



C O L U M N I S T S

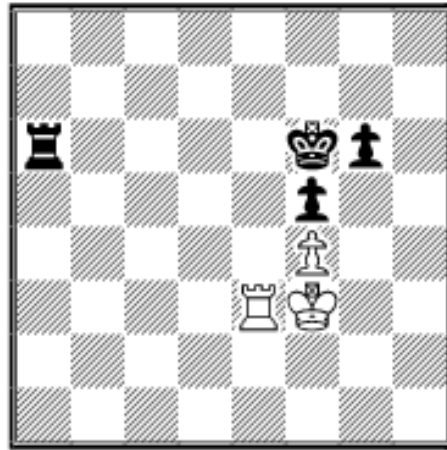
An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



Claims

Question Dear Geurt, I am the captain of a team in the Swiss team championship and I have a question related to the 50-move rule. In the last game of our final match the following approximate position occurred after 53 moves:



Olivier Moor - Igor Glek

The pawns are correct, while the exact location of the kings and rooks was different but of no consequence. The game was played with 2 hours for 40 moves and 1 hour for the rest of the game. Our player, Moor, was running short of time and Glek still had plenty of time on his clock. Since Black has no real winning chances, Glek proceeded to move his rook and king, hoping that White would err in time trouble. Around move 80, Moor was down

to his last 5 minutes and stopped writing down the moves, while Glek still had over 30 minutes left and continued recording his moves. Glek continued to write down his moves until around move 110, when he also stopped because his time was running low as well. The position on the board was practically unchanged, with no pawns moved or pieces exchanged. My teammates urged me to tell Moor to claim a draw with the 50-move rule. I didn't, and Moor didn't claim a draw either, so when Glek finally made his winning attempt by exchanging f4 vs. g6, Moor blundered in time trouble and lost. I have three questions:

1) Could Moor have claimed a draw based on the 50-move rule? He couldn't prove it because he stopped recording moves at move 80, but with the help of Glek's score sheet it could have easily been proven. A related question is: if a player isn't writing down his own moves, but his opponent is, can he claim a draw based on 3-fold repetition? The laws of chess specifically mention that with a 3-fold repetition the player "writes the move on his scoresheet," while in the 50-move rule there is no mention of the scoresheet. If there is a difference, is it intentional?

Excerpt from the laws of chess:

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

1 ...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

2 ...the last 50 consecutive moves have been made by each player without the movement of any pawn and without the capture of any piece.

2) Is a team captain allowed to tell a player to specifically claim a draw based on the 50-move rule? I realize this question may not be addressed by the FIDE laws of chess, and that the duties of a team captain might be different in different countries according to their respective federations. Nevertheless, I am curious to know what the official FIDE rule for such a situation is. As far as I know, a team captain may tell a player to offer a draw – but can he also tell a player to claim a draw. For instance, if the player is down to his last two minutes and is playing with bishop vs. rook and does not know he is allowed to claim a draw?

3) Assuming that you answer question 1) with yes, and question 2) with no, what would you do if I, as team captain, had informed my player that he should claim a draw based on the 50 move rule? I didn't do it because I thought it was not allowed and considered it unsporting, but would it have any consequences? With best regards, **Martin Fierz (Switzerland)**

Answer Regarding draw claims either based on three repetitions of position, the 50 move rule, or on Article 10.2, the tournament regulations of FIDE say:

1. A captain is entitled to advise the players of his team to make or accept an offer of a draw or to resign a game, unless the regulations of the event stipulate otherwise. He must confine himself to give only brief information, based solely on the circumstances pertaining to the match.

2. The captain should abstain from any intervention during play. He should not give any information to a player concerning the position on the chess board, nor consult any other person as to the state of the game. Players are subject to the same prohibitions.

There is more written about the role of the captain, but these two paragraphs answer your question. Hence, the captain is not allowed to inform the player that he has the possibility to claim a draw.

Yes, a player with an incomplete scoresheet may claim a draw. Let us check the Laws of Chess and especially Article 9.5:

If a player claims a draw as in Article 9.2 or 9.3, he shall immediately

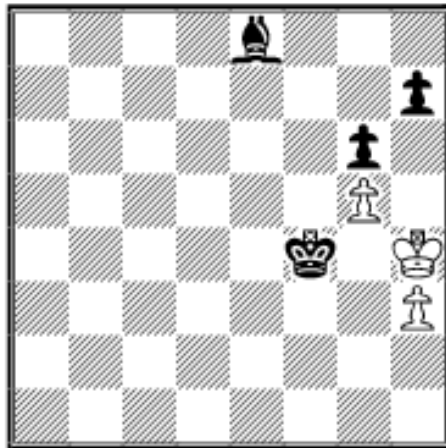
stop both clocks. He is not allowed to withdraw his claim.

a. If the claim is found to be correct the game is immediately drawn.

b. If the claim is found to be incorrect, the arbiter shall add three minutes to the opponent's remaining time. Additionally, if the claimant has more than two minutes on his clock the arbiter shall deduct half of the claimant's remaining time up to a maximum of three minutes. If the claimant has more than one minute, but less than two minutes, his remaining time shall be one minute. If the claimant has less than one minute, the arbiter shall make no adjustment to the claimant's clock. Then the game shall continue and the intended move must be made.

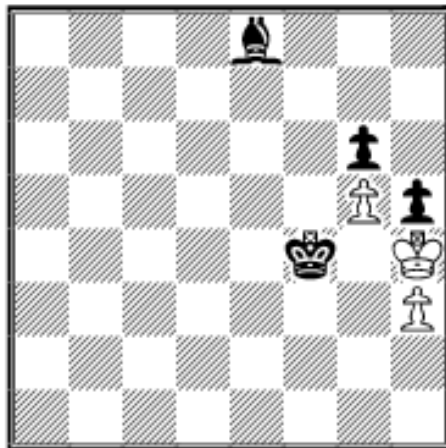
As you can see, a claim is made to the arbiter who then must verify it and impose a penalty if it is wrong. That the claimant needs to present a complete scoresheet or has to prove that his claim is correct is not mentioned in the Laws of Chess. By the way, the USCF rules do state that the claimant has to present a complete scoresheet.

Question The following question was circulating in internet chess news groups. Unfortunately, few details are available other than that White was GM Genov from Bulgaria.



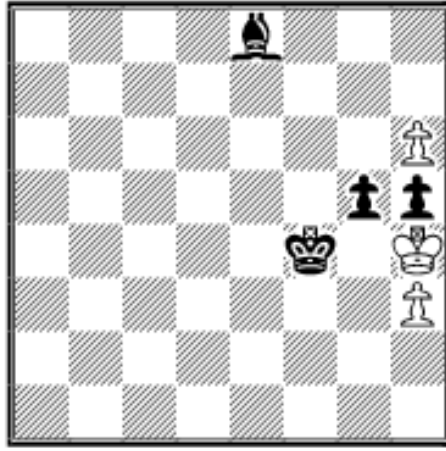
Position #1:

Black is winning and sees a nice combination: **1...h5** (see next diagram)



Position #2

The idea is **2...gxh5ep 3.g5 mate** (see next diagram)



In Position #2, White said: I will not capture “en passant,” because the FIDE rules say “en passant may or may not be played, if the side to move does not wish to do so.” The arbiter then declared a win for Black and White lodged a complaint. After two days of consultations the game was declared a draw! **IM Jovan Petronic (Singapore)**

Answer Let us review Article 3.7d of the Laws of Chess:

A pawn attacking a square crossed by an opponent's pawn which has advanced two squares in one move from its original square may capture this opponent's pawn as though the latter had been moved only one square. This capture may only be made on the move following this advance and is called an 'en passant' capture.

In this Article we twice find the word “may,” which can be interpreted to mean there is an element of choice in the matter. Therefore, there is a proposal to add the following sentence to this Article:

This move must be made in the event that no other legal move is possible.

Additionally, the decision of the Appeals Committee is wrong. I refer to Article 5.2a:

The game is drawn when the player to move has no legal move and his king is not in check. The game is said to end in 'stalemate'. This immediately ends the game, provided that the move producing the stalemate position was legal.

It is not stalemate, because White has still a legal move available: taking “en passant.”

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, A few years ago, in Canada’s National Championship, an intoxicated player fell asleep at the chessboard for over an hour. With less than 10 minutes of time remaining on his clock, he was suddenly awakened by another player who punched the sleeping player on the arm and pointed to his clock. The sleeping player awoke, went to the washroom, and returned to the chessboard to continue the game.

Meanwhile, in his brief absence, a few of the players complained to the

tournament director about “outside interference.” The T.D. stopped the clocks and awarded the game to the sleeping player’s opponent. The player who was sleeping protested his forfeit to a Local Appeals Committee composed of three honorable chess referees and won his case. The game was to be continued from where it was left off. Unfortunately, his opponent called the appeal a farce and resigned the game. The T.D. asked him if he was sure that he wanted to resign and he replied, “Yes.”

A few days later, a National Appeals Committee was set up by telephone and over-ruled the decision by the Local Appeals Committee. It was a rather rushed decision which broke many of the rules for proper procedure. The final result was that the sleeping player had now lost this game. For well over two years this case was debated by chess officials, yet the verdict remained unchanged. The sleeping player in question is now deceased, d. Aug 3, 2004. Did he have a case, or should we let sleeping dogs lie? **Tony Cheron (Canada)**

Answer Cases such as this are not described in the Laws of Chess. The arbiter has to ensure that all games are played in a correct way and that the final result will be reached through normal means. An opponent may protest if I woke up a player. Yet what is one to do if the arbiter, standing close to the board of the sleeping player, has to cough, even quite loudly?

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, my question is about keeping score in FIDE competitions. The rules require algebraic notation but allow the use of piece letters in the language of the player’s country. What is the rule with regards to keeping score entirely in languages that may not be commonly known, such as either Arabic or Hebrew? By entirely, I mean both the square names as well as the piece designations. If the rule is that they have to use square names such as a1 or b6, how is this rule actually enforced in competition? Would an arbiter tell a player to change his scorekeeping without a complaint by his opponent? Regards, **Ernest W. Schlich (USA)**

Answer The Laws of Chess cover a lot of situations and there is an answer even for your question. See Appendix E of the Laws of Chess:

FIDE recognizes for its own tournaments and matches only one system of notation, the Algebraic System, and recommends the use of this uniform chess notation also for chess literature and periodicals. Scoresheets using a notation system other than algebraic may not be used as evidence in cases where normally the scoresheet of a player is used for that purpose. An arbiter who observes that a player is using a notation system other than the algebraic should warn the player about of this requirement.

E1. Each piece is indicated by the first letter, a capital letter, of its name. Example: K = king, Q = queen, R = rook, B = bishop, N = knight. (In the case of the knight, for the sake of convenience, N is

used.)

E2. For the first letter of the name of a piece, each player is free to use the first letter of the name which is commonly used in his country.

Examples: F = fou (French for bishop), L = loper (Dutch for bishop).

In printed periodicals, the use of figurines for the pieces is recommended.

This means that to indicate the squares (from a1 to h8) algebraic notation must be used. To indicate pieces players' may use their own language. I have never had any problems when I checked the score sheets, for example, Chinese players always write the English abbreviation of the pieces.

Question Many years ago I was tricked into thinking that I had lost a game. I was playing Black and needed to play my 40th move to make the time control, but did not make it. My opponent pointed at my flag and I shook his hand and walked off thinking that I had lost. Shortly afterwards some spectators pointed out that my opponent's flag had already fallen so he must have lost on time. My opponent had blocked my view of his flag when he had pointed at mine. What would you have decided? **Bardi Einarsson (Iceland)**

Answer Well, as you know, the flag has fallen when the opponent or the arbiter notices this fact. If neither you nor the arbiter noticed it, then you lost the game according to the regulations, because you resigned.

Question Dear Geurt Gijssen, I believe Article 10.2 could be improved if you allow the arbiter to add some extra time for each move when the ruling is not clear. The point is you can avoid such claims by setting a time control with no finish and adding 30 sec/move like the one used in FIDE competitions. Many tournaments can't afford to have a digital clock for every game, but they can have a few digital clocks, so that in case of a 10.2 claim, the arbiter would have the option of changing the clock and setting an increment to allow the claiming player to show they can defend the game. I think this works in the USCF and it looks like a good idea to me. All the best, **Carlos Gimeno (Spain)**

Answer There are some problems with your proposal. Suppose, a player is in time trouble during the last phase of the game and claims a draw pursuant to Article 10.2, the arbiter then changes the clock, and suddenly the player has more time.

As discussed in an earlier column, it is better to establish a time limit with at least two periods and play the last period in any Fischer mode, for instance with an additional 10 seconds per move. In that case Article 10.2 is not applicable. The only thing you have to do is to change the clock at the start of the last period. In this way you need less digital clocks. Of course, you have to inform the players in advance that this will be done.

I recently spoke with GM Nigel Short about this subject and he agreed completely that the last phase of a game should always be played with an increment.

Question 1 During a Blitz game a player is promoting to a queen in a totally winning position, with less than one minute remaining on the clock for both players. Before moving he declares that he is promoting to a queen, but the queen is not available, so he pushes the clock and then replaces the pawn with a queen from his opponent's side of the board (causing a two second lapse). The opponent stops the clock and claims an illegal move. Can this be considered an illegal move? What should the arbiter do? No arbiter was present and when he arrived the queen was on the board.

Question 2 In another game White had a huge advantage of king and 3 pawns versus a lone king, with a pawn on the seventh rank. White moved, declared a queen, pushed the clock, and then looked for the queen. The opponent stopped the clocks and called the arbiter, who was present and witnessed the scene. The arbiter then declared the move illegal (for not placing the promoted piece on the board) and awarded the full point to Black despite not having sufficient mating material. Was he correct? **FM Ricardo Garcia (Mexico)**

Answer 1 Players too often overlook Article 6.13 of the Laws of Chess:

- b. A player may stop the clocks only in order to seek the arbiter's assistance, for instance when promotion has taken place and the piece required is not available.*
- c. The arbiter shall decide when the game is to be restarted in either case.*
- d. If a player stops the clocks in order to seek the arbiter's assistance, the arbiter shall determine if the player had any valid reason for doing so. If it is obvious that the player has no valid reason for stopping the clocks, the player shall be penalized according to article 13.4.*

When players apply this Article, arbiters have fewer problems. The correct action, when a player promotes without replacing the pawn with a piece and presses his clock, is to stop the clocks and call the arbiter, who must then take appropriate measures. But what are appropriate measures? It goes too far to award a win. The correct action is to compensate the offended player by giving him 1 or 2 minutes of extra time. I do not consider this incomplete promotion as an illegal move, but as an illegal action.

Answer 2 I disagree with the decision of the arbiter. Even if the arbiter considers the move illegal, he should decide that the result is a draw.

Question My wife and I were spectators at a recent tournament where a couple of players were hoping for GM norms. It was known publicly that Player A was dating Player B (a GM), and Player A was trying to get a GM

norm. We watched three games, and numerous times one of these players would walk over and examine the board of their "Friend," nod their head or wink, and then the other would get up and they would whisper to each other as they walked out of the room while looking at the game. At one point the GM raised his hand as if to say 'go ahead push it,' and Player A immediately pushed a pawn for a queenside attack. It was obvious to us that the players were conferring about the game. Is this sort of activity against FIDE rules or is it merely unethical? Thanks for considering this question. **Chris Willard (Canada)**

Answer If your interpretation of events is correct then it is a violation of the Laws of Chess. See Article 12.2:

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

It could be that the player involved was receiving advice or it could be that once your suspicions were raised each gesture or eye contact reinforced these suspicions. I may be wrong, but I feel obliged to point out that possibility. I am curious to know your opinion about it.

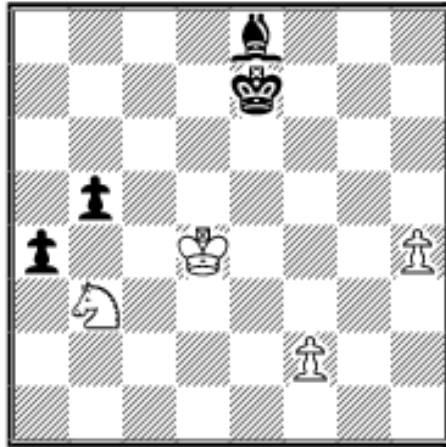
Question Dear Geurt, I have been told that at a recent Swedish arbiter's education class there was disagreement about interpreting Rule 4.3. Say, in a normal game, after the moves 1.c4 b6 2.g3 Bb7 White then makes the illegal third move 3.Bf3. How would the arbiter know whether a player deliberately touched a piece or not? Therefore, there are two possible interpretations of rule 4.3a:

4.3 Except as provided in Article 4.2, if the player having the move deliberately touches on the chessboard one or more of his own pieces, he must move the first piece touched that can be moved."

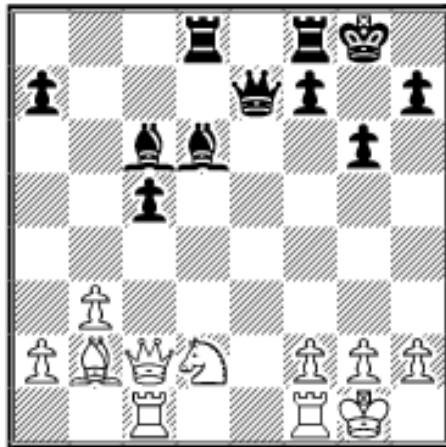
- 1) The arbiter rules that White did not deliberately touch the bishop as his intention was to play 3.Nf3. Therefore he can play 3.Nf3 without any penalty or possibly adding 2 minutes to Black's time.
- 2) The arbiter rules that it is impossible to know White's intent, as there is a possibility that he meant to play 3.Bg2, but realized his mistake and tried to "save" himself by playing the illegal 3.Bf3. The arbiter's decision is that White has to move the bishop and play 3.Bg2 or 3.Bh3.

I think the arbiter's decision should be that White must move the bishop. But if White is not compelled to move the bishop, Black should not get 2 extra minutes either. Best regards, **Calle Erlandsson (Sweden)**

Answer I received several letters about this case and it reminded me of a similar situation:



This was the position after 47...a4 in the game Korchnoi – Karpov (Brussels 1987). Of course, Korchnoi should move his knight and he went to do so, but there was a commotion at the entrance of the hall that distracted him, and he discovered that he had the king in his hand, instead of the knight. He resigned immediately.



Let me give you another example:

In this position Black played Bc6xh2, which is an illegal move. This is a little more complicated, because it is important which piece was touched first: the bishop on c6 or the pawn on h2. I found this position in *The Chess Competitor's Handbook* by IA Bozidar Kazic. And he made a very interesting remark:

It is left to the discretion of the arbiter to settle the case of a player who touches several pieces. It would be logical for the arbiter, in this case too, to take into account which piece was touched first and to be guided in his decision by the intention of the player who touched the pieces. The arbiter should differentiate accidentally and intentionally touched pieces and suggested by FIDE interpretation, should not be formalistic.

In an analogous way it is up to the arbiter to decide in the case you mentioned and it does not matter which decision the arbiter takes, as he will be held responsible anyway. I support Kazic's idea, not to be formalistic, and I would allow White to play Nf3. I would compensate the Black player with some extra time because of the disturbance, but not as a punishment for White.

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.

Copyright 2004 Geurt Gijssen. All Rights Reserved.



[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Bulletin Board\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2004 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

"**The Chess Cafe**"[®] is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.