



COLUMNISTS

*An Arbiter's
Notebook*
Geurt Gijssen10.2 - 10.2 - 10.2
It Will Never Stop

Last month I was again in Moscow, this time for the Aeroflot Open Tournament. It was an open tournament. There were three groups: The participants of Group A had a rating higher than 2400. Among the 130 participants in this group there were 80 grandmasters and the average rating was 2534. To play in Group B a rating of at least 2401 but no higher than 2450 was required. 138 players participated in this group. For Group C, the rating had to be lower than 2201. 102 players participated in this group. Let me give you some interesting data:

9 rounds were played in 6 days. This means there were three days with two rounds. In the end, nobody was very happy with this schedule. The time limit was the same as in the World Championship: 90 minutes for the whole game with an increment of 30 seconds per move from move 1. When two round are played in one day, this time limit is good, but generally the players prefer a slower speed.

The clock used was the Phileon clock. I was quite satisfied with the clock, but I have to make some observations. The DGT clock adds 30 seconds to the player's time when he has completed his move. The Phileon clock does it at the moment the opponent completes his move. What is the significance of this? When the opponent's Phileon clock is running and the player sees on his clock 14 seconds left, he has in reality 14 + 30 seconds. But playing with the DGT clock the player sees the actual left time.

It is impossible to make time corrections on the Phileon clock. The DGT clock shows clearly which player overstepped the time first. The Phileon does not. The Phileon clock has no memory. The consequence was that before each round all clocks had to be re-set. In a tournament with 185 games per round, this takes some time. I set out clear instructions for players and arbiters regarding the clocks. Only in round 1 did I have to explain something special when a player overstepped the time limit.

In the meantime I spoke with the producer of the Phileon clock and he promised me that in the next version of the Phileon clock he will take into account all the points I mentioned.

Keeping in mind that this tournament was announced only three months before it was to start, the number of participants was incredible. The sponsor was very

satisfied and announced that it would like to continue to organise this tournament.

Letter 1 Dear Mr. Gijssen: In our national championship I met with our central arbiters committee and came to an agreement with them. They will give duties and also an opportunity in the next domestic tournament. Now I am also a member of the education committee of our chess federation. I have good relations with the new management. There were some questions with the older management but today we dealt with all of them. Our new president is a young person full of energy, so I am hopeful for our developing. I again thank you and wish you success in your work. **Ozan Çakir, Chess Lecturer of Marmara University, Istanbul (Turkey)**

Comment I am very happy that the problems between you and the chess federation have been solved. I was quite sure that it was possible to accomplish this, because the new members of the board (as the previous one) are very reasonable people.

Letter 2 Dear Geurt. This is not a new question but a comment on the debate about 'capturing the King'. It seems to me to be ludicrous that the person capturing the King can lose by 'making an illegal move'. Surely the player, who leaves his king in check, moves onto a threatened square or exposes it to check, has made an illegal move. So they should lose before the capture takes place. In a slow time limit, I presume there is the possibility to point out that the move is illegal. In a fast time limit the illegal move has been made and the clock punched. So pointing out the illegality costs the non-offending player time. **Ian Reynolds (United Kingdom)**

Comment Let me again explain my opinion. I agree with you that a player who leaves his King in check or moves into check in a blitz game deserves to lose. What can be simpler for an opponent than to stop the clocks, summon the arbiter and claim the game?

Let us suppose that the player captures his opponent's King. After this, he calls the arbiter and claims the game, because he was able to take the opponent's King. The opponent claims that the player took the King with the illegal move Rd1xe6 or Bc1xg7. How can the arbiter solve this problem when he was not present at the chessboard and there are no witnesses? I do not know, because by removing the King from the board, there is no evidence whether the last move was legal or not.

In a 'normal' game Article 7.4 covers this case:

"a. If during a game it is found that an illegal move has been made, the position immediately before the irregularity shall be reinstated. If the position immediately before the irregularity cannot be determined the game shall continue from the last identifiable position prior to the irregularity. The clocks shall be adjusted according to Article 6.14. Article 4.3 applies to the move replacing

the illegal move. The game shall then continue from this reinstated position.

b. After the action taken under Article 7.4(a), for the first two illegal moves by a player the arbiter shall give two minutes extra time to his opponent in each instance; for a third illegal move by the same player, the arbiter shall declare the game lost by this player.”

I would like to add something: The arbiter must intervene when he sees an illegal move in a ‘normal game’.

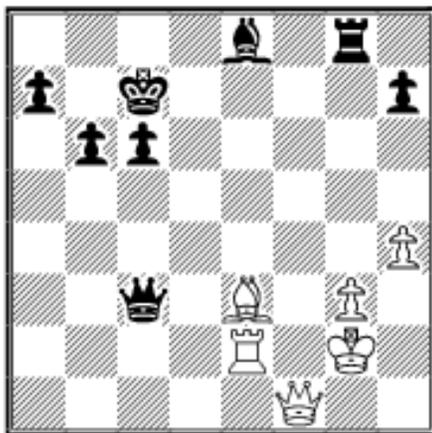
In a Rapid game it is different. First of all the arbiter may not intervene. Only after a player's claim must he act as described in the aforementioned Article 7.4. The player loses the right to claim once he has touched a piece with the intention of moving this piece.

To make it complicated, here are the blitz rules:

“An illegal move is completed once the opponent's clock has been started. However, the opponent is entitled to claim a win before making his own move. If the opponent cannot checkmate the player's King by any possible series of legal moves with the most unskilled counter-play, then he is entitled to claim a draw before making his own move. Once the opponent has made his own move, an illegal move cannot be corrected.”

Question Dear Geurt, In addition to the exchange of opinions at ChessCafe.com, I would like to express my opinion regarding the consequences after an illegal move in blitz games. According to FIDE Laws of Chess C3, the opponent of the player who made the illegal move is entitled to claim a win before making his own move. The reason of such rules' existence in the Laws is understandable, but in the meantime, I think that there might be cases when it will be difficult for the arbiter to make an objective decision or the players might apply the rules incorrectly.

These incidents are mostly possible in tournaments where the number of arbiters does not allow them to follow all the games. For example, at the end of a game, when the players are short of time and the moves are made fast, the following position takes place on the chessboard:



White moves to square Qf4½ (i.e., half on f4 and half on f5) and after Black's move a7-a5, White adjusts the position of the Queen on the square f4 and claims a win, as Black's King is under check. Black objects stating that the Queen was on f5. It is clear that it is very difficult for an arbiter who was not present to make an objective decision. I think that it will be fairer if, in the Laws of Chess, milder penalties are sanctioned in the event of an illegal move; for example, an addition of 30 seconds to the opponent's clock (or one

minute, depending on the clock's technical capacity), as it is in the Laws of Chess. **Ashot Vardapetyan (Armenia)**

Answer It is my opinion that in your example, Black should immediately claim something. Without leaving the board he should summon the arbiter. He can even claim a win because in my opinion the move Qf4½ is an illegal move. By the way, putting pieces ambiguously on two squares is a very well known trick in blitz chess.

Furthermore, I have the feeling that you are looking for a kind of compromise. To give a penalty is OK, but not the ultimate penalty: to declare the game lost. Finally I would like to return to your example. It is clear that the only thing an arbiter who summoned in this case by the Black player can do is to notice that at least one of the players is wrong. But who was wrong? Without witnesses there is no possibility of discovering what really happened. And we see again the weakness of the Laws of Chess generally. They are written for situations where there are only two players and an arbiter who has the possibility of watching the game from move 1 until the end of the game and, as everybody knows, this is not always the case.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I would like to go on from question 3 by J. Tompa in your January column. Player A claims a draw pursuant 10.2. The arbiter postpones his decision. But player B blunders, e.g., he loses a Rook or so. Now player A - in a winning position - plays for a win. Suddenly A's flag falls. What is the result? A loss on time because A has claimed a draw again after B's blunder although his first claim had yet not been decided finally? And what is the meaning of "The arbiter shall declare the final result after a flag has fallen" in 10.2 b)? Is there any difference to 10.2 a)?

Last question: if a player claims a draw because his opponent is making no effort to win, - only the first alternative in 10.2 a)- can he require the arbiter to examine the previous moves? For example, a player submits his claim with the remark: "My opponent has made no effort to win for twenty moves." In my opinion the arbiter cannot decide this claim without examining the previous moves. Is that right? **Peter Anderberg (Germany)**

Answer First a brief explanation of the current situation of Article 10.2.

After a claim of a player, the arbiter has three possibilities:

1. He agrees with the claim. This finishes the game (10.2.a).
2. The arbiter does not take a decision, but he postpones it. He may award two extra minutes to the opponent and the game is continued. After a flag fall he makes his decision. He has the possibility of declaring the game drawn (agreeing with the claim), but he has also the possibility of declaring the game lost for either player (10.2.b).
3. He disagrees with the claim and rejects the claim. The opponent receives 2 extra minutes and the game will be continued (10.2.c).

Furthermore it should be noted that the claim is considered as an offer of a draw. This means that at the moment a player claims a draw, the opponent has the possibility to say: "OK, I accept this offer." If an opponent does not do so, he takes the risk that he will even lose the game.

With this in mind, let us look at your example. When A claimed a draw, B did not react. At that moment player B assumed the risk of losing the game. Player A plays for a win. Apparently there were a lot of possibilities in the position, it was even possible to blunder and the position was not a dead draw. Then A's flag falls. At that moment the arbiter decides the result of the game: draw or won for player B. The result does not depend of the position, but on the way the game was continued. And when I read your story, I think 99% of the arbiters would decide for a win for B.

You ask the difference between 10.2.a and 10.2.b. I think it is clear that pursuant 10.2.a the game is a draw, but pursuant 10.2.b each result is possible.

Your last question: Is it possible to claim a draw based on previous moves and can the arbiter be required to examine the scoresheet?

Yes, it is possible to claim a draw based on what happened before, e.g., the opponent was not making any effort to win the game by normal means. The arbiter has the authority to examine the scoresheet, but he cannot be forced to do so. If he postpones his decision, he can base his decision after the flag fall on what was written on the scoresheet and what he noticed during the continuation of the game.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I appreciate the diligence and wisdom, which you use in applying the FIDE Laws of Chess. I have long been concerned that the USCF rules contradict the FIDE Rules, and unfortunately there does not seem to be much concern in the U.S. about this. The USCF approach has long been that the arbiter should never inject himself into a game, unless requested to do so by a player. The only exception is if an arbiter can be present at every board, which is practically never the case for U.S. tournaments. The USCF rationale is that "the game belongs to the players", and the arbiter should not intervene, even if he

witnesses a rules violation. I contend that this approach violates Rule 13.1, "The arbiter shall see that the Laws of Chess are strictly observed", because it requires the arbiter to ignore plain violations of the rules.

Historically the problem has come up most often with time-forfeit claims under the USCF rules. It is not enough under USCF rules for the claimant to show that his opponent failed to make the required number of moves within the time limit, although under FIDE rules that should suffice. Rather, the claimant must demonstrate from his scoresheet, which must be complete, that this is the case. The arbiter can allow up to three incomplete move-pairs, but in a blitz situation there will typically be more incomplete move-pairs than this one each scoresheet. Further, this can lead to the actual case in my state, in which the claimant did have a complete scoresheet, but the opponent still claimed he had too many incomplete moves, based on the fact that seven of his moves were not notated correctly (e.g., "Ne2" written without specifying which Knight went to e2). This illustrates the absurd situations created by the USCF approach.

As another example, I offer the following situation, which has been discussed recently in a chess newsgroup:

"In a recent USCF rated scholastic tournament, two players were running short on time in the endgame. The Chief TD was observing this game directly as it was the last left in that particular round. Player 1 touched his pawn, and recognizing the touch move rule, had to move it to the only place he could, resulting in a stalemate position. Player 2, however, did not recognize the stalemate, and proceeded to make an illegal move, placing his King into check by Player 1's Bishop. Player 1 then moved his Bishop, removing the check, and play continued. Player 2 resigned a few moves later, never recognizing the stalemate until after the game had ended, and then only after the Chief TD told him about it. The TD ruled, however, that even though he, (the TD) saw the stalemate and the illegal move, it was up to the players to call it. Player 1 later admitted that he saw it too, and was relieved when Player 2 did not. Player 2 (a 10-year old rated in the 1200's) became very upset and thinks it was not fair. Perhaps it wasn't. But was the correct call made?"

My view is that the game ended with the stalemate, as that is what the rules say. Since the arbiter saw it, he should have called it. But other scenarios (in which the arbiter is not present) are less clear. What if a spectator calls out that it is stalemate? What if the player's coach comes over right after the game and tells him "you missed a stalemate"? What if the players report the result, but then the player, in going over the game, discovers he missed the stalemate? What if the next round is already paired by the time it is realized? What if the tournament is over, trophies are presented, and then it is realized? In other words, when the result of a game is reported incorrectly, how long does a player have in which to request a correction of the incorrectly reported result? Your thoughts will be most appreciated! **Jerry Weaver (USA)**

Answer I have already wondered several times in my column why FIDE rates

tournaments played under USCF rules. There are cases where the score of a game is completely different from the score played under the FIDE Laws of Chess. And it is still my opinion that FIDE should do something.

Your main question is: When does a result stand? For this I like to quote Article 8.7 of the Laws of Chess:

“At the conclusion of the game both players shall sign both scoresheets, indicating the result of the game. Even if incorrect, the result shall stand, unless the arbiter decides otherwise.”

It is up to the arbiter to correct a wrong result. Let me give you my personal opinion about this matter. In a round robin tournament there is no problem correcting a result during the tournament. For example, there is an incorrect result posted in round 1. Instead of 1-0 (the correct result) in the table was written 0-1. Just before the last round starts the White player goes to the arbiter and informs him about the mistake. As a result, the player involved suddenly becomes the leader of the tournament. I can understand that other players might complain saying that they played in the last rounds short draws based on the current standings in the tournament and if they had known the “real” standings they would have played differently. I agree that this example is very bizarre, but in fact possible.

In my opinion, it is even possible that the arbiter might not correct an incorrectly posted result during the tournament, but in his report to FIDE he indicates the correct result. Of course the players must be informed of this.

In general, an arbiter has to be very careful when he changes a result, especially when the wrong result is discovered at a very late stage of a tournament.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I recently played a game in our club championship (time control: 30 move in 1½ hours, rest of the game in a half hour). At move 17, in mutual time-trouble, my lower rated opponent offered a draw in a worse position. I declined by making a move (without saying anything). My opponent than offered a draw after each of his move up to move 28 (after which he stood better and apparently no longer was satisfied with a draw). I find this behavior very irritating and unethical. My question is: Is there a rule against repeated draw offers? **Mats Nilsson (Sweden)**

Answer Yes, there is a rule against repeated draw offers. I quote Article 12.5 of the Laws of Chess:

“It is forbidden to distract or annoy the opponent in any manner whatsoever. This includes unreasonable claims or offers of a draw.”

In a case like this, the player should go to the arbiter and inform him about the opponent's behaviour.

In the grandmasters' practice it is normal that after a refusal the player who offered a draw will not repeat this. It is then up to the opponent to offer a draw.

I remember one case that a grandmaster offered a draw after each of three consecutive moves. Tal did so, but it was clear that his opponent, Korchnoi, did not hear this. This was the reason that each subsequent offer was made louder than the previous one. When Korchnoi finally became aware that a draw was offered, he accepted immediately.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, Further to my earlier e-mail regarding Article 9. I have recently met the chief arbiter of the tournament, the involved players, other players and the Libyan Chess Federation vice president, all of whom were witnesses of this case. During the last round of an important championship player A claimed the draw at the 37th move by writing it down on his scoresheet, stopped the clock, called the arbiter and claimed the draw by intending to play that move which would repeat the position for the third time.

The chief arbiter went to his computer and started repeating the game using the players' scoresheets. After a while he came to the conclusion that there was not the required repetition of the position and he did the following:

He added 3 minutes to player B's time. He reduced half of player A's time which was less than 2 minutes. He asked the players to continue the game, as there was no repetition.

After a few minutes, and with the help of an experienced witness player, the arbiter realised that he had made a mistake. There was indeed a repetition of the position for the third time as player A mentioned in his claim. Immediately, he went to the board, stopped the clocks and asked the players to sign the scoresheets, as the game was drawn. Player B of course did not like the decision and claimed. The appeals committee approved the arbiter's decision.

It would be appreciated if you kindly advise and give us your opinion about this matter. Your opinion will help all arbiters, players, organisers and maybe the witnesses. **Ahmed Sharata (Libya)**

Answer Even an arbiter can make a mistake. When the arbiter was of the opinion that the claim was wrong, he acted almost correctly. The only small mistake was when he reduced half of player A's time. According to the Laws of Chess, which came into effect on July 1, 2001, he should adjust the clock of the claimant in such a way that one minute remains on the claimant's clock. If this game was played before the mentioned date, his action was correct. When the arbiter discovered his mistake, he acted again correctly. He should be commended for such action. To admit a mistake is sometimes not easy, especially for an arbiter.

Question My opponent made his move, but didn't press the clock. Am I allowed to make my move? Consider the following two situations:

- a) My opponent forgot to press the clock;
- b) My opponent intentionally delays pressing the clock.

I witnessed situation b). White had just around 30 seconds and a much better position, while Black had 5 minutes left. After moving the piece, black took some 5-10 extra seconds each time before pressing the clock. White was in a hurry, so he made his next move before Black pressed the clock. Black stopped the clocks and called the arbiter.

Should White be penalized? Does it matter if it is a “normal” game or a blitz game? **Damijan Marolt (Slovenia)**

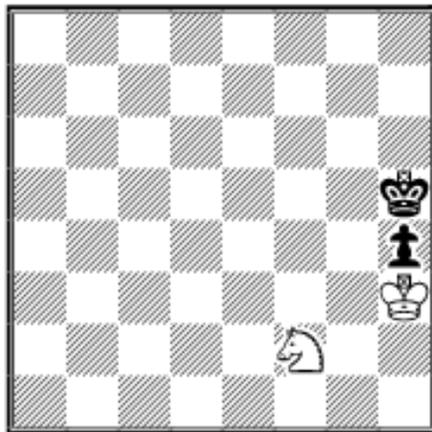
Answer There is a rule for all types of chess. From Article 6.8.a of the Laws of Chess:

“During the game each player, having made his move on the chessboard, shall stop his own clock and start his opponent’s clock. A player must always be allowed to stop his clock.”

The second sentence is very important. A consequence of this rule is, that the following situation is allowed:

Player A makes a move, but does not press his clock. Player B makes his move. At that moment Player A still has the right to stop his clock and to start the opponent’s clock. Player B who has made his move, may now complete his move as well, by pressing the clock. Now A has the move and his clock is running. There is no reason to give any penalty.

Question Sorry if this question has been answered in other columns, but I have been in an interesting situation. In a lightning tournament I had a very interesting game which ended up in this position.



With just 2 seconds left, I stopped the clocks and claimed a draw as the drawing method is very simple, but with the clock on the “wrong” side of the board, I simply was not fast enough to bring my knight around in time. The arbiters had a lengthy discussion over the result, and eventually my opponent (being a nice person) offered to just take the draw and move on. The arbiters never made their decision, and I was wondering what the correct ruling would be. **N. Nolans (Australia)**

Answer I understand it was a Blitz game. As you probably know, a claim pursuant Article 10.2 is in a Blitz game not possible. (See Article C 4 of the Blitz game rules: “Article 10.2 does not apply.”)

Article 6.10 says that the player who oversteps the time loses the game. But if the

opponent cannot checkmate the player the game is a draw. In my previous *Notebook* I wrote that an endgame Knight vs. Knight is lost for the player who oversteps the time. And it is possible to reach this ending from the position you mentioned in your question.

You have to thank your nice opponent that he offered you a draw.

Question Dear Geurt, the following series of events happened in round 7 of an open tournament on Saturday, 9, March 2002. 7 rounds, 30/30min. time control. Times on clock: White - 5 min. Black - 1min & 30 sec.

The following pieces were on the board: White- King, Rook, and pawn. Black- king, rook, and pawn. Black to move. Black claimed a draw.

The players answered the Arbiter: Black: "White cannot win". White: "I can win".

The Arbiter postponed his decision. He did not add extra thinking time to any clock.

Black's flag fell, as White was unable to proof his ability to win. The position on the board after Black's flag had fallen: White - Kg7, Rd7, f6. Black - Ke4, Rf3, d3.

Questions:

- 1) May the Arbiter declare it a win for White?
- 2) Which possible legal decisions could the Arbiter make? **Marcus Atterbury (South Africa)**

Answer FIDE decided that appeals against a decision of an arbiter based on a ruling of Article 10.2 are not possible. His decision is simply final. It means he may decide that the game is a drawn or lost for the player who overstepped the time. It is hoped that all arbiters make reasonable decisions.

I appreciate it very much that you gave me the final position, but more essential is the position at the moment of the claim and the most important element is the continuation of the game, the moves from the moment of the claim until the player overstepped the time. An arbiter should never judge the position, because this is not his duty. It should also be noted that all actions of the arbiter in this case were correct.

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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