



From Moscow with Love

At this moment I am in Moscow, not as an arbiter, but as a guest attending the world chess championships. At the same time a match between Kasparov and Kramnik was organised. For chess matches there are a lot of excellent sites in Moscow, but the most prestigious are the Kremlin and the big hall of the House of Union, better known as the Hall of Columns. The world championships were organised in the Kremlin and the match Kasparov – Kramnik in the other one.

COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook Geurt Gijssen

In both events there were different types of chess. Kasparov and Kramnik played 4 so-called classic chess games with a time limit of 40 moves in 2 hours, then 20 moves in 1 hour and finally 30 moves for the remaining moves. I am not an expert and do not like to say anything about the level of the games, but I can understand that the spectators were quite disappointed. The number of moves in these games were 18, 72, 21 and 19. In other words, in only one game was there a real fight. Probably this had to do with the fact that these two players know each other so well, and that they do not like to take any risks. By the way, in the program book of this match there was a very interesting picture: Kasparov is giving a lecture, Botvinnik, as the founder of the Botvinnik school, is listening and among the pupils you discover the very young Kramnik. In the Kremlin, the majority of the players were really fighting, but I have also to confess that the difference in strength, especially in the first rounds, is quite huge.

I don't have much to say about the rapid games between Kasparov and Kramnik. The same applies to the other 20-minutes games with an increment of 10 seconds per move. There were no incidents in the Kremlin.

I attended the ten games between Kasparov and Kramnik with a time limit of 5 minutes for the whole game and an increment of 2 seconds per move from move 1. The increment in the

Kremlin was 10 seconds per move. It is my opinion that an increment of 2 seconds is not very essential. The games are simply blitz games. With an increment of 10 seconds the games are quite normal and only a very few games were decided by a flag fall. There was one incident. See one of the questions below.

In the Kremlin there were only 2 screens and 3 monitors on which spectators could follow games. When more than 2 games were in progress, one of the organisers chose the most interesting positions. I felt sometimes irritated when I watched a position and suddenly a position from another game appeared.

In both events there were press conferences after each round. This was much appreciated by the journalists and spectators.

Question Could you comment on the decision reached by the Arbiters and Appeals Committee at the FIDE 2001 KO Championship regarding the Ehlvest - Radjabov tiebreak-match? In the first game, Radjabov's clock was not set with the appropriate increment, causing him to flag after apparently playing several bad moves trying in vain to gain time on the clock. Should they have played the second game without resolving the outcome of the first? Did they resolve the outcome of the first game appropriately? Should they just have played the first game over? **Andrew Schechter (USA)**

Answer I tried to get some information about this case. Unfortunately, the two players involved had already left Moscow when I arrived. Therefore I could not ask their opinion about it. Let me tell you the facts as far I could get them. There is no doubt about the fact that the clocks, not only Radjabov's, but also Ehlvest's clock, were incorrectly set. Mr. Nikolopoulos, the deputy chief arbiter, had installed all clocks for the tiebreak games. For some reason another arbiter re-installed the clocks used in the game Radjabov – Ehlvest. And he put 5 minutes and 10 seconds on the clock with an

increment of 0 seconds per move.

I apologise for the following technical detail, but it is quite important and should be mentioned. If you use option 23 or 25 of the DGT clock and you set 5 minutes and 10 seconds on the clock with an increment of 0 seconds, the clock shows at the start exactly the same as 5 minutes at the start and an increment of 10 seconds. The clock display even shows a triangle indicating that a Fischer modus has been installed. I hope that the reader understands that this is a somewhat tricky situation. If there are 32 sudden death games with this time limit, and if there is a lot of pressure to start the round and to prepare the protocols, it is fully understandable that this kind of mistake could be overlooked, but it is even more difficult to discover. The match arbiter, who wrote the moves (at tremendous task in these sudden death games) did not notice that there was not any increment.

After the flag of Radjabov's clock had fallen – and at that moment Ehlvest had only 3 seconds left on his clock – Radjabov protested immediately, pointing out that the clocks were set wrong. What to do? As a matter of fact, his protest came when the game was over, and not during the game. There were some suggestions such as replaying the game, or continuing the game from the final position and to give the players some extra time or simply declaring the game lost because he protested when the game was already over. By the way, the chief arbiter, GM Yuri Averbakh, asked both players if they knew that they were playing without the 10-second increment. Both players answered that they knew it. But they did not react. The chief arbiter started to consult some people before taking a final decision. But as I mentioned before, there were 32 sudden death games, therefore 62 other players had to wait for the chief arbiter's decision. He decided to start the next round, including the second game in the match Radjabov – Ehlvest, without announcing his decision. As a matter of fact, neither Ehlvest nor Radjabov protested the decision to start the next round. The second game finished drawn and the chief

arbiter decided the following: the game should be continued from the final position and the players should receive some extra time. The chief arbiter's decision was based on the fact that Radjabov did not lose by checkmate of the king or by resignation, but by overstepping the time limit. Radjabov disagreed with this decision, saying that the final position was lost for him and went to the Appeals Committee. This committee agreed with the chief arbiter's decision.

Strangely enough, the same mistake was also made in a game in the Women World Chess Championship, but during the game the ladies discovered that the clocks were not set correctly. They stopped the clocks, summoned the arbiter, he corrected the clocks and they continued the game.

Personally I think it would have been better if the chief arbiter had announced his decision before the start of the second game. In a match of two games it is very important to know the result of the first game before the start of the second one. If the score is 1-0, a player would probably play differently than if the score were $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ or 0-0.

It is in my opinion very strange, that the players knew that they were playing without an increment and did not summon the arbiter to correct the clocks. I can only guess why.

About Averbakh's decision, I would like to make the following remark: The decision is not unreasonable, although the decision to replay the game is also an option. If you ask me which decision I would have made, I really do not know.

I also read the decision of the Appeals Committee. Although I can understand their decision, I disagree with its rationale. The Appeals Committee mentioned that pursuant to the Laws of Blitz chess "once each player has completed three moves, no claim can be made regarding incorrect piece placement, orientation of the chess board or clock setting". But the big question is whether this game was really a blitz game. In my opinion, it was not. The point is that to be a blitz game all

moves must be played in a fixed time. See the definition of a Blitz game as it is written in the Laws of Chess. And using a Fischer modus, the total playing time is not fixed. Another point is, that the regulations of the World Championships say: *Play shall be governed by the FIDE Laws of Chess, except where they are overridden by the specific provisions of these regulation.*

And if you go the regulations, you will see that there is only one exception: *Players do not need to record the moves. Instead an arbiter or an assistant will record the moves.*

I understood that the chief arbiter called these games during the players' meeting "blitz games", but this is not an argument, to give them the status of blitz games.

Finally I like to mention that the Rules Committee of FIDE has to (re-)consider the regulations regarding the games played with Fischer modus. Probably we need an extra chapter in the Laws of Chess for it.

Question Dear Mr.Gijssen, I have a question to the pairings of Swiss system tournaments and Elo rating. Is it right that, if one pairing in a tournament with Elo rating is changed, FIDE would not calculate whole the tournament? Some arbiters told me that a change, except in case of problems, is now absolutely forbidden and there's no exception? In the FIDE handbook on the Internet I can't find such rules. **Heinz Brunthaler (Germany)**

Answer It happens quite often that the pairings in Swiss tournaments are not made completely according to the regulations. This happens for instance in the first rounds if one or more ratings are wrong. It happens also from time to time that arbiters receive wrong results and make pairings based on these wrong results. Nevertheless, this kind of "mistake" is never a reason to refuse to rate a tournament.

No, the real reason to refuse to rate a tournament is the fact that some arbiters manipulate the pairings, *giving* an advantage to one of their compatriots. How is this possible? For example, the arbiter or the computer makes the pairings for the last round. The arbiter sees that one of his compatriots cannot make a norm with the pairings made pursuant to the regulations. But

if he changes the pairings, giving his compatriot another opponent, a norm is possible. I know several examples of these manipulations. If a rating officer discovers such a manipulation, FIDE refuses to rate the tournament.

From my own experience, I remember the following story: A long time ago, when all pairings were made manually, an organizer approached me and told me that I had to make pairings in such a way that Dutch players could make a norm. I refused and he more or less accepted my refusal. After the tournament the organiser called a meeting of the organising committee and suggested that for the next tournaments the pairings system should be changed. For PR reasons he wanted more norms for Dutch players. I was very happy when the organising committee did not share his opinion and I could make the pairings in the appropriate way.

Question Dear Geurt, Having just read about bizarre situations in your column, here is yet another one, again, *absolutely not made up*: During a game in one of Carinthia's (Austria) lower leagues, player A sees that he will be mated in two moves and extends his right hand. Player B shakes it, looks at the board, makes a move and presses the clock. Player A realizes that this is not the move he feared, makes another move and presses the clock. This goes on for another two or three quick moves when apparently the position is about equal. Then Player B stops playing, says that A has resigned anyway and claims the win. Player B disagrees and says that they just shook hands and that the game continued. After some bickering the game was agreed a draw. Incidentally, the players were not juniors. Of course, after the handshake neither player signed the scoresheet and bringing the game into disrepute will also be a factor. But how would you decide? **Gernot Isola (Austria)**

Answer As I have mentioned in previous columns, shaking hands does not mean that a player resigns. Without any doubt it is of course very strange. Is it to congratulate his opponent for his birthday, to accept a draw, to resign? It is unclear. One thing is sure: the players continued the game and after some moves Player B protested. This protest was too late, but even if he had protested immediately, it would be very difficult to accept this protest.

I repeat what I wrote before. If you, as an arbiter, see that something happens in a game, for instance shaking hands, stopping clocks, starting analyses, starting talks, putting pieces in the initial position and so on, rush to the players, ask them what happened and order them to sign the scoresheets. Do not forget to check that the players have written the same result on both scoresheets.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, at a recent game a strange incident happened, about which I'd like to hear your opinion. First, in our local league there usually is no official arbiter present. Rules say that in this case one of the players of the guest team shall act as an arbiter and he may name others as assistants if necessary. Time control is 2 hours/40 moves, 1h/for the remaining moves.

In the case in question, both the arbiter A and his opponent B were in bad time trouble at about move 30, one of A's teammates was writing down the moves and acting as an arbiter. A's flag fell long before move 40, but the assistant arbiter failed to notice and the game continued, B's flag fell as well and again nobody noticed. Still, before move 40, B resigned the game. As they were about to shake hands, B saw the fallen flags. Due to the type of digital clocks used, it was still clear which flag had fallen first. The question is obvious - what should the outcome of the game have been?

Is it a win for A, because B resigned? Is it a draw because both flags were down? Is it a win for B because A's flag fell first? The situation was not clarified by this being the arbiter's own game - he couldn't possibly make a decision about it and his teammate didn't know what to do next. They finally agreed to a draw without any official ruling, but I'd still like to know what it should have been. **Ingrid Voigt, Aachen (Germany)**

Answer Let me start by quoting Article 6.9: *A flag is considered to have fallen when the arbiter observes the fact or when either player has made a valid claim to that effect.*

Let me quote also Article 5.1(b): *The game is won by the player whose opponent declares he resigns. This immediately end the game.*

By quoting these two Articles the result is in my opinion clear. During the game the flag is not considered to have fallen, because the arbiter did not observe this and there was no claim to that effect. Secondly, B resigned and resigning a game means the end of the game. You understand that the fact which flag fell first is in this case not relevant anymore. That the arbiter made a mistake by not calling a flag fall is very obvious.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, You might have had a similar question earlier, but anyway...

At a junior tournament two kids played a rated four-hour game (2 hours each - FIDE rules of Chess) Black's flag dropped, White did not notice, even though he had a spare hour. The game continued for 10 more minutes and Black finally checkmated in a King and Queen vs. King ending. What should be the result, asked white a few seconds afterwards, being told by kibitzers that he has won? Scoresheets were not signed. P.S. The local arbiter ruled that Black won. Can you comment please? **IM Jovan Petronic (Singapore)**

Answer I refer to the previous question and answer. The flag is considered to have fallen when this fact has been observed or claimed. And just like in the previous case this was not done.

Let me quote Article 5.1(a): *The game is won by the player who has checkmated his opponent's king. This immediately ends the game, provided that the move producing the checkmate position was a legal move.*

It means that the final decision of the arbiter was correct, but again the arbiter has to ask himself: "Was I wrong, by not observing the flag fall?" The answer is clear: "Yes, the arbiter was wrong."

Note I am very pleased with these two questions. At the moment there is a trend to save some money by appointing fewer arbiters for chess tournaments. I think that this is quite dangerous. The two examples in the previous questions show

clearly how important the role of the arbiter is. With only few arbiters in a tournament it is clear that it is impossible to observe all clocks. The consequence of this is that players who deserve to win pursuant the Laws of Chess even lose their games. And everybody will agree that this is a very unpleasant situation. The time limit used in a tournament will affect the number of arbiters that should be there. In my opinion one arbiter for 8 – 10 games is sufficient. A condition is, of course, especially in the period of time trouble, that all arbiters are present. As a matter of fact I observe more and more that arbiters leave the playing hall to smoke a cigarette or to get a cup of coffee even when a lot of players are in time trouble.

Question Geurt, During a recent tournament game my Chronos clock clicked off due to battery failure. My opponent and I agreed that we had each used the same amount of time so the problem was easily fixed. However, what would a TD do if the opponents disagreed on how much time was used by each player? **Brian Karen (USA)**

Answer Let me quote Article 6.11: *Every indication given by the clocks is considered to be conclusive in the absence of any evident defect. A chess clock with an evident defect shall be replaced. The arbiter shall be used his best judgment when determining the times to be shown on the replacement chess clock.*

The Laws of Chess leave it to the arbiter to determine the correct times on the clocks. Many arbiters write the clock times after one hour total playing time, after 1½ hours, after 2 hours and so on. I like this very much, because it gives an indication in cases of emergency how to determine the clock times. Some players write the consumed times on the scoresheet. This is also a good help. My experience is that players are honest in cases like these.

Now, I have a question for you: Normally electronic clocks show a sign that the batteries are running out of power. I was told that for instance the DGT clocks can still run for 50 hours after the sign “Battery” for the first time appears. Is this not the

case with the Chronos clock?

Question Is it not possible to create an electronic clock that will assure that both sides' time is being accounted for correctly, that will preserve the time record for the game, and will record the fall of the flag when this happens? After all, we live in an age of soft and intelligent technologies today. Then, the process of claiming a win on time could be duly simplified and the whole process could be more asynchronous. **Guy Haworth (UK)**

Answer I am sure that it is possible to create such a clock. In fact, I know one tournament in which such a "clock" is used. In the annual Amber tournament in Monaco there are two tournaments: a rapid and a blindfold tournament. In the blindfold tournament both players have a monitor in front of them and on the monitor an empty chessboard; using a mouse the player makes moves. At the moment the player wants to complete his move, he presses the "Enter" button and his clock is automatically stopped and the opponent's clock starts. And at the end of the game one can see how much time was consumed per move. At the moment a player oversteps the time limit, on both screens the message appears that a player has overstepped. As far as I know, there are no clocks that register the time as I mentioned before. I am quite sure that they can be made. The question is if it would be useful to develop such clocks. In my opinion they would be not only quite expensive, but also of questionable utility.

Question Dear Mr.Gijssen, You wrote in March 2001 column *Swiss Gambit*, that "in a few month there will be Windows-based Swissmaster". As a permanent SM 4.8 user I would like to know the actual situation in this case. **IA Richard Fischl, Prague (Czech Republic)**

Answer From a computer expert I have been told that it is a very big job. I collected a lot of new requirements for Swissmaster. We pay much attention to the Swiss system based

on Buchholz. I will inform everybody as soon we have finished the job and a new version is available.

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

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