



COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



Swiss Master for Windows is Available!

Let me start with a very important announcement: The Royal Dutch Chess Federation, in cooperation with MSD Software B.V., has developed a Windows version of the famous Swiss Master DOS. *Swiss Master 5.0* is for sale at the price of €50, which is based on the development and maintenance costs. You can download an unregistered version of the program, then later place an order for the registration code, after which you will be sent an invoice.

To download *Swiss Master 5.0*:

- Go to www.schaakbond.nl;
- Click on “Swiss Master 5.0 (voor Windows)” at the top of the page;
- Click on “English version;”
- Click on “Ordering.”

Question 1 This is not a question, but some research I carried out on the Internet. A Minnesota company has recently developed a device that is currently illegal in most countries, including the US and Canada, which raises some interesting questions. The Mobile Blocker cuts off all wireless communications in a 135 foot radius and it also blocks pager signals (one- and two-way). I think this is great for an expensive restaurant, at church, or at a tennis match/golf tournament. With a remote control it is \$950.00, without the remote control it's \$875.00. There is also a C-GUARD mobile phone disabler from an Israeli company called Netline. **Milan Ninchich (Australia)**

Question 2 Dear Mr. Gijssen, I found some information about the machine that stops mobile network signals. Its size is 10 cm x 6 cm x 2 cm. It has a small antenna and is supplied with an external adaptor. It also works against all types of paging devices. Its range is such that in a playing hall of 50 square meters, one machine will do the job. It can also be used in hospitals, with no adverse effect on the medical electronics. The price is \$250.00. Sincerely yours, **I.A. Charles Kayle (Lebanon)**

Answer First of all many thanks for the letters. Your information is very useful, although I have the feeling that chess players understand the risks of ringing mobiles in the playing hall. The only problems are the spectators and especially the so-called VIPs.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, there have been many questions about recording moves before or after the move is played and whether that constitutes using "notes" during a game. I play against an individual at my club quite often and he writes down the time remaining on his score sheet (i.e. at moves 10, 15, 20 etc.) I have never questioned this before, however; it occurs to me that the other player may make use of this during the game by helping him to pace his moves, perhaps giving him an advantage. What are your views of writing down the time remaining after certain moves? Is this to be considered as note taking or not? **Jon French (USA)**

Answer Let me quote Article 12.2:

During play the players are forbidden to make use of any notes, sources of information, advice, or analyse on another chessboard. The score sheet shall be used only for recording the moves, the times of the clocks, the offer of a draw, and matters relating to a claim.

As you may notice in the second paragraph of this Article, it is permitted to record the times on the clocks. Whether it is the used or the remaining clock times is irrelevant.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I ask you for a clarification regarding the rapid and blitz game rules and more specifically Rule B6 in Appendix B. The rule states:

The arbiter shall refrain from signaling a flag fall.

As I understand it, this rule does not prohibit the arbiter from signaling a flag fall, but suggests that he avoid doing so. If the arbiter was not allowed to signal a flag fall the rule should state it very clearly, for instance: "The arbiter is not allowed/authorized to signal a flag fall."

I have discussed it with a few experienced arbiters who believe that the arbiter cannot (is not allowed) to signal the flag fall, but I insist that this is not the meaning of verb refrain. Of course, as an arbiter I do not signal a flag fall during a rapid/blitz game, yet in a recent rapid tournament another arbiter did so and there was an argument whether he was allowed to do so or not. I believe that you can clarify the exact spirit and meaning of this article, however; I would suggest that the rule be reworded to avoid misinterpretations. Thank you in advance for your time and effort. Kind Regards, **Dimitris Skyrianoglou (Greece)**

Answer Well, the clarification is very simple. Signaling a flag fall in Rapid and Blitz games is not the duty of the arbiter. The players themselves, and to be very clear, only the players, are responsible for it. I shall contact some English speaking arbiters about whether we have to replace "refrain" with

another verb.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, we had a situation at 29th Paul Keres Memorial in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada and I would like your opinion on the matter. The game in question involved an IM and a WFM, but that's incidental. The clock being used was a Saitek II and the time control was 40/2, game/60, which is the Saitek's preset position 1. It was late in the second time control, both players were down to their last minute in a tight multi-piece endgame involving queens, and both were blitzing. What happened next was that both clocks *seemed* to stop with 30 seconds left.

None of the arbiters remembered having set the clock before the game. The players continued to blitz, reeling off 30 or so moves at a rate of a half second to two seconds per move. If either player had requested a FIDE Quick play Finish I would have said no or less likely reserved my decision, but neither did; so play continued. I was attempting to keep score and was unable to do so after about move 85, the clock later showed 127 moves had been made! I was unsure what to do. Should I have upset both players by intervening and stopping the clock? Had I done so it was likely one or the other would have flagged.

After the game we found the clock had not been set to Saitek preset 1, but to Saitek preset 2 which is 40/2, 20/1, game/30. And what I thought was 30 seconds was in fact 30 *minutes* on the non-existent tertiary time control. Needless to say we carefully checked *all* the clocks each round thereafter and the three arbiters, two of which are IAs, made sure *we* and not the players set the clock. The IM asked us to use an analog clock for the remaining rounds.

In general how should arbiters handle such a situation? How quick should we be to stop a game to inspect a clock we are uncertain of? I would have automatically known what to do with analog clocks, but there are so many models of digital clocks, and knowing how to add time to each clock is far less obvious than on an analog, that it is difficult to keep track of the workings of each clock. How many and which models of digital clock should the conscientious International Arbiter be expected to master? Many thanks for your opinions. Best regards, **Lyle Craver, International Arbiter (Canada)**

Answer I was the chief arbiter in the Women's World Championship in May/June 2004 in Elista. In my report to the FIDE President I wrote:

It became, again, very clear to me that FIDE should try to arrange a standard method for installing chess clocks. Too often chess arbiters (and frequently the chess players as well) do not know how to install the clocks and how to handle them in critical situations.

Your letter confirms this. Before I travel to a chess tournament I try to

determine the rate of play and the type of clock that will be used. I have different types of chess clocks at home and study the manuals on how to operate them. Sometimes I am not familiar with a particular model and then I try to learn how it works on the spot. In all such situations I organise an arbiters' meeting and explain what I have learned regarding the clock being used in the tournament. One recurring problem is that some of the arbiters pretend not to need such an explanation, when it is exactly these arbiters that make mistakes. Whenever possible I set all the clocks myself and ask a colleague, whom I trust, to check them.

Recently I had an incident in an important game with the new DGT clock. The time limit was 40 moves in 100 minutes, 20 moves in 50 minutes and 10 minutes for the remaining moves with an increment of 30 seconds per move from move one. At the end of the first time period, 50 minutes were automatically added to the players' remaining time. To our surprise these 50 minutes were added after Black's 39th move. Fortunately the players had enough time and I asked them to play their 40th move, then I told them that I would replace the clock after this move. The players agreed, but it was a mystery as to why the time was added after a Black move.

I checked the clock and as far I could tell everything was all right. After a few moves the players agreed to a draw and I asked them if they knew what had happened. One of them told me what he had observed at the start of the round. As usual the lever was up on White's side. The deputy arbiter pressed the lever and started the clocks by pressing the start/stop button. Then seeing that the wrong clock was running, pressed the lever on Black's side, which the clock recorded as a White move. The moral of this story is to always check the display indicator as to which side is Black and which one is White.

After this long introduction let me answer your question. Whenever an arbiter must interfere, he has to ask himself: "Is it better not to interfere, because interfering is probably more of a disturbance than not doing so?" In the described case, it was better not to interfere. Reducing the clock times at the very end of a game should not be done, however; increasing the clock times, in case of a wrong setting, should always be done.

Question At a recent tournament I was paired against an opponent that had a terrible cough, and he would only occasionally cover his mouth; the rest of the time he would cough directly across the board at me. Although I'm sure the coughing was legitimate, should I have involved the tournament director, or admonished him to be more considerate, and cover his mouth? I did neither – although I "exaggerated" leaning away from the board so the other players near us would be alerted to his "behaviour." **James Jackson (USA)**

Answer Yes, you should have involved the tournament director and explained to him what was going on. It is better not to approach the opponent directly, because it could be considered as disturbing the opponent. It depends, of

course, on the diplomacy of the tournament director as to whether it helps or not.

Question Geurt, as tournament director for small double round-robin, I personally observed a game which had a 1-hour per player time limit. Each player had less than 3 minutes on his clock. Black checked White with a queen move, and White moved a rook, but did not block the check. Black quickly hit the clock, and stated to White: "You are in check." White replaced the rook, and then traded queens, to answer the check. Black did not request 2 minutes to be added to his time, nor did Black insist on "touch move." Whereas the rook could have been interposed to block the check, which would have meant Black would have won White's queen on the next move. Should I have intervened to (a) declare the first rook move an illegal move and then add 2 minutes to Black's clock, or even (b) point out the touch-move requirement and insist that White move the rook and block the check, which then was the only legal move the rook could make? **Sam Naylor (USA)**

Answer Each player had one hour for the whole game. It means that it was a Rapid game. I quote Article B5a:

The arbiter shall make a ruling according to Article 4 (The touched piece), only if requested to do so by one or both players.

I understand that neither player requested an action from the arbiter, so it was correct not to intervene. If it had been a "normal" game, you should intervene and act as you described.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, the following is an account of an incident from a tournament in San Diego. I've edited the comments of the original author (Chuck Ensey) to make it shorter.

At the beginning of the 2nd round, the two highest rated players of the Open section were paired against each other. Before the round even started, the players announced to the TD that they were going to draw and therefore they didn't see the need to even play a game, and could he please just record the result as a draw. The TD was having none of this, and told them firmly that they had to play a game. Furthermore since they had already told him they intended to draw, this put him in a difficult situation. It was a clear violation of the rule book, which says no prearranged results can be accepted as rated games. So besides telling them that they had to play, he also warned them that a grandmaster draw would be unacceptable.

Fifteen minutes later they returned with a completed game of 15 moves that ended in a draw. In the TD's judgment, the game was unacceptable, especially in light of their previous attempt to fix the result. He told them he could not record their result and they had to play a "real" game, like all the other players

were doing. This upset one of the players, who refused to continue in the tournament if this game was not accepted. The other player attempted to negotiate with the TD and this went on for quite some time. The TD said he was going to forfeit them both. A compromise finally emerged that they would be allowed to continue in the tournament with this game counting as a forfeit, but they would only be eligible for one half of the stated prizes. Normally anyone who forfeits a game is not eligible for any prize money, so this was a big concession by the TD. If the two top players continued they would still very likely be able to win and split the reduced prizes, despite the second round result. However, this deal, after several stops and starts, also fell through.

In order to show support for the players' position, four other players withdrew in protest. In the end, the top two players were forfeited because they had played a game with a pre-arranged result. What is your opinion on this matter, was the decision to forfeit the players too harsh? Best regards, **Baldomero Garcia (USA)**

Answer The initial actions of the TD were fully correct. He should not have accepted the prearranged draw and he was probably right when he told them to play a normal game. Yet what is the definition of a normal game? And is a TD able to make this judgement? And what kind of game is acceptable? Many attempts were made in the past, for instance that a game should last at least 30 moves before the players could agree to a draw, but all these failed.

In this case the TD created a difficult situation for all the parties involved. I have the feeling that anything other than a decisive result would have been unacceptable to him. Finally, I wonder if a TD is empowered to make decisions with regards to the prize fund.

Question Dear Sir, recently I witnessed an affair during a chess tournament and I would very much appreciate your opinion on it. Here is the situation: Players A and B are in time trouble and are playing the moves rather quickly. Player A has more time, about 1 minute and player B has about 5 seconds. The time control is Game 60 with no time delay or increment. Player B runs out of time and immediately sweeps all the pieces from the board and declares a draw. Player A had mating material on the board, therefore the game is not a draw, but the final position was unavailable for the arbiter. Moreover, both players did not record the last 30 or so moves, thus the score sheets are useless. What is the remedy for this type of situation, and what can Player A do to protest Player B's behaviour? Thank you, **Lu A. Tahmazyan (USA)**

Answer The arbiter's decision is a very easy one. He should declare the game lost for Player B. If this practice is tolerated, then each player having a lost position could act accordingly.

Question 1 According to rule 9.1:

A player wishing to offer a draw shall do so after having made a move on the chess board and before stopping his clock and starting the opponent's clock. The offer cannot be withdrawn and remains valid until the opponent accepts it, rejects it verbally, or rejects it by touching a piece with the intention of moving.

What happens if the opponent takes too much time to accept or reject the draw offer while his adversary's clock is running? Is this a loop hole in the rule?

Question 2 Let us look to Article 9.3:

The game is drawn, upon a correct claim by the player having the move, if:

- a. 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, or*
- b. the last 50 consecutive moves have been made by each player without the movement of any pawn and without the capture of any piece.*

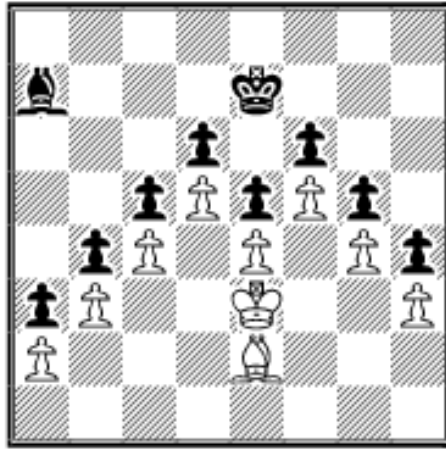
But what about the following situation: A and B are playing, 50 moves are made from the starting position and a position is reached such that no pawn moves are available, no progress can be made with the pieces and there are no captures, but pawns have already moved. Does this come under the 50 move rule? Thank you, **Pranesh Yadav, National Arbiter (India)**

Answer 1 I am afraid you misunderstood Article 9.1. Let me explain the procedure:

- Player A makes a move;
- Player A offers Player B a draw and immediately after this offer;
- Player A stops his own clock and starts B's clock;
- Player B starts to think about Player A's proposal.

Therefore, Player B ponders the proposal on his own time and not during Player A's time.

Answer 2 I am not sure, but I understand your question as follows. After 50 moves we have a position like this:



I assume that taking en passant is not possible. Well, in this position we will not apply Article 9.3 as mentioned by you, but Article 9.6:

The game is drawn when a position is reached from which a checkmate cannot occur by any possible series of legal moves, even with the most unskilled play. This immediately ends the game.

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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