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COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

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Perpetual Check Doesn't Exist

Next month there will be a FIDE Congress in Halkidiki (Greece). A main part of the discussions will deal with the World Championships. As readers know, the match Ponomariov – Kasparov was cancelled. The Presidential Board of FIDE decided to organise a knockout tournament with 128 players at the end of this year. The winner of this tournament will play Kasparov. And the winner of this match will play the winner of the match Kramnik – Leko. After this last match we will have, just like before 1993, one world champion. I understand that the organisation of the knockout tournament needs the approval of the General Assembly of FIDE.

There is also a meeting of the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee. One of the items will be the preparations to revise the Laws of Chess and probably also the Tournament Regulations in 2004. I have already received several proposals for revisions. Among them there is a very extensive one from Mr. Eddy Price (South Africa). I already have quite a long list from remarks by readers of The Arbiter's Notebook and I urge everybody who has some changes in mind to send them to me. I hope that the **ChessCafe** readers shall show the same co-operation as they have done before.

Question 1 Dear Geurt, in one of our rapid tournaments I had the following situation: Player A makes an illegal move (ignoring a check with the rook); Player B takes the king with his rook!

Now what should be the exact procedure? Actually, I was misled by (B5) which says "The player loses the right to claim according to Articles 7.2, 7.3 and 7.5 (Irregularities, illegal moves) once he has touched a piece according to Article 4.3." I never checked 7.2, 7.3 and 7.5 - I just took the comment in brackets for granted ("illegal moves"). *but*: Chapter 7.4. is about illegal moves, whereas 7.2, 7.3 and 7.5 do not say anything at all about illegal moves.

So in rapid play, illegal moves have to be taken back even several moves later after the illegal move - just as in a regular game. Isn't this far too complicated? A player could make use of it by ignoring an illegal move and continuing the game, and later on, when the game is nearly lost, he could claim the illegal move, take another two minutes or start endless discussions!

My decision actually was to take back both moves, so that there was a way to continue the game. Both players wanted to have 2 minutes added to their clock, as both claimed illegal behaviour from their opponent. I declined – which was probably wrong – as I was under the impression, that neither of them could really claim an illegal move. Today, I would probably award player B two additional minutes.

Answer 1 This was a real problem. But there is also another problem. It is the bad communication between FIDE, national federations and players.

We discussed Article B5 at a FIDE Congress. The result of this discussion was mentioned in the minutes of the Congress and these minutes were sent to all federations. Is the decision communicated to the members, and among them the arbiters, of the federation? I think in 99% of the cases, it is not. Therefore let me start by referring to what was decided at the FIDE Congress in Kallithea 2001:

In case of an illegal move the arbiter shall only interfere after a claim of the opponent.

This means that an arbiter who observes a game shall not take any action regarding an illegal move unless the opponent has made a claim to this effect. In other Articles of Rapid Play it has already been mentioned that the arbiter shall not do anything in cases of a flag fall and violations of the touched piece regulations.

So no action from the arbiter so far.

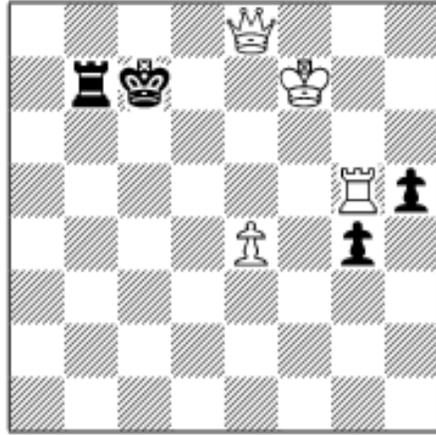
Let us see how to handle this in your case:

1. Player A makes an illegal move.
2. Player B does not claim it, but takes the opponent's King.
3. Player A claims that player B makes an illegal move by taking his King. This is a correct claim. The arbiter has the option of forcing B to make a correct move, but he cannot force him, in my opinion, to make a move that removes the attack on the King.

This means that an illegal *position* remains on the board. (I have already mentioned that the Laws of Chess do not deal with illegal positions.) My conclusion is that you probably made the best decision taking two moves back.

To award two minutes only to player B is in my opinion also the best option. We have again a very clear example why we have to revise the Laws of Chess in 2004.

By the way I had more or less the same case in a Rapid game in the Interpolis Tournament, Tilburg 1992: Karpov – Chernin.



Karpov had this position with 10 seconds left and Chernin had about 1 minute remaining. Furthermore it was stated in the regulations that in case of an illegal move the arbiter may interfere and the offending player will be penalised by adding two minutes to the opponent's time. The time limit was 25 minutes per player for the whole game.

The continuation of the game was:
54...Kd6+ 55. Qe6+ Rxf7. At this

moment the arbiter who was responsible interfered immediately, stopped the clocks and informed the players that 58 Qe6+ was an illegal move. He added 2 minutes to Chernin's time and ordered Karpov to play a queen move. The continuation of the game after 54...Kd6+ was: 54. Qe7+ Rxe7+ 55. Kf6 Re6+ 56. Kf7 Re5. I agreed fully with the decision of the match arbiter.

Several hours later Karpov protested and told me that the arbiter had to penalise Chernin as well, because he had also made an illegal move. I disagreed with Karpov and told him that probably he had right to receive some seconds, being the time between the start of his clock after Chernin had stopped his own clock and the moment the arbiter stopped both clocks. But, due to the fact that this game was played with a mechanical clock, it was not possible to make this correction. **N.B.:** the game Karpov – Chernin was played under different rules.

Question 2 If the whole thing had happened in Blitz, I would not have been able to make the players take back the moves - Paragraph (C3). Let's assume player B didn't stop his clock so he hadn't completed his move. As I cannot force player B to make an illegal move, I must make him move with the rook but not take the king, which leaves the king still in check after his move – is this correct?! **Jens Nissen (Denmark)**

Answer 2 This is an example of the well known discussion we had in earlier columns. Is it possible to take the King if a player leaves his King in check. See previous Arbiter's Notebooks.

Question Hello Geurt, I would like to know your opinion reference to the

following situation. In a qualification tournament in Gyumri (Armenia), two chess players had equal points and were competing to participate in the Pan Armenian Games. As per the Laws of Chess, after they had played two Rapid games, which ended in draw, they played Blitz Chess until one of them won. At the end of the first game, the two players were short of time and they were making their moves very quickly. Finally, time was over and the sign << - >> appeared on the display of the DGT clock. The White player immediately declared “flag” and to a surprise of the arbiter, who was watching the game, pushed the button of the clock from below. The Black player required to register “lose” to the White player, as he turned off the clock and it was impossible to determine which flag fell first. But the arbiter who was following the game confirmed that he saw Black’s flag falling. The Black player replied that because of the B6 point of Laws of Chess, the Arbiter had no right to re-set the time, especially when it is not dealt with in the Tournament Regulations. Please, kindly advise what should the Arbiter’s decision be. **Ashot Vardapetyan (Armenia)**

Answer Some Articles are in this case relevant:

1. Article 6.8(c): *“The players must handle the chess clock properly. It is forbidden to punch it forcibly, to pick it up or to knock it over. Improper clock handling shall be penalised in accordance with Article 13.4.”*

To press the button on the underside of the clocks, a player has to pick up the clocks and this is clearly forbidden.

2. Article B7 of Rapid play, but also applicable for Blitz: *“To claim a win on time, the claimant must stop both clocks and notify the arbiter. For the claim to be successful the claimant's flag must remain up and his opponent's flag down after the clocks have been stopped.”*

It is clear that the clocks were not stopped with the start/stop button. The white player violated two Articles of the Laws of Chess. At first I thought a warning to him would be sufficient, because it was clear that Black had overstepped, a fact seen by the arbiter.

But when I thought it over, I came to another conclusion. First, the White player really committed two mistakes. Second, he may not benefit simply because the arbiter happened to be present. Had the arbiter not been present, the penalty would have been clear: the arbiter would have declared the game lost. Therefore it is my opinion that the game also must be declared lost, even

when the arbiter saw everything.

Question During a recent international Swiss (in both senses of the word!) open, my opponent attempted to claim three-fold repetition by writing down the move that would cause the repetition and playing the move on the board. When the arbiter was summoned, I objected to the claim on the grounds that the move had already been played on the board. The arbiter disagreed with me, saying that since the clock had not been pressed my opponent could still claim the repetition. This seemed absurd to me, but since the position was totally drawn I didn't protest too much. **Mel Ó Cinnéide (Ireland)**

Answer Two Articles of the Laws of Chess are relevant:

1. Article 9.2 (a): *The game is drawn, upon a correct claim by the player having the sequential move, when the same position, for at least the third time (not necessarily by sequential repetition of moves) is about to appear, if he first writes his move on his scoresheet and declares to the arbiter his intention to make this move*
2. Article 9.4: *If the player makes a move without having claimed the draw he loses the right to claim, as in Article 9.2, on that move.*

The arbiter was wrong. Article 9.2 states only that the player has to write the intended move and to stop the clocks and Article 9.4 even states that the player has lost his right to claim when he has **made the move**.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I would like to ask what is the rule in the following case:

Player A claims in a Rapid game a draw saying that the opponent is not making any effort to win the game in a normal way but is only playing for a win on time. He requests the arbiter to follow the game and to observe it.. Player A's flag falls in a winning position for him. What is the correct result? I decided that the game is drawn, but some other people told me that the game is lost for Player A. **Bolívar Ribeiro Gonzalez (Brazil)**

Answer The exact procedure to claim a draw is described in Article 10 of the Laws of Chess: Quickplay finish. Provided the claimant had less than 2 minutes left on his clock at the moment he was claiming and he had stopped

the clocks when he claimed, I think he did nothing wrong, because in Rapidplay such a claim is allowed. And you as an arbiter really have the right to decide that the game is drawn. But read Article 10.2 very carefully. **You will then see that it is possible to postpone your decision and to even reject the claim.** In Blitz games such a claim is not possible, because Article C4 of Blitz states: “*Article 10.2 does not apply.*”

Question Who can be a tournament director in the tournament for the state champion? This tournament is organized by one state chess federation of Australia. May the TD be anyone or does this person have to get a license to be a chess arbiter? Where can I find all this information and rules about a Swiss System? **Andrzej Patron (Australia)**

Answer Europeans have always some problems with the title “Tournament Director” (TD). I understand that non-Europeans mean Chief Arbiter. I suppose this is what you mean. For international tournaments it is preferable to nominate an International Arbiter (IA) for this job. Generally an IA has the required experience to conduct a tournament. If an IA is available it is also preferable to have such as an arbiter for the national championships. I know that some federations have an article in the regulations of the national championships that the chief arbiter must have attained a certain standard, for instance national arbiter. I do not know what the situation in Australia is, but there is no general rule regarding the level of the chief arbiter in a national tournament. The rules for Swiss systems you may be found in the FIDE Handbook on Internet: Chapter C4. For this you have to go to the website: www.fide.com.

Question A few days ago I played in my first tournament. During my last game I moved my queen into a position such that perpetual check was unavoidable for my opponent. However, as I was playing the 3rd move my flag fell. The tournament director subsequently ruled that I had lost. His explanation was that quick chess rules are in place during the last five minutes on the clock and that perpetual check is not valid in quick chess. I am unable to find any rule to this effect. Can you help? **Phil O'Reilly (USA)**

Answer I have to make one preliminary remark: Perpetual check is not mentioned in the Laws of Chess. In Article 9 there are two cases mentioned:

1. The same position will appear at the next move for the third time or has just appeared
2. During the 50 previous moves no piece was captured and no pawn was moved.

I simplified Article 9 a little bit, but these are the principles. I advise you to

read Article 9 of the Laws of Chess carefully to become familiar with all its details.

The arbiter's decision was in my opinion correct. One additional remark: I have heard more than once that some players and arbiters think that in the Quickplay finish of a normal game the Rapid Laws have to be applied. This is wrong. In the Quick play finish period the games are also played according the "normal" Laws of Chess.

Question Dear Geurt, In a blitz game, player A makes a move that will result in mate next move. Player B unfortunately stops the clocks with the intention to resign. Suddenly, player B sees that his opponent's flag has fallen and then claims a win on time, in a matter-of-fact way. I declared the game lost for player B. Am I wrong? **Gabriel Araujo (Brazil)**

Answer Yes, I am afraid you are wrong in this matter. The way that you have explained the situation, Player B did not openly or clearly declare that he wanted to resign and Player B's flag was still up when he stopped the clocks. When I read Article B7 of the Rapid play rules and this Article is also valid for Blitz, then Player B acted correctly. See Article B7:

"To claim a win on time, the claimant must stop both clocks and notify the arbiter. For the claim to be successful the claimant's flag must remain up and his opponent's flag down after the clocks have been stopped."

Question Dear Sir, I am writing seeking clarification on Article 8.1 on the recording of moves. Article 8.1 states that and I quote:

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 (Appendix E), on the 'scoresheet' prescribed for the competition.

A player may reply to his opponent's move before recording it, if he so wishes. He must record his previous move before making another. Both players must record the offer of a draw on the scoresheet. (Appendix E.12)

If a player is unable to keep score, an amount of time, decided by the arbiter, shall be deducted from his allotted time at the beginning of the game.

While playing at a local tournament here I was told that a player must record

his opponent's move as soon as he makes it, and he/she must record his move before playing his own move. Can you, please clarify this latter requirement for a player to record his move before he actually plays it on the board because I find this a little absurd.

So, when is a move considered completed, when it is recorded on the scoresheet or when it made on the board and the player has taken his hand off the piece? Can the arbiter force me to make a move on the board because it is what I recorded?

Alternatively, what happens if I record a move on the scoresheet and I play a different move on the board. Will I be compelled to play the recorded move or can I go ahead and simply change the recorded move. I have had serious controversy with this "record your move before you play it" requirement because it does not appear in the Official Laws of Chess. In case there has been an amendment to this Law requiring players to record their moves before they are actually played on the board then could you, please, amend the Official Laws to reflect this new requirement otherwise it is very upsetting when someone insists you record your move before you actually play it. I cannot see this mentioned in the Official Laws of Chess and I am looking at what is supposed to be the latest copy released in November 2000 and effective from 1 July 2001. **Ssegirinya Joseph-Mary Muteesaasira (Macao)**

Answer There is no requirement that a player has to write a move before making it. It may even be to the contrary. To record something means in my opinion to write what happened; this means writing down the move just played, not the intended move. In one of the previous Notebooks I wrote about a discussion I had with IM Mark Heidenfeld during the Chess Olympiad in Bled. It is still my opinion that a player who writes a move before making it makes use of notes and this is forbidden.

A have to mention a second point: A player makes a move. The opponent has the right to think about his next move and to make his next move before recording his opponent's and his own move. In other words: A player has the right to record the moves in pairs.

Question Dear Geurt, Recently on ICC I had a game of 3/0 blitz whereby we arrived at an ending where each of us had one rook and no pawns. My opponent disconnected with one second left on his clock and due to this I claimed a win on time as I had almost a minute of time left. Yet the adjudicator called it a draw and I lost rating points as he was rated lower than I. I don't see the logic of this as obviously my opponent disconnected for obvious reasons. Why should he be rewarded with a draw? It does not seem fair isn't? In blitz doesn't time play a factor in the results? **Dominic Sciarretta (USA)**

Answer Frankly speaking, I do not know the ICC rules very well. I guess that

cases as you describe are covered in the rules of the ICC and I am also sure that you can ask for the rules.

In "normal" over-the-board Blitz chess time is a very important factor, even more important than in normal and Rapid Chess. Therefore the Quickplay finish rules do not apply in Blitz. Claims of winning positions or the opponent is only playing because the player has not enough time available are not allowed.

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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