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## Kallithea!

As you probably know, the FIDE Congress was organised from October 27 until November 3, 2003 in Kallithea, Greece. It is called a congress, but in fact it is a meeting of the Executive Board of FIDE. Generally the same decisions may be taken as in the meetings of the General Assembly. All commissions and committees of FIDE had its own meetings.

### COLUMNISTS

## *An Arbiter's Notebook* Geurt Gijssen

Let me begin by informing you about the meetings of the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee. We had a very special guest: Grandmaster Nigel Short. He had played in a tournament in the United Kingdom. It was a Swiss Tournament. The pairings for the first round were published, the first move (Short had White) was completed on his board, but his opponent did not show up. He waited for one hour and after one hour he wrote on his scoresheet 1-0. He went to the chief arbiter, gave the scoresheet to him and wanted to return to the hotel but, to his surprise, he was told that he had to play another opponent. Mr. Short disagreed, saying that he had prepared for the opponent he was supposed to play according to the published pairings. The arbiter did not accept Mr. Short's opinion and Mr. Short left the tournament.

He asked the Committee's opinion about this matter. Several arbiters from the UK were present in the meeting and they explained that for many decades it has been the usual procedure in the UK to re-pair the first round in the event players do not show up.

After extensive discussions the committee agreed with Mr. Short that one hour after the start of the round it is not acceptable to make some new pairings. Nobody disagreed when I mentioned that re-pairing is possible within 15 minutes after the start of the round, but only with the approval of the players involved. In principle, pairings once published, should not be changed. There was a consensus that this rule should be moved to the Tournament Regulations.

We again had extensive discussions about mobile phones. The following was agreed: If a player's mobile rings in the playing venue, then this player shall lose the game. The arbiter shall ensure that all the players are informed in advance of this rule.

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A personal observation: But there is more to mention. It is my opinion that it must be forbidden to bring mobile phones into the playing venue at all. With the new technology it is possible to use the mobiles to get a lot of information, even about actual positions on the board. The problem is how to check it that players do not bring them into the playing hall. We probably need to use metal detectors in the top tournaments. The second problem is the mobile phones brought in the playing hall by spectators. It is very clear that a request at the entrance of the playing hall to switch off mobiles phones is not sufficient.

Let me return to the meeting of the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee:

Mrs. Brana Malobabic from the Monroi Company in Canada demonstrated an electronic device, which in her opinion saves some time, when players use it instead of a score sheet. The Committee made some comments and expressed its enthusiasm for each development in chess which might benefit of the game. Mrs. Malobabic promised to investigate the possibility of organising a tournament in Canada using this electronic device.

After a vote it was agreed that that, starting in 2004, the Laws of Chess would be revised every four years. The Tournament Regulations would also be revised every four years, but starting in 2006. This means that during Congresses organised together with the Olympiad we have the possibility to revise the Laws of Chess and the Tournament Regulations. In that case there would many players, organisers and arbiters present to comment the proposals.

Mr. Pahlevanzdeh from Iran proposed to create a website (with a link to the FIDE website) containing the updated version of the FIDE Handbook. I will keep you informed.

I distributed at the meeting the Laws of Chess, including the proposals for revisions I had already received. I would like to follow the same procedure as in 2000. Anyone who would like to make a proposal or to discuss something regarding the Laws of Chess is invited to send his/her contribution to me at [geurtgijssen@chesscafe.com](mailto:geurtgijssen@chesscafe.com). Also let me know if you would like to receive the proposals distributed in Kallithea.

*The Chess Organisers Handbook* probably will appear in the third edition in 2005. Anybody who has any input should contact Stewart Reuben: [stewartreuben@aol.com](mailto:stewartreuben@aol.com).

Some information about other Committees: The Arbiters' Council committee proposed and it was agreed by the Executive Board, that it is possible to make a norm for the title of international arbiter in the National Team

Championship, under the following conditions:

1. Each team has at least 4 players; 2. At least ten teams take part in this competition; 3. At least 60% of the players have a FIDE rating; and 4. It applies only for the highest division of the national team championship.

The following proposed requirements for an international arbiter were accepted:

1. Obligatory knowledge of English language, minimum at conversation level and of chess terms in other official FIDE languages. 2. Minimum skills at user level to work with a personal computer 3. Knowledge of pairing programs endorsed by the Swiss Pairing Committee, Word, Excel and E-mail 4. Sufficient knowledge of FIDE regulations regarding the achievement of title norms and the FIDE rating system 5. Sufficient knowledge of Swiss Pairing Programs. 6. Skills to operate electronic chess clocks of different types and for different systems.

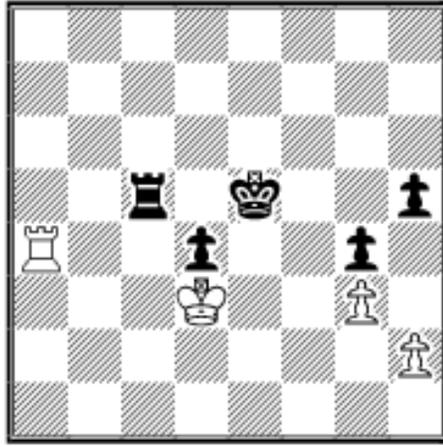
A personal observation: Since 1 July 2003 we have had new Title and Rating Regulations. In some meetings of the Qualifications Committee it was very clear to me that several members of this respected committee do not know all the new elements of these new regulations. It is my opinion that FIDE should be very active making arbiters familiar with these regulations. It is insufficient to only publish the new regulations. Sometimes the differences are very subtle. Let me give an example. One of the requirements to make an IM or GM norm in a tournament with ten players was that at least 5 players had a title. The new situation is that a player must have at least 5 *opponents* with a title to make an IM or GM norm.

The Swiss Pairing Committee made several proposals, accepted by the Board. I mention some of them.

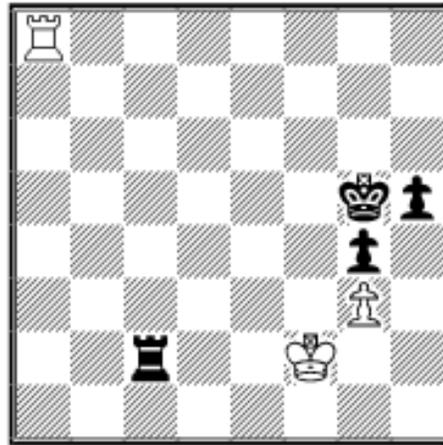
For seeding purposes in a FIDE rated Swiss tournament the FIDE ratings shall be used. If a player is not FIDE-rated, the national rating, if available, shall be used.

In the Olympiad pairings, Buchholz points will be used from round 5 instead of Extended Buchholz points. The proposal to award half-point to players having a bye was unanimously rejected. For a bye, a full point shall still be granted.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, Please solve the following situation which occurred in our local boys' under 14 championship two month ago. In the last game of the last round it has occurred the following position after Blacks' move:



White moved Ra8??, and after several moves the following position occurred:



Black stopped again both clocks and claimed a draw. But White's coach said: "Go on!" and started the clocks anew. The near staying chief arbiter was silent. The game continued: 1.Ke3 Rc3+ 2.Kd4?? Rxc3 3.Rg8+ Kh4 4.Ke5 Re3+ 5.Kf4 Rf3+ 6.Ke4, and Black's flag fell. But the chief arbiter didn't announce his decision and fixed a 1-0 result. Immediately after that a group of 5 coaches announced a protest against this result as White couldn't win and didn't attempt to win by normal means. Then the chief arbiter called by cellular phone an international arbiter and asked him what to do if in the position: White: K+R; Black: K+R+2p Black's flag fell. The international arbiter asked in his turn the chief arbiter: "Did Black claim the draw and did White play against Black's flag?" The chief arbiter answered: "Yes, Black claimed the draw, but White didn't play against flag." Then the international arbiter advised the chief arbiter to fix a 1-0 result. The group of coaches hearing this phone conversation was really against such result. They didn't time to make a written protest immediately since they should had to take their children home, but 4 days after the tournament they made a written protest and submitted it to the national federation. The federation decided to leave the 1-0 unchanged based on the opinion of the international arbiter.

Please answer (according to the FIDE Law of Chess, Tournament Rules, and precedents) the following questions:

1) Were the chief arbiter's actions according to the FIDE Rules? 2) Could such protest be justified? 3) How can a young player protect his rights in case a chief and assistant arbiters' "arbitrarily rule" when an appeal committee doesn't exist? **Anastasia Golubenko (Estonia)**

**Answer** I originally had some hesitation about answer to this question,

because I know that Mrs Golubenko also sent this letter to the FIDE Ethical Commission. And as long as this Commission deliberates about the question, I do not want to be involved in this matter. I now also know that the Commission sent a reply to Mrs. Golubenko.

Now I feel free to give my opinion about this case.

It is clear that Article 10.2 is again involved. I quote again this Article:

*If the player, having the move, has less than two minutes left on his clock, he may claim a draw before his flag falls. He shall stop the clocks and summon the arbiter.*

*a. If the arbiter agrees the opponent is making no effort to win the game by normal means, or that it is not possible to win by normal means, then he shall declare the game drawn. Otherwise he shall postpone his decision or reject the claim.*

*b. 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 an arbiter, if possible. The arbiter shall declare the final result after a flag has fallen.*

*c. If the arbiter has rejected the claim, the opponent shall be awarded two extra minutes thinking time.*

*d. The decision of the arbiter shall be final relating to 10.2 a, b, c.*

The following elements are clear:

Black claimed in a correct way. The arbiter acted correctly and applied Article 10.2b. Black again claimed. It is not prohibited to claim for a second time.

It is unbelievable that a coach restarted the clock and the arbiter did not react. I do not understand why nobody protested against the action of White's coach. Finally I would like to point to Article 10.2d: It is impossible to make an appeal in cases of these draw claims. What remains unanswered is: The improper action of White's coach and the passivity of the arbiters in this matter.

**Question** Dear Geurt, In your answer to Mr. Mulford in your October column you do not mention Article 8.7. Assuming the game was a normal game, and that the result was reported by handing in the scoresheets, Article 8.7 says the incorrect result must stand, unless the Arbiter decides otherwise. Under what circumstances would you expect the Arbiter to decide otherwise? **Ian**

## Thompson (England)

**Answer** I mentioned in my answer several possibilities:

*The problem is what the arbiter should do if the error was discovered later. Then there is at least one general rule: if it happened in a rated tournament, the correct result must be sent to FIDE.*

*Furthermore, it depends on when the error was discovered. If it had been discovered before the pairings of the next round in a Swiss tournament were published, the result would have been corrected. If the mistake had been discovered after the start of the next round I would not have changed the pairings. Whether I correct the result for the next round or not depends on many factors, e.g., the number of rounds left, the rankings of the two players involved at the moment the error was discovered and so on.*

**Question** Dear Geurt, Could you clarify the current rules on players hiding the moves on their scoresheet from their opponent? Although this has been common practice for as long as I have been playing, I was under the impression that it was no longer acceptable. However, I have noticed that in the competitions I play in (mostly English club games and weekend congresses) many players continue the practice, writing down a move and then covering it with their hand, or a pen. Are they permitted to do so, or am I in error in my understanding? **Justin Horton (UK)**

**Answer** The Laws of Chess do not say that the scoresheet must be visible for the opponent. Article 8.2 says something else:

*The scoresheet shall be visible to the arbiter throughout the game.*

In previous Notebooks I have already mentioned my opinion, i.e., that it is not permissible to write the move before making it, although some colleagues have tried to convince me that I am wrong. Article 8.1 starts as follows:

*In the course of play each player is required to record his own moves and those of his opponent.*

To record something means in my opinion to write down what already happened. And this means that there is no any reason to hide the scoresheet for the opponent.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, I observed an interesting controversy during a

recent tournament. An analogue clock was used in a 60-minute game and player A had only a king and a bishop left. Player B had a king, a queen and a bishop of opposite color. The flag of player B fell. The question is as follows: Has player A won the game or is it a draw due to insufficient mating material? Hypothetically, one could construe a mating position with the given material on the board. **Sebastian Gueler (USA)**

P.S.: The referees decided that this game would be a draw.

**Answer** Let me quote Article 6.8:

*(.....), 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 by any possible series of legal moves, even with the most unskilled counterplay.*

As you mention yourself it is possible to construe a mating position with the given material. Therefore player A should win the game. The arbiters' decision was wrong.

**Question** Dear Geurt, the following bizarre situation occurred in one of Carinthia's lower leagues (where we have no arbiters present for team events):

Player A has a promising position but is in modest time trouble with a couple of minutes left for about 10 moves. His opponent (with over an hour left on his clock) has left the board. B's team captain, who has already finished his game, sits down at his team mate's board (!) and when player A -after some puzzlement- makes his move, the team captain responds instantly with a move of his own (!!). Player A protests, the team captain apologizes, player B returns, makes his move (a different one), but then player A is so upset that he blunders and goes on to lose the game. The scoresheets are not signed. How do you see an incident like that? **Gernot Isola (Austria)**

**Answer** When I read your letter I was little bit amused. But when I thought it over, I was shocked. I tried to imagine how the player had felt when what you described happened to him. He was completely helpless. Of course he wanted to make a protest. But to whom should he address his protest when there is no arbiter? OK, the team captain of the opponent apologised and the opponent made another move. But in the meantime he lost some time (he was already in time trouble!) and of course also his concentration.

I do not know how the situation is in the Austrian Chess Federation. Is it possible to send a protest to an Appeals Committee? If so, it is evident that this is such a case.

Probably you should ask me what I would do if I am an arbiter in a match

between two teams and this had happened. One thing I like to point out in advance: A player should never suffer when his captain makes a mistake. This means the game should not be declared lost for the player whose captain made a mistake. In the actual situation I would have stopped the game and given the offended player some time to relax. Let us say ten minutes. During these ten minutes he may not sit in front of his board. Furthermore I should give him some time compensation. It depends of the situation how many minutes I would give him. Finally I would expel the captain from the playing venue.

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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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