

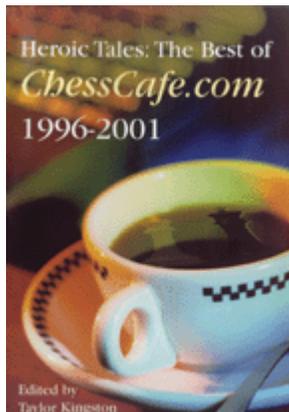


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COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook Geurt Gijssen



The Aeroflot Festival, Clocks, Mobiles, and Much More

Introduction I just returned from Moscow where I was the chief arbiter at the 2004 Aeroflot Festival, which is probably the strongest open chess tournament in the world. In fact there were three tournaments, players from 51 countries competed and the average rating in the A Tournament was 2538. The average rating in the B Tournament was 2328. The following table shows some other interesting statistics:

Tournament	# Players	GM	WGM	IM	WIM	FM	WFM	Untitled
A	203	131	10	50		6		6
B	244	5	17	67	7	46	3	99
C	198				1	1	1	195
Total	645	136	27	117	8	53	4	300

As you can see, 131 grandmasters started in the A Tournament, but following Round 2 we actually had 132 grandmasters, because one player, who was awaiting the title, passed the 2500 threshold and automatically became a grandmaster. The average rating in the A Tournament was 2538; in the past we called this a category XII tournament; and this was with 203 participants. So I was not surprised that the Guinness Book of Records showed so much interest in the tournament statistics.

This tournament was probably the most difficult one in my chess career. The B and C Tournaments started at 9.30h in the morning. At 8.00h every morning the arbiters were present in the playing hall to put the pieces in proper order, to code the score sheets, and to set-up the clocks. As the time limit was 90 minutes for the whole game with an increment of 30 seconds per move, the rounds finished between 14.00h and 14.45h.

The A Tournament started at 15.30h and was played in the same hall. Therefore we had to do the same set-up procedure as in the morning and to reset the clocks. The time limit in the A Tournament was 40 moves in 2 hours, then 20 moves in 1 hour, and finally 15 minutes for the remaining moves with an increment of 30 seconds per move in the last time control. So the rounds finished about 22.45h.

While the A Tournament was in progress we prepared and published the pairings of the B and C tournaments, and after the finish of the A Tournament we readied the next day's pairings. These pairings were then published around midnight as it was necessary to check the results and ensure proper pairings, as some pairings were prohibited for political reasons.

It was decided beforehand that the players in the B and C Tournaments had to play two rounds on the same day at the start of the tournament. In one case this turned out to be a disaster because of a prohibited pairing. The morning session finished at 14.50h. I received the results from the senior arbiter at 15.10h and the next round was due to start at 15.30h. This was not a problem because it was

very easy to enter the results and make the pairings in only 10 minutes, but when I checked the pairings I discovered a prohibited pairing. I tried to make new pairings, but the prohibited pairing appeared again. This happened yet again and then, suddenly, I lost all my data. Therefore I postponed the round and expected a revolution from the players. However, I was very surprised about the way they accepted my decision and, as a matter of fact, nothing happened.

Clocks

In this Festival we played with two different time limits and also with two types of clocks. The majority of the games were played with the new DGT XL clocks. I like this clock very much as it has some new options and is easy to install. In the A Tournament we utilized the classical time limit, which is option 18. There is a move counter, but the clock goes to the next time control after a flag fall. So after a flag fall the arbiter has to check whether the players completed the required minimum number of moves or not, just as with mechanical clocks. Generally this did not cause problems, although sometimes I had to explain that when the flag was shown at the end of the first and second time control, it does not mean that the game was lost.

In the C Tournament we also used the DGT XL clock, but here we faced some problems. The time limit was 90 minutes for the whole game with an increment of 30 seconds per move, which is option 12. Option 12 appeared in the clock display as 1 hour + 30 minutes and Fischer mode, but sometimes it showed 1 hour + 40 minutes, Fischer mode and 3 cycles, which is option 13. It is a clear defect in the clock. When I spoke with the producer of the DGT clock, he told me that this mistake was known and that the clocks may be returned to the retailer where they were purchased for replacement, free of charge. I was informed that about 1000 of these defective clocks were produced, all with a serial number of 28500 or lower.

In the B Tournament Phileon clocks were used. This clock adds time the moment the opponent stops his own clock and starts the player's clock. The consequence of this is that the player has to keep in mind, as long it is the opponent's move, there are effectively 30 more seconds available than the display shows. As far as I know all other clocks display the exact time the player has for his next move. The system of the Phileon clock is quite bad as the clock, in the described Fischer mode, does not stop when one of the players runs out of time. The display shows a minus sign, indicating that a player has overstepped the time limit, but the clock continues to operate. So if the opponent also oversteps the time limit, his display also shows a minus sign, and it is absolutely unclear who overstepped the time limit first. I hope that the manufacturer will change this as soon as possible.

Mobiles

There was a billboard at the entrance of the playing hall with the message, in both Russian and English, to switch off any mobile phones. Plus prior to each round I told the players to switch off their mobiles, informed them about the penalty, and gave them ten seconds to complete their task. So I was of the opinion that we had done our utmost to warn the players and was quite shocked when a player's mobile phone began ringing. I had no choice and had to forfeit this player, which is a very unpleasant job for an arbiter. When a spectator's mobile was found to be ringing, I expelled him from the playing hall for the rest of the round. In one case I decided that a spectator may not enter the playing hall until the end of the tournament, because his phone was ringing during two consecutive rounds. I had no qualms with penalizing the spectators.

Swiss Program

For the first time I used the Windows version of Swissmaster 4.8 in a tournament. Although I had some problems, I felt encouraged to continue working with it. One of the benefits is that all of the documents (standings,

pairings, norms, etc.) can be almost immediately created as an Excel file. My colleagues Ashot Vardapetian (Armenia) and Vladimir Dvorkovich (Russia) were also very enthusiastic. After these first experiences several elements will likely be improved and I will keep you informed.

Norms

As shown in the next table, 37 title norms were achieved in this Festival:

Tournament	GM	WGM	IM	WIM
A: 19	9		10	
B: 18		2	13	3
Total: 37	9	2	23	3

Miscellaneous

I occasionally receive some odd questions, remarks, or complaints in each tournament. Here are some examples from the Aeroflot Festival:

1. *"Is it true that a GM norm is counted as 2 IM norms?"*

No, it is not true. It is true that a GM norm can be used as one of the norms for an IM title and then later used as a norm for the GM title as well.

2. *"In the 2nd round I was up floater and in the 8th round it happened again. Some of our International Arbiters told me that the rule is a player can receive only one up float in a tournament."*

The rule is that, if possible, a player, being an up floater, will not get an up float in two consecutive rounds. So having an up float in the 2nd round, an up float in the 5th round, and the 8th round is possible.

3. *"My opponent made an illegal move, which I discovered when playing over the game. Yet, I signed the score sheets, upon which the result was correctly written."*

The player was very disappointed when I informed him that the result stood, because the illegal move was not discovered during the game.

4. *One game started with the white king on d1 and the white queen on e1. The error was discovered when White played 4.Kd1-d4. White then asked Black to allow the king and queen to be placed on the correct squares. Black refused, probably hoping that White would have to move his king.*

The rule says that they had to start a new game. Black was disappointed.

Question I want to share some thoughts with you concerning the use of mobile phones and how to handle this problem in the rules. As you mentioned in an earlier column, there are two different problems with mobiles:

- (a) they generate disturbances by ringing and making other noises, and
- (b) they may be used to communicate with other players, or may be used to run chess software on it, both violating Article 12.2.

Concerning (a), I think it's necessary to have the rule that all mobiles, as well as all other electronic devices, must be switched completely off. Perhaps "ringing" has to be defined as "making any kind of electronic signal, which disturbs any other player" this, of course, must include getting text messages. My opinion is that one can't declare a game lost when mobiles ring, but then do nothing or impose a smaller penalty, when it only vibrates, beeps, or delivers an instant message. During our national championship one player had a small bag in which, after one hour of playing, his alarm clock began beeping. He didn't hear it, but a few players, spectators, and the arbiter all mentioned it, although they were not sure from where the sound originated. This disturbance lasted about 20 seconds;

until the source was detected, and the player only received a warning. Had he been forfeited, it would have alerted all players to be more careful with their electronic "toys."

Concerning (b), of course the usage of mobiles for any reason must be a cause for forfeit. With this in mind, I do not think it's necessary to have metal detectors as the threat of forfeiture would be too great. In West Germany, we already had the rule that mobiles must be switched off completely, but there was no fixed penalty if one violated this rule. This was handled differently from region to region and from arbiter to arbiter. But after you published the result of the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee, all tournament directors began to declare that games would be forfeit when a mobile rings. I think this is OK, as the "mobile plague" must be stopped somehow ... Yours sincerely, **Leo Evers, (Germany)**

Answer Well, generally I agree with all you mentioned in your letter. Only on one point do I disagree with you. In your opinion the penalty of losing the game in the event of a vibrating phone should be more severe. I think we have to punish players, who disturb their opponent in any way. However, recently there was a ringing alarm clock in the playing hall, the player involved was not aware it was her alarm clock, and felt very ashamed. I decided not to penalise her. At the beginning of the next round I mentioned that all mobiles and alarm clocks had to be switched off.

Question Dear Mister Gijssen, According the new guidelines of the Dutch Chess Federation a ringing mobile means that the owner of this mobile shall lose the game. Suppose a player had already won his game and is walking in the playing hall when his mobile rings. What is the penalty in this case? **Tom Bus, (Netherlands)**

Answer A player, who has finished his game, will be considered as a spectator and be penalised accordingly: the player/spectator should be expelled from the playing hall.

Question Many times warning a player serves no effective purpose. To curb bad behaviour FIDE should compile a list of repeat offenders and make it public on the FIDE Rating List! Then organisations and arbiters will be forewarned and it will have a deterrent effect. **Shashikant Rimbak Sahasrabudhe, (India)**

Answer I agree with you that to give only warnings is not effective. If a player after, say, two official warnings is still showing the same bad behaviour, other penalties have to be imposed. From the list published in Article 13.4 of the Laws of Chess, these include: warning, increasing the remaining time of the opponent, reducing the remaining time of the offending player, declaring the game to be lost, reducing the points scored in a game by the offending party, increasing the points scored in a game by the opponent to the maximum available for that game, and expulsion from the event. However, it is my experience that 99.99% of the players behave correctly and it is my opinion that there is no need to publish an official FIDE black list.

Question At the end of 2003, I read your opinion about recording moves before they are played. You claimed it was illegal and wrote:

"A player who writes a move before making it makes use of notes and this is forbidden. 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."

I share your point of view, but a friend of mine indicated that to claim a triple repetition or the 50-move rule, players are obliged to write their move before they play it on board! Article 9.2 states:

The game is drawn, upon a correct claim by the player having the 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.

And article 9.3 states:

The game is drawn, upon a correct claim by the player having the move, if he writes on his scoresheet, and declares to the arbiter his intention to make a move which shall result in the last 50 moves having been made by each player without the movement of any pawn and without the capture of any piece.

Therefore one cannot record a move before it is played, but in other cases one is obliged to do it! With best wishes, **GM Bartłomiej Maciejka, (Poland)**

Answer I am very pleased that you share my opinion that writing the move before making it is incorrect. It seems that your friend got me, but I think not. Let me start with another example. Once, a long time ago, games were adjourned and the next move was sealed. It means that it was only written. After a player had written his move, he stopped the clocks. At that moment the move was completed, but not executed. The execution of the move took place at the resumption.

Now to discuss your case, first of all, I will quote two other Articles of the Laws of Chess:

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 or 9.3, on that move.

Article 9.5: If a player claims a draw as in Article 9.2 or 9.3, he shall immediately stop both clocks. He is not allowed to withdraw his claim.

- a. If the claim is found to be correct the game is immediately drawn.*
- b. If the claim is found to be incorrect, (...) the game shall continue and the intended move must be made.*

As you see in Article 9.4, the draw must be proposed before the move has been made. Going to Article 9.5, you see that the written move stands in case the claim was not correct. So in my opinion, writing the move in case of a draw claim and stopping the clocks has the same meaning as completing the move.

Question During a game played at a hotel in an open tournament, the time control was 40 moves in 2 hours and 1 hour for the remaining moves. I had the white pieces and was playing for the win with only 7 minutes left on my clock. My opponent, playing for a draw, had 8 minutes left on his clock. After 5 hours and 45 minutes I was not feeling very well and had to take some medicine, which was in my room. But I could not go to my room, because I would

lose 2 or 3 minutes on my clock. My questions are:

1. Can I stop the clocks and request to go to my room to take my medicine?
2. How long should such a time out last - 3 minutes? **Jean Deschesnes, (Canada)**

Answer First of all, I would like to mention that it is always possible to stop the clocks and to ask for the arbiter's assistance. It is up to the arbiter to decide whether stopping the clocks was justified or not. It is also up to the arbiter to grant you a time out. Personally I would give you such a time out. Even though the request was made at a difficult moment for the arbiter, as there are normally many Zeitnot cases at this point in a tournament and, if possible, an arbiter has to go with you to your room.

Question You've probably had this one before. Should an arbiter point out when a player's flag has fallen? In some tournaments arbiters take action and in others they leave it up to the players to make a claim. Does the arbiter have a duty to watch all the clocks? This is not always easy when there are a large number of time-scrambles occurring. Regards, **Peter Davies, (Wales)**

Answer I refer to some Articles of the Laws of Chess. For "normal" games:

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."*

For Rapid and Blitz games:

Article B6: *"The flag is considered to have fallen when a player has made a valid claim to that effect. The arbiter shall refrain from signalling a flag fall."*

It is clear that in "normal" games the arbiter has the duty to announce a flag fall. In Rapid and Blitz games it is the responsibility of the chessplayers to claim the flag fall. I agree with you that it is in many cases quite difficult, even impossible to watch all the clocks, but at least the arbiter should try.

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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