



C O L U M N I S T S

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



Touching Pieces with a Pen

Question Dear Geurt, The Swiss Chess Federation has compelled the players participating in the highest league to submit to the doping regulations imposed by the Swiss Olympic Committee and FIDE, or else play in lower leagues. It reads:

The undersigned Player will abstain from all forms of doping. By doping it is meant the use of substances from prohibited groups of active agents and the use of prohibited methods according to the current doping lists issued by SO (Swiss Olympic) and FIDE ... The Player will be subject to sanction according to the statutes and regulations of SO and SCF (Swiss Chess Federation) as well as FIDE in the event of a positive test result...

The full text of this document can be found at:

<http://www.schachbund.ch/schachsport/doping/submission.pdf> .

From what I can tell, there is no longer any information on doping on the FIDE website. Are there any current FIDE statutes and regulations concerning doping? I remember that such rules were drafted a few years ago, but it seems that FIDE has tacitly buried them after protests by the players. Is this correct? Best regards, **Martin Fierz (Switzerland)**

Answer It is rather difficult to find the FIDE Doping Regulations, but after some effort I was able to locate them. Go to the FIDE website and then: Info → Commissions and Committees → Medical Commission → FIDE Anti Doping Regulations and Therapeutic Use Exemption Form.

Question There are many situations where it would be ideal to have games automatically recorded, rather than relying on the players to keep score. With modern RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology, I'm sure this could be achieved with 'readers' in the board and RFIDs in the men. Then, if there was some issue of ratifying a player's claim, the game could be 'played back' to verify it. **Guy Haworth (UK)**

Answer There is nothing wrong with using new technology to record the moves. At the FIDE congress in Kallithea 2003 there was a presentation from

the Canadian company Monroi. If this becomes commonplace, I will miss the scoresheets as we will lose many historical documents. Some regulations may need to be changed, but this is not a big problem.

Question 1 With regards to illegal positions, the rules for Rapid Chess should be changed to state that:

- All moves played in illegal positions are considered illegal.
- The last player to play a move in an illegal position, or create an illegal position, is lost.
- To claim a win under point (b) above, the player must have a mating material. Otherwise the game is drawn.

This way we cover all potential problems that lead to illegal positions, such as capturing the king in blitz. If making an illegal move is a violation, then acceptance of this violation is even worse.

Question 2 Consider the following situation: in a rapid game, Player (A) makes an illegal move while his opponent's (B) flag is down. Player (B) requests an additional two minutes because of the illegal move, while Player (A) claims a win because of the flag fall. My colleagues' opinions were:

- Player (B) is considered lost on time. He is only continuing the game hoping to mate or stalemate his opponent before the flag fall is discovered.
- Player (B) is not lost as the flag fall in Rapid chess is recognized only when a claim is raised. In this case the illegal move claim by player (B) precedes the flag fall claim by player (A).

I agree with the second opinion, but this leads to another problem. Using a Digital clock the time of Player (B) will stay at zero even if his time expired five minutes ago. So it will always be reset higher than zero. While when using conventional clocks, adding two minutes might not reset the clock before the flag fall. Therefore, it must be fair, in comparison, to move his time two minutes before flag fall. **IA Naji AlRadhi (UAE)**

Answer 1 I fully agree with you that illegal positions are not covered in the Laws of Chess, but first we have to define what constitutes an illegal position. I tried to define it as follows:

An illegal position is a position that can never appear on the board by any series of legal moves.

Secondly, we have to decide what the role of the arbiter should be in such cases. Should he interfere or does he have to wait for a claim? And should the penalty be as you suggested or something else? Your remarks are an excellent

starting point for these discussions in the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee.

Answer 2 It is an accepted, although unwritten, rule that what happens on the board has priority over what happens off the board. Therefore the illegal move has priority over the flag fall. This means that I also agree with the second opinion. To know the consequences, we have to make a distinction between Rapid and Blitz games.

In Blitz game Article C3 states:

An illegal move is completed once the opponent's clock has been started. However, the opponent is entitled to claim a win before making his own move. If the opponent cannot checkmate the player by any possible series of legal moves with the most unskilled counterplay, then he is entitled to claim a draw before making his own move. Once the opponent has made his own move, an illegal move cannot be corrected.

If all the requirements are fulfilled, the game is therefore lost for the player who completed an illegal move. The flag fall is irrelevant.

The situation is different in Rapid games and covered by Article 7.4 of the Laws of Chess and Article B5 of the Rapid rules:

7.4 a. If during a game it is found that an illegal move has been made, the position immediately before the irregularity shall be reinstated. If the position immediately before the irregularity cannot be determined the game shall continue from the last identifiable position prior to the irregularity. The clocks shall be adjusted according to Article 6.14. Article 4.3 applies to the move replacing the illegal move. The game shall then continue from this reinstated position.

b. After the action taken under Article 7.4(a), for the first two illegal moves by a player the arbiter shall give two minutes extra time to his opponent in each instance; for a third illegal move by the same player, the arbiter shall declare the game lost by this player.

B5. a. The arbiter shall make a ruling according to Article 4 (The touched piece), only if requested to do so by one or both players.

b. 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.

The opponent of the player who made an illegal move receives two extra minutes. It is not relevant when the player's flag fell. In all situations the player's time after the correction should be two minutes.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I have searched the chess organisers handbook and have been unable to find anything relating to a situation that occurred in a recent Australian tournament. What decision would you make in the following circumstances?

- White is late for the start of a round and Black starts White's clock.
- Black decides he does not like the colour of the pieces, as the white pieces had a pink tinge, and asks the arbiter if he can move to another board. The arbiter allows him to do so.
- Black moves the clock and reverses the position of the clock so that it appears that his own clock is now going.
- White arrives at the board and is told “the director asked me to start your clock” and he replies: “sorry, but you have started your own clock.” At this point the clock is stopped and the arbiter is asked to make a decision.

Regards, **Mal Murrell (Australia)**

Answer I am not surprised that you could not find a solution as the Preface clearly states:

The Laws of Chess cannot cover all possible situations that may arise during a game, nor can they regulate all administrative questions. Where cases are not precisely regulated by an Article of the Laws, it should be possible to reach a correct decision by studying analogous situations, which are discussed in the Laws. The Laws assume that arbiters have the necessary competence, sound judgement and absolute objectivity. Too detailed a rule might deprive the arbiter of his freedom of judgement and thus prevent him from finding the solution to a problem dictated by fairness, logic and special factors.

However, the solution is an easy one, because the facts are very clear. White was late, his clock was started, and the arbiter was informed about relocating to another board. The solution is, of course, to place the clock on the other side of the board.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, During the final round of an Open tournament, a player went to get new scoresheets at move sixty. When he left the table, he thought he was winning the game. He returned and found that his opponent had played a winning move and he resigned. Going over the game he discovered that his opponent's last move was illegal. In fact, the opponent admitted, publicly and for the record, that he had purposefully made the illegal move. The player appealed the result, but the Appeals Committee ruled that the player had resigned and the result could not be changed. Thank you.
Cheers, **Jonathan Berry (Canada)**

Answer This is, of course, a very sad story. The ruling of the Appeals Committee was correct, because it is completely in accordance with the Laws of Chess. An illegal move must be noticed *during the game*.

Nevertheless, that is not the end of the story. Something must be done about the inappropriate behaviour of the player who admitted to purposefully making an illegal move. The arbiter should impose the ultimate penalty: *expulsion from the event (Article 13.4.g)*.

Question Are non-playing observers allowed to have pocket computers analyse games they are watching? I am referring to tournaments where observers are allowed to circulate among the tables. **Prof. Henri H. Arsenault (Canada)**

Answer It is written in the FIDE Handbook, in the Regulations for the World Chess Championships, that the players are not allowed to analyse in the playing area. Furthermore Article 12.2 states:

During play the players are forbidden to make use of any notes, sources of information, advice, or analyse on another chessboard.

I could not find any article that forbids the spectators from analysis in the playing hall. Although, I have always ordered spectators who were doing so to stop immediately and they did.

The situation you describe is quite precarious, but not unusual in big Open tournaments. Since the spectators are walking amidst the tables, they are able to contact the players quite easily. In such situations I always forbid them from analysing in any way, whether on pocket chessboards or on pocket computers. I cannot imagine that any arbiter would act otherwise.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, You mentioned that if one of the players is unable to write the moves you deduct time from the clock. At the tournaments where I am Chief Arbiter I usually reduce the time of this player by ten minutes, thus reducing the time control of the whole game. Yet, there is a problem. The FIDE Rating Regulations clearly state:

1.1 For a game to be rated each player must have the following minimum periods in which to complete all the moves, assuming the game lasts 60 moves.

1.11 Where at least one of the players in the tournament has a rating 2200 or higher, each player must have a minimum of 120 minutes.

1.12 Where at least one of the players in the tournament has a rating 1600 or higher, each player must have a minimum of 90 minutes.

1.13 Where all the players in the tournament are rated below 1600, each player must have a minimum of 60 minutes.

1.14 Examples of ways in which 1.11 can be achieved include:

All the moves in 2 hours.

40 moves in 75 minutes, followed by all the moves in 15 minutes but each time a player makes a move an extra 30 seconds is added to his clock time.

40 moves in 90 minutes, followed by all the moves in 30 minutes.

1.2 Games played with all the moves at a rate faster than the above are excluded from the list.

1.3 Where a certain number of moves is specified in the first time control, it is recommended be 40 moves. Players benefit from uniformity here.

With the new time control of 90 min. + 30 sec. per move, the remaining reflection time of such a player is less than two hours, and so this game would not be rated. How would you handle this? I think that this new time control should be included in Article 1.14, and there should be a statement concerning such cases. Thank you very much. Best regards, **IA Milen Petrov (Bulgaria)**

Answer It is clear that when only one player is required to press the clock, the other player saves some time by not doing so. I have seen this quite often and the only thing that needs to be discussed is the amount of time that should be deducted. As you probably understand I disagree with you that there is a problem and that a change in the regulations is required.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, According to Article 9.2, in a three-fold repetition claim, two positions with identical pieces on identical squares are still not deemed to be the same if, amongst other things, “the right to castle has been changed temporarily or permanently.” How can there be a temporary change in the right to castle, with the same pieces on the same squares? That seems impossible. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find a definition of “the right to castle.”

There is only Article 3.8:

(1) Castling is illegal:

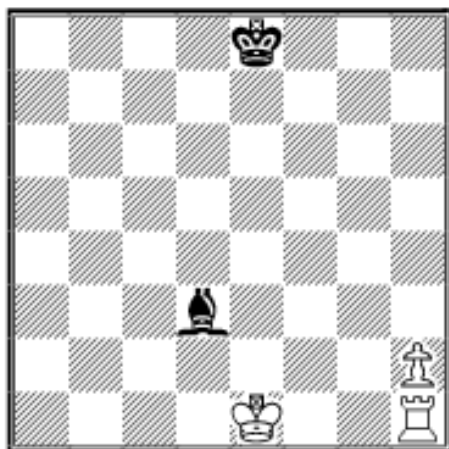
- 1. if the king has already moved, or*
- 2. with a rook that has already moved*

(2) Castling is prevented temporarily

- 1. if the square on which the king stands, or the square which it must cross, or the square which it is to occupy, is attacked by one or more of the opponent's pieces.*
- 2. if there is any piece between the king and the rook with which castling is to be effected.*

In case (1), the right to castle does not apply, but what about case (2)? If

castling is temporarily prevented, does the king still have the right to castle, and is only temporarily barred from doing so, or does he temporarily not have the right?



In the diagrammed position, White is on move and has not yet moved his king or rook, but is temporarily prevented from castling. White moves his king and Black moves his bishop, resulting in the same piece placement, but now castling is entirely illegal. Are the positions identical for claims of three-fold repetition, i.e. was “the right to castle” changed? The practical relevance is slim at best, but if you find the time to address this question anyway I'd appreciate it. **Joachim Vaerst**

(Germany)

Answer I had this discussion just a few weeks ago in Holland and came to the following conclusions. Article 3.8a.ii.(1) has to be changed as follows:

- (1) *The right for castling has been lost:*
- a. if the king has already moved, or
 - b. with a rook that has already moved

Furthermore the words “temporarily or permanently” must be deleted from Article 9.2. When you reread these two articles, you will see that everything is now OK.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I downloaded a trial version of *Swiss Master 5.0* and it is less intuitive and more difficult to use than *Swiss-Sys*, which I am more familiar with. Have you tried *Swiss-Sys*? If so, what do you think of it?
Hans Poschmann (USA)

Answer Unfortunately, I do not know *Swiss-Sys*. So I cannot say anything about it, but I understand your remarks. I have worked with *Swissmaster* for more than ten years and I am very familiar with it. The benefits of *Swissmaster* for Windows are that the arbiter can copy the names, identification numbers, and ratings from the FIDE rating list. At the end of the tournament all norms are available, along with the norm form, and the tournament report for rating calculations is also immediately available in an Excel spreadsheet. I agree with you that you have to work with each program before you master all of the special functions.

Question 1 As a TD I have a question regarding the touching of pieces in Articles 4.2 and 4.3. Would it be acceptable for a player to use his pen or

perhaps the tip of his little-finger to adjust a piece on the board without saying “*j'adoube?*” I sometimes adjust the pieces using a pen. It is clear that the player intends to touch the piece, but hard to imagine that he intends to move it using a pen or his little-finger!

Question 2 Some players have the bad habit of not placing the pieces in the centre of the squares when they move. I met a player who forgot to say “*j'adoube?*” in such a situation and his opponent then claimed he had touched the piece. He was so surprised that he stood and asked if the opponent really would make the claim, bearing in mind the numerous other adjustments he had made during the game. When the answer was affirmative, the player left the board without calling the TD. Who was to blame? Can the TD make them continue the game when he learns the details or is the game lost for the player who left the board without resigning?

Question 3 In a recent tournament I asked a player to stop writing candidate moves on his scoresheet because he regularly changed his mind and made another move. This left the scoresheet in disarray and hard to read. He told me that he had learned this as a child and it would be hard for him to stop. So he asked not to be penalized if he continued! I decided not to do so... In earlier columns you have expressed your opinion on this subject and I agree that this is equal to taking notes. I suggest rephrasing Article 12.2 to read: "The scoresheet shall be used only for recording the moves played, the times of the clocks" etc. in. Best wishes, **Morten Møller Hansen, (Denmark)**

Answer 1 It is very clear that a player has no intention of moving a piece when he touches it with a pen or a little finger. But such activity can be very irritating to an opponent. And if you meet the “wrong” opponent, it creates disagreements. Therefore my advice is: do not do it.

Answer 2 The player who had to constantly adjust the pieces should have informed the arbiter about the opponent's bad behaviour. The arbiter should then warn the opponent. The arbiter cannot stop a player from resigning, but something should have been done to avoid the situation escalating as it did.

Answer 3 There is currently a proposal that a move will be recorded only after it is made or completed.

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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