



## Caller Waiting

**Question** When I was preparing for the qualifying exam for new arbiters, I thought about a strange situation. A player claims a draw after a threefold repetition of the position or 50 moves. The arbiter sees it very clearly on paper. However, he needs to play through the game in the presence of the two players on a board. Yes, really there are three repetitions or 50 moves without capturing a piece or moving a pawn, *but* there previously was an illegal move!

### COLUMNISTS

## *An Arbiter's Notebook*

Geurt Gijssen

I asked the Turkish arbiters about this and all of them replied that the game must be returned to the illegal move and it cannot be a draw. I also agreed with this, but let me comment on this a little bit, keeping in mind compliance with of Laws of Chess:

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

*b) The game is won by the player whose opponent declares he resigns. This immediately ends the game.*

*5.2 a) The game is drawn when the player to move has no legal move and his king is not in check. The game is said to end in 'stalemate'. This immediately ends the game, provided that the move producing the stalemate position was legal.*

*b) The game is drawn when a position has arisen in which neither player can checkmate the opponent's king with any series of legal moves. The game is said to end in a 'dead position'. This immediately ends the game, provided that the move producing the position was legal.*

All of these Articles need a legal last move and ignores previous illegal moves. How about triple repetition? When the player applies to the arbiter, he deserves the draw if there are really three repetitions of positions. When the game is over by checkmate, the arbiter never looks for a previous illegal move. So why should he look for an illegal move before, when there is a

claim for three-time repetition of position or 50 moves. **Cengiz Keles (Turkey)**

**Answer** One of the items the Rules Committee discussed was: If a player checkmates his opponent, must only the last move be legal or all moves played? I suggested that all moves have to be legal, but the majority of the Rules Committee was of the opinion that checking the last move was sufficient. The majority was very afraid for the fact that at the end of each game the arbiter must check all played moves. With this explanation you understand why only the last move is mentioned in Article 5.

Let me return to your question: When a player claims a draw pursuant to Article 9 (triple repetition of the position or the 50-move rule) and it is discovered during the reconstruction that an illegal move was played before, what should be done? In my opinion there is an essential point we have to take into consideration. In all cases you mentioned in your question the game is over: the King is checkmated with a legal move; there is a stalemate position with a legal move; a player resigns and so on.

In case of a draw claim the game is *not* over at that moment, but the arbiter is summoned to check whether the game should be over or not. This means that the game is still in progress.

And Article 7.4 says: *If during a game it is found that an illegal move has been made, the position immediately before the irregularity shall be reinstated.*

It means that the answers of the Turkish arbiters were, in my opinion, correct.

**Question** This week my team from Johannesburg (J) played a team from Centurion (C) in the Gauteng Chess League. Something unusual happened: The J board 3 arrived 30 minutes late and later found himself in time trouble. He was not scoring during the last few minutes before the time control. The C player kept his scoresheet up to date. The J player, looking at his opponent's scoresheet, thought that he had made the time control because it showed that the C player (white) had made 41 moves. He was decidedly surprised a few seconds later when his opponent claimed the game on time! The C player revealed that he had repeated two moves of each player on his scoresheet; it means actually moves that had not been made and thus player J had only made 38 moves and had lost on time! Sporting stuff!!

There was no doubt that J had failed to make the time control, that C had an updated (presumably corrected) scoresheet and thus J had lost on time. The feeling amongst the J players was that the C player had been indulging in some gamesmanship that left a sour taste in the mouth. At Gauteng League games there are no arbiters present whilst games are being played. What

action should an arbiter take if he sees a player making "phantom" moves on his scoresheet? Is it illegal? **Laurence Ball (South Africa)**

**Answer** What happened in this game is a very well known practice. Even on the grandmaster level it happens from time to time. I know one case when it happened about 25 years ago. A player wrote the same moves twice on his scoresheet. When the opponent saw it, he did the same on his scoresheet. When the player had written 40 moves on his scoresheet (40 moves included the twice-written moves), he left the board and took a little walk. The opponent made a move and started the player's clock. When the flag of the player's clock fell, the opponent claimed a win, pointing out that the player did not complete 40 moves. The arbiter agreed, but the player appealed. Finally the Appeals Committee agreed with the arbiter's decision, but gave the opponent an official warning. The Committee considered the behaviour of the player unsportsmanlike.

Now the answer to your question: What action should an arbiter take if he sees a player making "phantom" moves on his scoresheet? Is it illegal?

Yes, it is absolutely illegal and at the moment the arbiter sees it, he should interfere immediately. I base this on the following articles of the Laws of Chess:

1. *In the course of play each player is required to record his own moves and those of his opponent in the correct manner, move after move, as clearly and legibly as possible, in the algebraic notation, on the 'scoresheet' prescribed for the competition. (Art. 8.1)*
2. *The scoresheet shall be visible to the arbiter throughout the game. (Art. 8.2)*
3. *The scoresheet shall be used only for recording the moves, the times of the clocks, the offer of a draw, and matters relating to a claim. (Art. 12.2)*
4. *The arbiter shall see that the Laws of Chess are strictly observed. (Article 13.1)*

In my opinion these four Articles are very convincing: Article 8.1 says that the moves must be written in a correct manner. Article 8.2 says that the arbiter has always the right to inspect the scoresheet. Article 12.2 says that the moves, (i.e., the moves actually played) should be recorded and finally Article 13.2 says that the arbiter should be active in case a player acts contrary to the Laws of Chess.

I would like to add something. The only claim a player may make is that his opponent did not record the moves the way he was supposed to do.

**Question** Dear Geurt, In the previous column you mention a Mr. Maeser

writing to you about the disqualification of late arrivals: *And he makes a point, asking whether there is any sport in which the players do not have to be present at the start.*

I believe it's possible in cricket - and I mean professional cricket, as opposed to amateur club cricket where people can obviously make their own rules. It's not unknown for players to arrive late, and sometimes there are good reasons for this - for instance, a player may have been selected for the England squad, but not be picked for the final XI, a decision that can be made inconveniently late. Conceivably he could then have to drive to another part of the country to play for his county team, and not be sure of making it in time for the scheduled start. If his team were batting first, he wouldn't have to be there at the start because he wouldn't be named as one of the opening batsmen: he'd take his place in the order (which can, anyway, be changed) when he arrived. If they were bowling first then I'm not sure what would happen, but it's possible that the opposing side might allow a substitute fielder to take his place until he arrived. **Justin Horton (England)**

**Answer** Understood, but in an individual sport, it is very unpleasant to allow late arrivals as a mentioned in my previous column. This reminds me of a very special rule of the Dutch national league. If at the start of a league match one of the team members is absent, the opponent may seal his move when he playing white. And, of course, the move shall be made when his opponent arrives. But the captain of the player who did not show up at the start of the match has the right to replace the absent player within one hour after the start. If this happens, the player, who sealed his move, has the right to play another move. The reason is clear.

**Question** Dear Mr Gijssen, in our local rapid tournament we had a problem I've never seen before: The players couldn't agree on whose move it was. One of them claimed a draw by stalemate. The other one said it was his move and therefore no draw. They had already stopped the clocks before the arbiter arrived, there were no witnesses and there was nothing to support either side. How does one rule in such a case?

The game was declared to be a draw by stalemate. We used FIDE rules with the exception that players are required to write down the moves with more than 5 minutes remaining, which the player seeking the win had not done; the other player was nearly out of time and had not written the moves. But this decision does not seem really satisfactory to me, and what if we hadn't had this local rule and moves were not written down? **Ingrid Voigt (Germany)**

**Answer** Frankly, to solve a problem like this is almost impossible. It is clear that one of the players is cheating. But who is cheating whom? I have written several times that it is virtually impossible to prevent cheating. The only thing you can do is to try to reconstruct the game. But often this is also 'mission impossible'.

There is a solution, but it may not be possible in all games, that being if the

game was played with an electronic clock with a move counter. But even this is not absolute proof, but only an indication. When the game is played with a DGT clock, the position of the lever can be an indication.

**Question** I am writing on behalf of one of our local arbiters who just encountered the following situation in our National Championships. During the course of a game a player receives a cell phone call at a critical moment. The arbiter was not by the game when the call was received. His opponent suspects that the call was from another player in the event who is related to the player but whose game finished early. He suspects this because the player receiving the call, only says hello, listens to the calling party with his only comment being the time remaining on the clock and ends the call without saying goodbye.

A relative of the opponent also notices that the related player of the player receiving the call, and their cell phone, is no longer in the playing area. The opponent's relative, suspecting something is amiss, draws the situation to the arbiter's attention. However, by the time the arbiter reaches the game the call has ended and the player receiving the call goes on to win the game.

The losing party submits a protest after the game is concluded claiming that his opponent received assistance during the game. It should be noted that this is not the first occasion where these two players had been suspected of using cell phones to assist each other. The question our arbiter wishes to pose is as follows:

- a) How should he handle the protest?
- b) What strategies are recommended by FIDE to prevent situations like this? **Allan Herbert, President Barbados Chess Federation**

**Answer** Some elements of this incident are unclear. First of all, I do not understand why the player did not protest when his opponent received the

phone call. To protest *after* the finish of the game is in my opinion useless. Secondly, when the arbiter was informed and went to the board, did he try to find out what has happened? For instance, did he try to find some witnesses, and I mean neutral witnesses not related to either player? I assumed that all these things did not happen; otherwise you would have mentioned them in your letter.

As a chessplayer I know how unpleasant it is when you see your opponent talking to someone else. It always distracts me and although I am in many cases quite sure they do not talk about the game, I do not like it. And I know that many professional chessplayers are of the same opinion. As an arbiter, I do my utmost so that players do not talk to other players during play. And Article 12.5 of the Laws of Chess supports me: "It is forbidden to distract or annoy the opponents in any way whatsoever."

And my experience is that players are very reasonable when I tell them not to talk to other players.

In this context I like to quote another Article of the Laws of Chess: *During play the players are forbidden to use of any notes, source of information, advice, or to analyse on another chessboard.* (Article 12.2)

It is my opinion that players even have to behave in such a way that there is not any reason for suspicion. It is clear that making or receiving phone calls are forbidden. The only question is only how the arbiter should act. I would like to discuss it in the next FIDE congress. For the moment I would do the following: When a mobile (cell phone) rings, I give the player an official warning; when it happens the second time, I declare the game lost for that player. I would inform the players about this at the start of each round.

**Question** Dear Geurt, A player completes an illegal move by punching the clock; his opponent's flag then falls. The player who completed the illegal move, claims a win on time; his opponent claims an illegal move and wants two minutes added to his clock. There are no witnesses, however the player does not dispute the claim that he made an illegal move. Time Control is Blitz (G/:05). What is your ruling? **Terry Winchester (USA)**

**Answer** Article C3 of the Laws of Blitz controls: *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 counterplay, then the player 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.*

As you see, the opponent may seek even more than two minutes to be added to his clock time. He may claim a win. The fact that his flag has fallen is in my opinion not important. **Question** I just read your column about correcting the results of a game in which, unknown to the players, stalemate or checkmate had occurred on the board, they played on, and a different result came about and they signed off the game. In that type of situation, I would correct the result for (USCF) rating purposes, but not for pairing purposes. It might happen that I waited until after the final results were in to correct the results, but most computer pairing programs today allow for corrections at any point. Thus, the result that the players agreed to would count for the tournament, and the correct results would count towards their ratings. **Dr. Ira Lee Riddle, IA (USA)**

**Answer** I agree with you that this is an option. I remember a case in the Dutch league where there was a game won by player, but later it turned out, that this player was not authorised to play in this match. The chief arbiter of the competition declared the game lost for the player involved, but for rating purposes it was counted as a win for him.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, Your rich comments and the unusual, at times even bizarre, situations discussed in your columns make highly interesting and informative reading. The answer in your February 2002 column to the question posed by Laura Nogueira (Belgium) inspired me to make a list of positions. Here they are:

### List of Positions

In all cases White's flag falls. Is it a draw or win for Black? These are our questions.

	White	Black	Result
(1)	K + any force	Lone K	=
(2)	K + opp. col. B/N/P	K + B <sub>-</sub>	+
(3)	K + Q/R/same col. B <sub>-</sub>	K + B	=
(4)	K + opp.col.B/N/P + any/all other e.g. K + Q + N <sub>-</sub>	K + B <sub>-</sub>	+
(5)	K + R/B/N/P <sub>-</sub>	K + N	+

(6)	K + Q	K + N	+
(7)	K + R/B/N/P + any/all other force e.g. K + Q + N <sub>-</sub>	K + N	+
(8)	K + any force	K + Q/R/2B/B+N/P/2N <sub>-</sub>	+

Wins in positions (2), (4), (5) and (7) and K vs. K + 2N in (8) are possible because of Articles 6.10 (Normal and Rapidplay chess) and C3 (Blitz chess). In (2) and (4), Black can checkmate White's King through a series of legal moves with the most unskilled counterplay by White. In K + P vs. K + N, the pawn promotes to a Knight and we get

K + N vs. K + N (+). Similarly, (5) and (7) transform into positions under (2) and (4). For example, in K + Q + N vs. K + B/N, White loses the Queen and the resultant position is winning for Black.

### Implications

The results as above are highly relevant to Blitz chess. However, with a view to ensure that players do not bring chess in disrepute, in positions such as those below, the Arbiter should not allow prolonged, aimless play, e.g., perpetual checks by Q or R or mere wood shifting. He should interfere before flag fall, cite Article 12.1 and declare the game drawn:

- (1) K + B vs. K = B of opp. col.
- (2) K + B vs. K + N<sub>-</sub>
- (3) K + N vs. K + N<sub>-</sub>
- (4) K + N vs. K + 2N<sub>-</sub>
- (5) K + R vs. K + R<sub>-</sub>
- (6) K + Q vs. K + Q<sub>-</sub>
- (7) K + P vs. K + B / N / P<sub>-</sub>
- (8) K + R + P vs. K + R + K + P<sub>-</sub>

This should also be done if a player who is materially down is trying to win on time. For example, in K + Q vs. K + 2R/R/2B/B + N/ 2N /Pawns, Black may be playing in a Blitz game for a win on time. The Arbiter should cite Article 12.1 and declare the game drawn. These implications are equally applicable in Normal and Rapidplay games when:

- (1) Due to incremental addition of time, Article 10 does not apply or
- (2) Even though Article 10 is applicable, a claim for draw under Article 10(2) has not been made

Now my questions:

- (1) Is the list in order? Exhaustive?
- (2) How can we make the list useful as a ready reference to Arbiters and players?
- (3) Could we have fewer number of articles by combining the definitions of draw in C3 (Blitz), 1.3, 5.2(b), 6.10, 9.6

I draw you attention to Article 8.4. It refers to the possibility of only one player being in time pressure. The other possibility where both players are in time pressure is covered in 8.5. I feel this article should say 'immediately after his flag has fallen' instead of 'immediately after one flag has fallen.' Do you agree? **S. T. Sahasrabudhe, National Arbiter (India).**

**Answer** Your remarks are very interesting, but I am afraid you have overlooked something. Since July 1, 2001 for normal, rapid and blitz games we have the same rule when a player oversteps the time. It is Article 6.10:

*Except where Article 5.1 or one of the Articles 5.2 (a), (b) and (c) 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 with the most unskilled counterplay.*

I checked your list. I agree with you in the cases (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (7) and (8). I disagree with you in case (6). It is in my opinion a draw.

Regarding the implications, I have the following remark: it is very dangerous to make a general rule that these positions are drawn. Some of them can lead to forced mate. I prefer that arbiters in these situations use their sound judgement instead of applying such a rule.

Your questions:

- (1) I have already mentioned that I disagree with you regarding (6). I could not find any position in which K + N checkmated the K + Q side. I leave it to the readers to check whether all cases are covered in the List of Positions.
- (2) It is always dangerous to make lists, but I think that the list is complete and useful. But I am reluctant to officially add the list to the Laws of Chess.
- (3) As I mentioned already in my introduction, the number of relevant

## Articles in case of a flag fall is already limited after the congress in Istanbul

I disagree with you that we have to change article 8.4. It is possible that one player is in time pressure for most of the game, but it is his opponent who oversteps.

Finally I thank you for your efforts in producing the list of positions.

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*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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