



## COLUMNISTS

## An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijsen

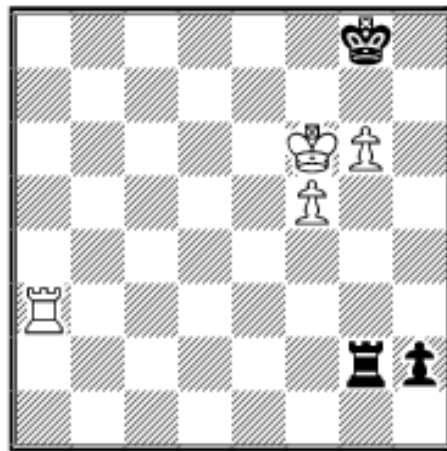


## Does Canada Exist?

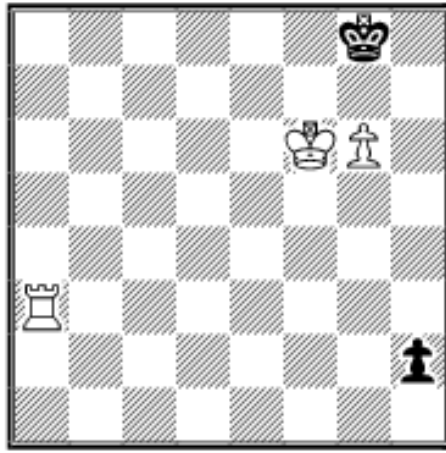
In 1971 Hans Ree and Boris Spassky shared first place at the Canadian Open Championship in Vancouver. Jan Hein Donner wrote an article, wondering how it was possible that Hans Ree made such a good result in Canada, titled *Does Canada Exist?* in *Schaakbulletin* 46 (the predecessor to *New In Chess*). I broach this subject because Canada is not well known as a chess country, but all of the sudden I have received many comments about an incident there. To be honest, it is very sad, especially since the aggrieved party was a young boy.

I received letters from **Luc Fortin, (Canada)**; **Mike Burr, (USA)**; **Dan Dornian, (Canada)**; and **Larry Luiting, (Canada)** regarding my answer in a previous column.

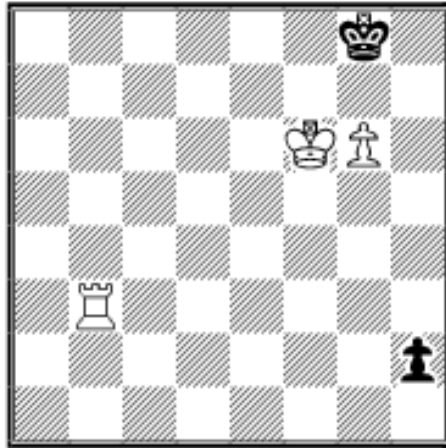
I have also received some additional information in regards to the incident in the game Sam Lipnowski (2127) vs. Dane Mattson (1730), Round 10, 2004 Canadian Open (Kapuskasung, Ontario). After Black's 59<sup>th</sup> move the position was as follows.



It appears that Ra8 mate is unstoppable, but Black played 60...Rxf6+ and White answered with 61 fxf6 – Black is suddenly winning because there is no mate after 61...h1=Q. Black then went to the arbiter to obtain new scoresheets with the position as follows (see next diagram):



When he returned to the board, he probably expected White to resign. Instead, Black resigned because he faced mate in the following position (see next diagram):



Of course, White cheated by moving the rook from a3 to b3. After the game two witnesses testified that they had seen Mr. Lipnowski's actions, while Mr. Mattson was away from the board, and verified this in writing. The appeals committee (GM Kevin Spraggett, GM Harmen Jonkman, and the Canadian Chess Federation President) denied Mr. Mattson's protest and upheld the win for Mr. Lipnowski, who later admitted (in front of several people, including a member of the appeals

board) that he had intentionally cheated.

Mr. Mattson went to the arbiter with a protest (I assume), the arbiter refused the appeal (I assume), and then he went to the Appeals Committee who also refused the appeal. The arbiter and the Appeals Committee likely based their decision on Article 7.5 of the Laws of Chess:

*If during a game it is found that pieces have been displaced from their squares, the position before the irregularity shall be re-instated.*

It is very important that Article 7.5 states that the "displacing" must be found during the game, which means that the game result cannot be changed if the displacement was found after Black had resigned.

Previously I mentioned that the only penalty was to expel the white player from the tournament, but this event happened in the last round. Therefore, I do not see how the arbiter or the Appeals Committee can punish the white player since this is unforeseen in the Laws of Chess. The Organising Committee might have acted by reducing the prize money, or by barring the player from participating in future tournaments, and reporting the case to the national federation. In turn, the national federation could ban this player from officially sanctioned events.

**Question** Mr. Gijssen, Ludo Tolhuizen has a FIDE rating of 2297. When his rating reaches 2300, he can apply for the title of FIDE Master. Can he apply for the title immediately after the game that brings his rating to 2300 or does he have to wait until his rating has been published? Best regards, **Frans Peeters, (The Netherlands)**

**Answer** Unfortunately, he has to wait until the rating has been published. This only applies to the title of FIDE Master. A player can be awarded the title of WGM, WIM, GM or IM conditionally (meaning the player met the requirements, but has not had the rating published). The player receives the title the very moment that they have the required rating, even during the course of a tournament. The required ratings are: GM: 2500, IM: 2400, WGM: 2300, WIM: 2200.

**Question** Dear Geurt Gijssen, What is the fairest way to allocate a list of 16 chess players, in rating order, to four preliminary groups of four in an all-play-all European Cup-style Elimination Tournament (football-style); with the winner and runner-up of each group advancing to the knock-out stages.

I am a Tournament Manager on the Internet Chess Club and a colleague has written software that enables such a tournament to be run for 16 individual players at the usual time controls such as 3.0 or 1.0. It has proved popular with the players; the possibilities of giant-killing and the lowest-rated players doing well is part of the appeal in such a format.

However opinion is divided about the best way to pair the players. If we call the strongest player 1 and the weakest 16, as we have been (European Cup-style) there are two possibilities:

#### **Possibility 1:**

- Group A: 1-5-9-13
- Group B: 2-6-10-14
- Group C: 3-7-11-15
- Group D: 4-8-12-16

With Quarter finals being:

- QF1 : Winner of A v Runner-Up of B (1 v 6 if all games go with seeding)
- QF2 : Winner of B v Runner-Up of A (2 v 5 if all games go with seeding)
- QF3 : Winner of C v Runner-Up of D (3 v 8 if all games go with seeding)
- QF4 : Winner of D v Runner-Up of C (4 v 7 if all games go with seeding)

Semi-Finals being:

- SF1: Winner of QF1 v Winner of QF3 (1 v 3 if all games go with seeding)
- SF2: Winner of QF2 v Winner of QF4 (2 v 4 if all games go with seeding)

Final being:

- F: Winner of SF1 v Winner of SF2 (1 v 2 if all games go with seeding)

This is in contrast with the Wimbledon-style seeding normally used in simple elimination tournaments on ICC, which is (if all games go with seeding):

- Q-Finals: 1 v 8, 2 v 7, 3 v 6, 4 v 5
- Semi-Finals: 1 v 4, 2 v 3

We tend to call this format “bracketed elimination” on ICC [as opposed to a random draw in every round (as in the English FA Cup)]. Some tournament managers and players have argued for an alternative way of doing the preliminary groups – we dubbed this Style 34 as each group adds up to 34.

**Possibility 2:**

- Group A: 1-8-9-16
- Group B: 2-7-10-15
- Group C: 3-6-11-14
- Group D: 4-5-12-13

What is your opinion of each system? **Bruce Birchall, (UK)**

**Answer** If we have 16 players and we have to make 4 groups, it is clear that we should make 4 preliminary groups.

- Group I: 1, 2, 3, 4
- Group II: 5, 6, 7, 8
- Group III: 9, 10, 11, 12
- Group IV: 13, 14, 15, 16

From these four we make new groups and in each one is a player from these four. The two possibilities mentioned by Mr. Birchall fulfill this requirement. But Possibility 1 is unfair because Group A is stronger than B, B is stronger than C, and C is stronger than D. Possibility 2 is very fair. I also agree with the Quarter and Semi Finals allocations. The aim of each system should be that the #1 and #2 will meet each other in the final and not before.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, I was playing in a recent tournament with a time control of 35 moves in 90 minutes, followed by 60 minutes sudden-death. My opponent and I were both blitzing out moves to make the first time control, and I noticed my opponent's digital clock was on zero and called "Time" whereupon he made his 35<sup>th</sup> move and hit his clock, which added an hour to his time. This all happened very fast, and my opponent did this innocently and was not trying to cheat. The TD ruled that I had set the clock incorrectly, and should have set it to stop when either side reaches zero to serve as proof of running out of time, so we played on. The TD later said the rules on this are unclear and he based his decision on another director's recent ruling for the same situation. Did the TD make the correct ruling and is this the correct way to set a digital clock? I had previously thought it was up to the players to notice when time runs out, and if they failed to do so before either a time control is reached or both clocks run out then it is too late to claim a win on time, just like you'd have to do with analogue clocks. **Chris Kilgore, (USA)**

**Answer** My answers always relate to the *FIDE* Laws of Chess and not to the regulations of the USCF. Let me explain how the DGT clock works. Prior to the game you set the clock. In this case you or the arbiter set 90 minutes for 35 moves and a second period of 60 minutes for the remaining moves – so far, so good. You start playing and after your opponent made move 35, his flag fell. Therefore, he did not complete the required number of moves for the first time period and should have lost on time. As long as you did not make a move after the flag fall, the arbiter can see that your opponent overstepped the time limit. According to the FIDE Laws of chess, the player or the arbiter may call the flag fall. If both players overstep the time limit, the DGT clock shows which one fell first as it displays a minus sign on that players side.

**Question** Dear Geurt, I am seeking clarification concerning players who withdraw from a round-robin after playing 50% of their games and how this affects their opponents. I have looked at the FIDE Handbook C (General Rules 06-Fide Tournament Rules V-The conduct of players 4 a & b), but it does not say for certain whether the opponents get a point added to their score or not. The opponents only get a "+" symbol, is "+" a point? **Joseph Kaamu, (Uganda)**

**Answer** In such a case, a "+" is placed in the cross table of the opponents and the player who withdraws receives a "-". The "+" is counted as a win, and "-" as a loss, for the final standings of the tournament. These games are not counted for rating calculations. In a Swiss tournament, after the player withdraws they are simply not paired in future rounds and the played games stand.

**Question** My question concerns scorekeeping. Some opponents do not keep their scoresheet up to date after each move is made. Inevitably, they use my scoresheet to update their own, without asking for permission from the

tournament director. Am I correct in refusing to allow them to do this? It seems to me that I have every right to refuse them access to my scoresheet unless they have obtained the tournament director's permission. Also it seems peculiar that a director would grant such permission because it could aid my opponent in a time forfeit claim. It seems to me that each player is responsible for their own scoresheet and should accept all potential liabilities in not doing so? **R. Downs (USA)**

**Answer** As long as a player has more than 5 minutes left on his clock, and I refer to normal games, he is obliged to keep score. If a player stops writing the moves, with more than 5 minutes remaining, the arbiter is obliged to inform the player that he must keep score. The arbiter can give the offending player an official warning and if the problem persists, the arbiter can declare the game lost by this player. Under no circumstances can a player take the opponent's scoresheet; explicit permission from the arbiter must be granted.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, In your last column you answered a question about the legality of recording clock-times on the score sheet and referred to Article 12.2. I have a question about the same Article that may have implications for the often-given advice to write down one's move before making it on the board. Doesn't the phrase, *The score sheet shall be used only for recording the moves*, imply that only the moves played be recorded and that those only being considered not be recorded? Furthermore, the very meaning of the word "recording" implies an event (move) that is happening or has happened, but surely one cannot record an event that has yet to happen. Regards, **Chris Hinman (Norway)**

**Answer** I agree with you completely; only completed moves can be recorded, not intended moves.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, in the latest issue of your excellent column you wrote: *There is currently a proposal that a move will be recorded only after it is made or completed.* For nearly 30 years, I have recorded my move before playing it on the board. This is very helpful as it prevents me from making a move impulsively. Two or three times during a serious game I might cross the move out and play another. Moreover, within the last 20 years I have coached generations of young chess players who have also adopted this behavior and there has never been any complaint by the opponents or arbiters. Can you please tell me what the intention of the rule change is? Do you know when it will be included in the official rules? Thanks in advance. **Thomas Binder, (Germany), Member of the Board of Berlin Chess Federation**

**Answer** I understand your point, but writing down a move before it is played is tantamount to making notes. And it happens quite often that a player writes down a move to mislead his opponent. I think it was your compatriot Tarrasch, who advised his pupils to sit on their hands before making a move. Perhaps this is what should be done instead.

Other practices that were once considered normal are now against the rules:

- It is accepted that smoking in the playing hall is forbidden.
- Formerly, many players used descriptive notation, however; it has now become obsolete.
- Everyone castles by first moving the king, when previously it was possible to castle by moving the rook first.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, Thanks for providing such an informative column! I have a question regarding rapid chess. As an arbiter, I watched a game of rapid chess with 25 min/player and game. It was played on a DGT-board that recorded the moves. The game progressed to an endgame with Player A having K+Q and Player B having K+R. I started counting the moves but was unsure whether I caught the move at which the last piece had been taken. After 41 moves, according to my count, Player A forked the king and rook, which would have resulted in the loss of the rook. Player B then stopped the clocks and claimed a draw because he was sure 50 moves had been played.

Do I have to reject this claim immediately as the player cannot prove it? Or do I have to use all possible resources to verify his claim? This would include my counting the moves and the recording of the DGT board, which didn't record the moves properly because of the speed of the moves when both players were blitzing. I rejected the claim because I only observed 41 moves. I look forward to your answer. Best regards, **Axel Eisengraeber-Pabst (Germany)**

**Answer** A player has the right to claim a draw in a rapid game and it is the task of the arbiter to confirm the correctness of the claim. I know it is very difficult, even almost impossible in some situations, to verify such a claim. Yours is a good example of this. Generally, if it is impossible to verify, the arbiter should reject it and you acted correctly.

By the way, if a player claims a draw, after he has stopped the clocks, he has to write down the moves that produced the position in which 50 moves have been played without a capture or a pawn move, or the moves that allowed for a triple repetition claim if that be the case.

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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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