occur by any possible series of legal moves, even with the most unskilled play (Article 9.6).

4. The arbiters announced that they should announce their decision at the end of the game. What they meant is, that they would take a decision after a flag fall. It means also that they postponed their decision. Doing this, they acted according to Article 10.2b:

*“ If the arbiter postpones his decision, the opponent may be awarded two extra minutes thinking time and the game shall continue in the presence of the arbiter, if possible. The arbiter shall declare the final result after a flag has fallen.”*

5. Note that the arbiter **may** give extra thinking time to the opponent. The fact that they did not penalise you, was also a correct decision.

6. After a claim under Article 10.2, not the position, but the continuation of the game is essential: does the opponent make any effort to win the game by normal means and not by using the fact that the player has no time?

7. After point 6 it is clear that there must be a continuation. This means that you have to play some more moves. If a player claims a draw and the arbiter decides to postpone his decision, but the player decides not to make any move, the game is simply lost after his flag falls, provided that the opponent has material to checkmate the player.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, my question is concerning FIDE Handbook section B.02.10. In article 10.68 is given an example for a round-robin tournament:

*Determining the Ratings in a round-robin tournament.*

Player	Rating	score	p	d <sub>p</sub>	R <sub>c</sub>	R <sub>u</sub>	R <sub>c</sub>	R <sub>u</sub>	D	P <sub>D</sub>	We	DR
							(new)	(new)				
A	2600	8	.89	351	2320		2373		227	.79	7.11	+8.9
B	2500	7	.78	220	2331		2350		150	.7	6.3	+7
C	U	7			2348	2411	2355	2418				
D	2400	6	.67	125	2342		2348		52	.57	5.13	+8.7
E	U	6			2348	2386	2352	2390				
F	2150	4	.44	-43	2370		2359		-209	.23	2.07	+28.95
G	2300	3	.33	-125	2353		2353		-53	.43	3.87	-13.05
H	U	2			2348	2128	2332	2112				
I	U	1			2348	1997	2286	1935				
J	2300	1	.11	-351	2353		2353		-53	.43	3.87	-43.05

It seems to me that there is quite obvious mistake in this table for players E, H and I. I think that correct table is:

Player	Rating	score	p	d <sub>p</sub>	R <sub>c</sub>	R <sub>u</sub>	R <sub>c</sub>	R <sub>u</sub>	D	P <sub>D</sub>	We	DR
							(new)	(new)				
A	2600	8	.89	351	2320		2373		227	.79	7.11	+8.9
B	2500	7	.78	220	2331		2350		150	.7	6.3	+7
C	U	7			2348	2411	2355	2418				
D	2400	6	.67	125	2342		2348		52	.57	5.13	+8.7
E	U	6			<b>2348</b>	<b>2386</b>	<b>2352</b>	<b>2390</b>				
F	2150	4	.44	-43	2370		2359		-209	.23	2.07	+28.95
G	2300	3	.33	-125	2353		2353		-53	.43	3.87	-13.05
H	U	2			<b>2348</b>	<b>2128</b>	<b>2332</b>	<b>2112</b>				
I	U	1			<b>2348</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>2286</b>	<b>1935</b>				
J	2300	1	.11	-351	2353		2353		-53	.43	3.87	-43.05

If I am right, then it is necessary to make changes in Handbook. This article is very difficult for

many arbiters even without such mistakes. I sent an email to FIDE almost a year ago concerning the same article. I am still waiting for answer. **Branislav Suhartovic, IA (Yugoslavia)**.

**Answer** Yes, you are right and I shall send your remark to the FIDE office for correction. I would like to thank you for your remark and I am ready to apologise for the fact that it took a whole year before the corrections were made.

**Question** The new July 2001 Laws have removed from all chess - "lightning" or "blitz", as well as ordinary chess - the requirement that in order to claim a win on time you must have "mating potential". This means that from now on you will be able to win a game on time if your opponent's flag falls when you have only a lone king. The reason given by FIDE for making this change is that "the arbiter should not be placed in the position of having to solve help-mate problems in order to determine the result of a game".

But FIDE also apparently has a rule that "a game is automatically drawn if a position is reached from which checkmate cannot occur by any series of legal moves", and "such a position immediately ends the game". This means that you can win on time with a lone king - but only if your opponent has "mating potential"! That is, it is not you, but your opponent who must have "mating potential". Or to put it another way, if your flag falls when you were the only one who could possibly have won the game, you lose; but if neither player could have won, the game is drawn.

It also means that the arbiter has not in fact been relieved of the need to solve helpmate problems. For example, what ruling will he give if one of the flags has fallen when each side has only a king and bishop on the board? If the bishops are on opposite colours the game will be lost by the player whose flag fell, but if they are on the same colour the game will be drawn. A king and knight each, or king and knight versus king and bishop, would allow either side to win on time; but if one of the pieces is taken then neither side could win and the game would be automatically drawn. With a king and two knights versus a lone king, either side could win on time if the opponent's flag falls.

One can foresee situations with (for example) king and knight versus king and knight, where the player with the least amount of time remaining is desperately trying to fork his opponent's king and knight and so get one of the knights removed from the board before his flag falls, so that the game will be drawn. I wonder whether such a spectacle of "losing chess" will be good for the image of the game.

I respectfully suggest that someone should take another look at these situations and come up with some rules that make a little more sense; or if I what I have written above is based on a misunderstanding, then I ask that someone explain where I have gone wrong and how the new Laws will operate. **John Riches (Australia)**

**Answer** I am sure you overlooked Article 6.10. I quote: "*Except where Article 5.1 or one of the Articles 5.2a, 5.2b and 5.2c apply, if a player does not complete the prescribed number of moves in the allotted time, the game is lost by the player. However, the game is drawn, if the position is such that the opponent cannot checkmate the player's king by any possible series of legal moves, even the most unskilled counter-play.*"

Well, with a lone king it is impossible to checkmate the opponent's king. There fore, if a player has a lone king and his opponent oversteps the time limit, the game is draw.

Regarding the endgame King + Bishop against King + Bishop with Bishops of opposite colours, nothing has been changed in the new Laws of Chess. I would like to direct your attention also to Article 10.2 that can be applied in normal chess (not Fischer-modus) and rapid chess. With less than two minutes on the clock, it is possible to claim a draw in positions: King + Knight against King + Knight, King + Bishop against King + Knight and also King + Rook against King + Knight or Bishop.

**Final remark** A few months ago there was in the Netherlands an examination for arbiters organised by the Royal Dutch Chess Federation. I was informed that the question asked by Mister Koster from the Netherlands in one of the previous columns was exactly the same as in the examination. In my opinion it is quite unfair to use this column for cross-checking the teachers who made the examination. I think this is very inappropriate.

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

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