

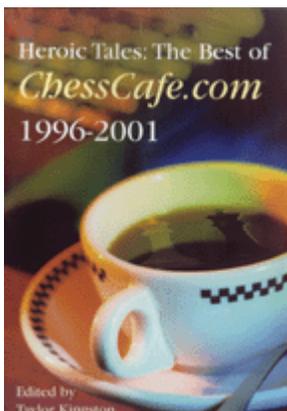


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COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook Geurt Gijssen



Forbidden Pairings

Question 1 Dear Mr Gijssen, During the Corus tournament I discussed some items with you and I would like to have three clarifications:

Say a player makes a move, presses his clock, but at the same time he knocks over some pieces. How should the arbiter react? I asked this question to several international arbiters during the Corus tournament and I received quite a few different answers. What is your opinion? Let me add, that on the club level this happens quite often, in which case the opponent restarts the player's clock, especially in Blitz games.

Question 2 With regards to the following Articles of the Laws of Chess:

4.1: Each move must be made with one hand only.

*3.8i: 'Castling'. This is a move of the king and either rook of the same colour on the same rank, counting as a single move of the king and executed as follows: the king is transferred from its original square two squares towards the rook, **then** that rook is transferred to the square the king has just crossed.*

4.4 c: If a player, intending to castle, touches the king or king and rook at the same time, but castling on that side is illegal, the player must make another legal move with his king which may include castling on the other side. If the king has no legal move, the player is free to make any legal move.

Article 4.1 is very clear. How can a player touch the king and the rook at the same time with one hand? In my opinion it is impossible and as far as I can see even forbidden. As Article 3.8ii states that the player has to move his king and then, after the king move, has to move his rook.

Question 3 Suppose a player has the intention to castle. He moves his king and then his rook. Then it is discovered that castling is illegal and the king has no legal move. In that case the player should be forced to play the touched rook pursuant to Article 4.3. What is your opinion? Best regards, **Alex Roose, (Curacao)**

Answer 1 I will quote Article 7.3 of the Laws of Chess:

If a player displaces one or more pieces, he shall re-establish the correct position on his own time. If necessary, either the player or his opponent shall stop the clocks and ask for the arbiter's assistance. The arbiter may penalise the player who displaced the pieces.

In principle there is nothing wrong with restarting the player's clock, but there are some small problems. The first is that in the event the game is played using

Fischer mode, time would be added, and this is not what should be done. The second problem is if the player disagrees. Therefore, I prefer to call the arbiter in such cases. This is always the best option as an offended player should not also be the judge.

Answer 2 You are completely right. We have to delete from Article 4.1 the words “*at the same time*” and then everything is OK.

Answer 3 Unfortunately I have to disagree with you. Castling is considered to be a king move. See Article 3.8:

There are two different ways of moving the king, by:

I. moving to any adjoining square not attacked by one or more of the opponent's pieces(...).

II. castling. This is a move of the king and either rook of the same colour on the same rank, counting as a single move of the king and executed as follows (...)

The fact that a player touches the king has consequences; it shows his intention to play a move with it. Therefore, if castling on one side is not possible, he has to make another king move. The fact that he touched his rook for an illegal castling has no consequences, because he did not intend to make a rook move. Touching and moving the rook was part of a king move. Therefore no rook move is obliged.

Question Dear Geurt, With regards to the Application of Section 10.2, say we come across the following situations:

a) An arbiter may have limited knowledge of the game and may not be able to determine whether the "game can be won by normal means." What is "normal means" equated with? Is it wasting time by moving here and there so that the claimant's flag falls, and not really moving towards checkmate? Or is it not having the material or position to be able to win in the future?

b) A young player in his formative years may have a similar lack of knowledge. So his "normal means" are different from a higher level player who might be working as the arbiter.

Can the arbiter postpone a decision and allow the game to continue beyond flag fall for a number of moves or minutes and then base his decision on the subsequent play? Thank you, **Pratap Mohan Atul, (India)**

Answer You understand the essential meaning of Article 10.2 perfectly. A player does not make any effort to win by normal means when he simply makes moves, hoping that the opponent oversteps the time limit. As I explained many times previously, the position on the board is not important. The way the player is playing is the important item. Is he really trying to make progress? Is he really trying to checkmate? If the arbiter is of the opinion that the player is not trying, he should declare the game drawn.

As for a younger player not understanding what “by normal means” is, I think it is part of their chess education to learn this information. Finally, I am completely against your suggestion to continue the game after a flag fall. The flag fall should clearly mark the end of the game and it is the appropriate moment to decide the outcome of the game.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, there are two Articles in the Laws of Chess that

oblige a player to give his scoresheet to an opponent:

8.3 The score sheets are the property of the organisers of the event.

8.5 b. If only one player is not required to keep score under Article 8.4 he must, as soon as either flag has fallen, update his scoresheet completely before moving a piece on the chessboard. Provided it is the player's move, he may use his opponent's scoresheet, but must return it before making a move.

As an arbiter I have noticed that when a player very frequently requests his opponent's scoresheet, it disturbs and displeases the opponent. To solve this problem, I propose that since an offer of a draw must be noted on the scoresheet with the symbol (=), the players should also mark the requests of the opponent for giving the score sheet. Then it would be very clear how many times the request was made and the arbiter can punish the player for disturbing his opponent. Therefore I propose to add to article 8.5b the words: "unless the arbiter decides otherwise." **Dr. Jorge Bermúdez, (Uruguay)**

Answer Dear Dr. Bermúdez, I am afraid you misunderstand Article 8.5. Let me explain why. The only situation in which a player may ask for the opponent's scoresheet is in the event that the player was not obliged to record his moves. This situation occurs only when a player has less than 5 minutes left on his clock and a flag has fallen. Only in this case can the opponent's score sheet be requested. When a player has more than 5 minutes left on his clock, he has to record the moves. If a player does not write the moves, the arbiter must issue a warning and if the player frequently does not record the moves in the same game, the arbiter should apply Article 12.7:

Persistent refusal by a player to comply with the Laws of Chess shall be penalised by loss of the game. The arbiter shall decide the score of the opponent.

Question Dear Geurt, in your discussion of the 2004 Aeroflot Open you stated that "it was necessary to check the results and ensure proper pairings, as some pairings were prohibited for political reasons." As a historian who is interested in international relations I found this remark to be very interesting. Could you please elaborate on why some pairings would be "prohibited for political reasons?" Thank you for your attention, **Dr. Christopher D. O'Shea, (Canada)**

Question I would like to know what the "political reasons" were that prohibited some pairings at the Aeroflot Open. Thank you, **P. Guyer, (Switzerland)**

Question Dear Mr Gijssen, I enjoyed your report on the Aeroflot Open but do not understand why you tolerate "politically-prohibited pairings." If a player enters a tournament, surely he is obliged to play anyone he is paired against!? If people can object to playing someone for political reasons, then is that not just the same as choosing your opponents? Could a Polish player, objecting to the Katyn Massacre, refuse to play against Russian players, and therefore play weaker opponents, and hence achieve an undeservedly high position in the event? I am looking forward to your reply. Yours sincerely, **Leonard McLaren, (New Zealand)**

Answer I understand that many people have different reasons for wanting to know what forbidden pairings are.

First, I would like to mention what happened in 1939. The Chess Olympiad was

organised in Buenos Aires. During this Olympiad, World War II began, and many countries refused to play against Germany. FIDE decided not to change the pairings but the results of the unplayed matches versus Germany and "Böhmen und Mähren" were 2-2. The last country was, as a matter of fact, the Czech Republic, which was occupied by the Germans. The following matches were decided in this way: Germany – Poland, Germany – Palestine, Germany – France, Poland – Böhmen und Mähren, Palestine – Böhmen und Mähren, France – Böhmen und Mähren, and Argentina – Böhmen und Mähren.

In 1984 I was involved for the first time in the pairings of an Olympiad. I remember quite well that there was a list of countries that should not be paired against each other. I was at that time a person who cooperated with the Pairings Committee. So although I was a little bit surprised, as a newcomer in the chess world I accepted it as a matter of fact.

In 1988 I was appointed as Chairman of the Pairings Committee and we made the mistake of overlooking a forbidden pairing. There was a lot of consternation when the pairings were published and I had to organise several individual meetings with team captains in order to change the published pairings to secure that every team could play. My point is to show that forbidden pairings are not a new phenomenon.

In the FIDE Handbook I found the following rule:

The General Assembly has passed a resolution that every team participating in the Chess Olympiad must declare in advance that it is willing to play against teams from any other affiliated Federations. The only possible exception would arise in the case of war. The Assembly accepted a proposal of the President that if any match could not be played owing to a state of war, its result would be decided on the basis of probabilities deduced from the players' FIDE ratings.

As far as I know, this rule has never been applied. Instead of applying it, the pairings were changed. And I think that it is better to change the pairings, if possible, and if the change does not affect the normal progress of the event. I know that it is easy to criticise me for my opinion, but let me explain the situation. There are governments who explicitly forbid the players of their country to play against players from a specific country. Let me emphasize that it is the governments that forbid it and that quite often the players have a different view. They would like to play, but they have no choice.

Well, the arbiter can decide not to change the pairings, but he knows in advance that one of the players will not show up and lose his game by forfeit. This is, of course, an unpleasant situation. Yet there is more – a game decided in this way, will not be counted for rating calculations, which is not a very serious problem, but it will also not be counted for a norm. It means, that, for instance in a 9 round tournament, both players do not have the possibility of making norms, because 9 games must be played to qualify for a norm. So both players suffer in such a case.

I hope that everybody agrees that changing the pairings is preferable. And I already know the next question – suppose two tournament leaders refuse to play each other before the last round, because one player is forbidden to by his government. What would you do in this case? Well, in such an exceptional case I would probably have no choice, but this case would be very exceptional.

Question Dear Sir, where could I get the arbiter's handbook? Thank you for your kind consideration! Yours in Chess, **Ray Duque, (USA)**

Answer It is possible to download it from the Internet. Go to www.fide.com, then to INFO and finally to Handbook.

Question 1 I have two questions regarding the FIDE Rating Regulations. Firstly, Rule 10.31 states:

Where a player's first performance(s) is less than 1801, the result(s) is ignored.

What is the reason for this and does it mean that if a player has a first performance of, say, 2101 based on 3 or more games, and then he scores a performance of 1776 based on at least three games, that the second tournament won't be considered for his initial rating? To my mind it is not a good idea to ignore the first poor performance, as all performances should be included. What is your opinion?

Question 2 Secondly, Rule 10.4 states:

If an unrated player receives a published rating before a particular tournament in which he has played is rated, then he is rated as a rated player with his current rating, but in the rating of his opponents he is counted as an unrated player.

My question is based on the following performances:

- 1) 2118 based on 4 games
- 2) 2160 based on 6 games

Say he starts a new tournament before publication of the rating list, does it mean that he has a rating of 2143 $(2118*4+2160*6)/10$ or will he be considered as an unrated until the next rating list? And what will happen if he covers the nine games rule during the tournament? Does it mean that all his remaining games will be counted as if he has a rating or will they be counted as if he is unrated?

Finally I want remark that there is an error in the formula on the FIDE web site in Rule 14.1. In the downloadable file the formula is correct, but on the web site it is wrong. Thank you very much in advance. Best Regards, **Milen Petrov, (Bulgaria)**

Answer 1 As you are probably know, at this moment FIDE publishes rating lists containing players who are rated higher than 1800. This means only the results of players, who have achieved a performance rating higher than 1800. You may also know that FIDE has in mind to publish players who are rated higher than 1000.

Answer 2 For the player who made the performances you mentioned, the games will be rated, even when his rating was not previously published. The situation is different for his opponent. As long the rating of a player was not published, he will be considered for his opponent as an unrated player.

Question Hi, my opponent had a lost game in a tournament, and put his bishop *en prise*, but if I captured it I would be mated on the back rank. He then asked to take his move back. I fell for it and said no, but saw the trap as I was playing the move. I was so mad that I simply put the rook back and played another piece. The opponent didn't call the arbiter. My question is, if one player deliberately disturbs the attention of the other, is he subject to some kind of punishment? And in my case, if he had called an arbiter, would I have to make

the capture and lose the game? Thanks, **Paulo Schreiner, (Brazil)**

Answer Dear Paulo, you describe a very common trick. The opponent makes a move that seems to be very bad then makes some remark or expression to demonstrate that he is almost ready to resign. Yet in fact it is a ruse and when you fall for it, you are checkmated or something such as this. It is very clear that what the opponent is doing is incorrect. And an arbiter upon seeing such behaviour should punish him, because it distracts the player. See Article 12.5, 12.6 and 13.4:

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

12.6: Infraction of any part of the Articles 12.1 to 12.5 shall lead to penalties in accordance with Article 13.4.

13.4: The arbiter can apply one or more of the following penalties: a. warning, b. increasing the remaining time of the opponent, c. reducing the remaining time of the offending player, d. declaring the game to be lost, e. reducing the points scored in a game by the offending party, f. increasing the points scored in a game by the opponent to the maximum available for that game, g. expulsion from the event.

Meanwhile it is clear that you deliberately touched a piece with the intention to play it. And in this case you have to play your rook. As long as you did not touch the opponent's bishop you are allowed to play any legal move with this rook, but you have to move it. You were lucky that your opponent did not make a claim and that the arbiter did not see it.

Question Dear Geurt, I would like to make the following observations with regards to writing one's move down before playing it, and of obscuring the scoresheet from one's opponent. There seem to be varying opinions among arbiters and players, which of course is not helpful from anybody's point of view.

1. Is it your interpretation of Article 8 that a player should not write down a move beforehand, rather than anything explicitly stated in the rule regarding the recording of moves? It seems to me to be quite a reasonable practice to write down a move beforehand in the effort to avoid blunders. Therefore, Article 8 should be amended so that it either makes clear that the practice is acceptable or forbidden.

2. There is a similar problem with sub-article 8.2, which states:

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

I know of contradictory interpretations of this rule. One is that a player may not hide their move by placing a pen or other object on the scoresheet, since an arbiter who passes the board would not be able to see it. The opposing viewpoint is that a player may do precisely this, since the opponent has no right to see the scoresheet, but that the scoresheet must be visible to an arbiter.

My point is, again, would it not be better to amend 8.2 so that the practice is either explicitly permitted or forbidden? In this specific instance it's particularly important because tournament chess is often played without the presence of any actual arbiter. Therefore the players need to know what is acceptable regardless of the role of the arbiter. I look forward to your opinion on these matters!

Justin Horton, (London)

Answer As I wrote before, I never paid attention whether a player recorded his move before or after he had made his move. During the Olympiad in Bled I came across a situation in which a chess player several times wrote his move before making it, changed his mind, and replaced the written move with another one. I was of the opinion that he was making notes and making use of any notes is forbidden (Article 12.2).

Another point I mentioned is that Article 8.1 has to do with the “recording of moves.” And recording something means to write down what has happened or is happening, but not what shall happen. So I agree with you that the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee has to clarify such cases explicitly.

Regarding your second point, if it is forbidden to write down the move before it is made; then hiding the scoresheet from the opponent no longer has any meaning. The only reason to hide the scoresheet would be in the opponent's time trouble, to prevent him from seeing the number of completed moves. And to be very honest, it is not unreasonable for this to happen. My own experience is that professional chess players never have any problem in making the scoresheet 100% visible to the arbiter. Tony Miles always removed his watch from the scoresheet when I passed his board without any request from my side.

This brings me to another item, but related to this one. At many meetings during FIDE Congresses I have proposed that players should play under the same conditions. At the moment in specific situations one player is obliged to record the moves, and the other player does not have this obligation. And I always failed to convince my colleagues that this situation is unfair. If the FIDE General Assembly should decide that in the event of time trouble of either player that neither player must record his move, then there is no reason for hiding a scoresheet.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, in a recent blitz game, black accidentally began with his king on d8 and queen on e8. The players only noticed this after several moves, and since it was a blitz game, continued with the king on the wrong square. Is black allowed to castle?

Can black move the king to b8/f8 and the corresponding rook to d8/e8, if they haven't moved previously, and the other limitations on castling don't apply? In the specific case I decided that black is not allowed to castle, since by being on d8 it implies that the king has moved. Regards, **Arnoud van Vliet, (The Netherlands)**

Answer Let me quote Article B4 of Rapid play and this Article applies also for Blitz:

Once each player has completed three moves, no claim can be made regarding incorrect piece placement, orientation of the chessboard or clock setting.

In case of reverse king and queen placement castling with this king is not allowed.

Well, as you see, your decision was right.

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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