



## Team Spirit

**Question** Respected Sir, please inform me how to obtain a model copy of an arbiter's report. Thank you. **K. Pranesh (India)**

**Answer** The tournament report forms in the FIDE Handbook are posted on the Internet:

- Go to [www.fide.com](http://www.fide.com)
- Click on Info
- Click Handbook
- Go to B02
- Go to 17. Forms

The form for round robin tournaments is very straightforward, but I perceive some problems with the form for Swiss tournaments. However, the most popular Swiss pairing programs also produce tournament reports and it is advisable to use the form generated by these programs as they fulfill all the FIDE requirements.

**Question** Regarding the Aeroflot Open and time forfeits: Can spectators comment on the game at that point? Doesn't one need a correct scoresheet to make a claim? Can the clocks be stopped? What if I am playing next to all this commotion in a crowded event? When can I just stop keeping score? **Bill, Baraboo & Laramie Murray (USA)**

**Answer** There are a lot of questions in this short letter, but I will try to answer them all.

- It is absolutely forbidden for spectators to give any comments. This applies to such situations as flag falls, illegal moves, bad behavior, and claims, etc.
- It is not necessary to have a complete scoresheet to make a claim according to the FIDE Laws of Chess. However, the Rules of the USCF require a complete scoresheet when a player makes a claim.
- The clock can be stopped if a player needs assistance from the arbiter. For instance, a player may stop the clock during a pawn promotion if the piece to which the pawn promotes is not available.

## COLUMNISTS

### *An Arbiter's Notebook* Geurt Gijssen



- If a player feels disturbed by those playing next to him, he is allowed to stop the clock and request the arbiter's assistance. But if the arbiter decides that it was unnecessary to stop the clock, he has the authority to penalize the player who did so.
- In a normal game a player has the right to stop recording the moves when he has less than 5 minutes remaining on his clock. But if the game is played with a Fischer mode and at least 30 seconds are added per move, he must keep score throughout the whole game.

**Question** My question is about the "50-move" rule. Say, in a king + bishop + knight versus king ending, the player on the winning side clearly knows how to play it, but makes an inaccuracy and has to exceed the allotted 50 moves. Should the arbiter declare the game drawn or allow the winning side to make some more moves? Regards, **Ivan Guerreiro (Geneva)**

**Answer** The Laws of Chess are very clear. See 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.*

As you can see, there are no exceptions because these were eradicated from the Laws of Chess in 1996. Let me quote Stewart Reuben's comments as they were published in 1998:

*Hopefully we have finally laid to rest the idea that this rule should be extended beyond 50 moves for certain positions. Clearly the strong players didn't want such torture to continue.*

**Question** Dear Geurt, I am the Secretary General of the Brunei Chess Federation and my question is in regards to a 5-minute blitz tournament. Player A had a king and a pawn versus a king and a bishop, but lost on time. Therefore, Player B claimed the win, but Player A argued that Player B had insufficient mating material and so the game should be a draw. Player B countered that he can checkmate if the opponent promotes his pawn to an opposite color bishop. As an arbiter what would be your decision? I am looking forward to your answer. **Leong Voon Choon (Brunei)**

**Answer** The arbiter's decision was correct. Player A lost on time. See Article 6.10:

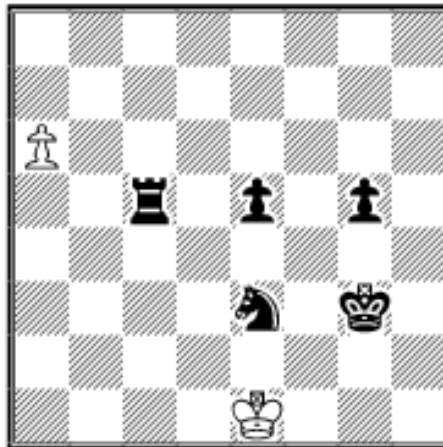
*If a player does not complete the prescribed number of moves in the allotted time, the game is lost by the player. However, the game is drawn, if the position is such that the opponent cannot checkmate the player by any possible series of legal moves, even with the most unskilled counterplay.*

And as Player B demonstrated, he is able to checkmate the opponent's king. Here is a game that Kasparov won during the 1987 Blitz World Chess Championship. I would especially like to bring your attention to the final position.

### ***Kasparov - Karpov***

Brussels, 1997

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.Nc3 Bb7 5.a3 d5 6.cxd5 Nxd5 7.Qc2 Nxc3 8.bxc3 Be7 9.e3 0–0 10.Bd3 h6 11.e4 c5 12.0–0 Ba6 13.Bf4 cxd4 14.Bxa6 Nxa6 15.cxd4 Qc8 16.Qe2 Qb7 17.Rfd1 Rfe8 18.Ne5 Rad8 19.Rd3 Bf6 20.Rad1 Nb8 21.Ng4 Bg5 22.Bxg5 hxg5 23.e5 Qe7 24.Qe4 Nd7 25.f4 Nf8 26.fxg5 Qxg5 27.Rg3 Nh7 28.Rf1 g6 29.Qf3 Kh8 30.h4 Qf5 31.Qe3 Qh5 32.Rxf7 Rf8 33.Rxf8+ Rxf8 34.Nf2 Qxh4 35.Rh3 Qf4 36.Ne4 Qxe3+ 37.Rxe3 Rd8 38.Ng5 Nxe3 39.Rc3 Rxd4 40.Rc8+ Kg7 41.Rc7+ Nf7 42.Rxa7 Rd5 43.Rb7 b5 44.Kf2 Rxe5 45.Kf3 Kf6 46.Kf4 g5+ 47.Kf3 Nd6 48.Rb6 Nc4 49.Rb8 Re3+ 50.Kf2 Kf5 51.Rxb5+ e5 52.Rc5 Rc3 53.a4 Kf4 54.g3+ Ke4 55.a5 Rc2+ 56.Kg1 Kf3 57.a6 Kxg3 58.Kf1 Ne3+ 59.Ke1 Rxc5 1–0**



**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, during a recent tournament the chief arbiter asked the board arbiters to be strict with players who wrote their moves illegibly. He also asked that he be consulted in such cases so that he could decide whether a warning or a penalty was to be given. As it happened there were two players who were recording their moves in such a way and so we notified the chief arbiter. He looked at the scoresheets and then exited without a word. When we asked him about this later he said, “If I can figure out the recorded moves, then it is alright.” Needless to say, we had many problems with the bulletin

team throughout the tournament. My questions are:

- Who should decide whether the moves are recorded clearly?
- How should we decide if the clarity is sufficient?

Taking into consideration that all the arbiters at this tournament were international arbiters; shouldn't they have the authority to make such decisions? Best regards, **Naji Alradhi (UAE)**

**Answer** Dear Mr. Naji Alradhi, you previously asked me a question about the relationship of an arbiter to the chief arbiter which I would like to repeat below:

*...what is the rule or guide that governs the relationship of the Arbiter with the Chief Arbiter in international events? When is it appropriate to make a decision by yourself?*

**Answer** *In several tournament regulations of the FIDE Handbook, the role of the chief arbiter is discussed. In the event that a deputy chief arbiter is mentioned, the regulations always say that the chief arbiter or the deputy chief arbiter has to be present in the playing hall. /It is very clear, that the chief arbiter has to inform the arbiters where they can find him when there is no deputy arbiter appointed.*

*The relationship regarding the responsibilities between the chief arbiter and the other arbiters is not defined in the tournament regulations. In big tournaments it is my habit that if an arbiter observes a game, then it is "his" game. So long as the arbiter does not make a mistake, I shall naturally not interfere. Yet in the arbiters' meeting before the tournament, I always inform the arbiters that if a player acts in such a way that the only penalty would be to declare the game lost; it is only the chief arbiter who shall execute this penalty.*

When I am the chief arbiter at a large tournament I do my best to foster a team spirit among the deputy chief arbiters, match arbiters, and assistants. Every team member has their responsibilities in the area where he or she is working and I respect the work of my colleagues, because I do consider them as such. If I disagree with one of them, I try to explain why, and this is the only way to conduct a tournament. So I have implicitly answered your question, but I would like to explicitly add that the chief arbiter in your situation should, at least, explain himself.

**Question** Hello, A friend of mine was involved in a strange incident during a 6-round Swiss tournament in Groningen, the Netherlands. He overslept before the second round and forfeited the game because he arrived 75 minutes late. Well, in the fourth round, he was once more paired against his second round

opponent because they had the same number of points. His opponent then refused to play and the arbiter awarded another forfeit, this time with the result the other way around. My questions are:

- Under the Swiss system rules, is it possible for two opponents to be paired against each other twice in this way, or was this a bug in the pairing program?
- What would you have done when the opponent refused to play the fourth round?

I believe there was still time to change the pairings. **Remco Gerlich (Netherlands)**

**Answer** When a game is decided by forfeit the computer, following the rules of the Swiss pairing system, “forgets” the number of the opponent and the colors with which the players were supposed to play. It only “remembers” that one player received one point and the other zero points. This is not a bug in the program; this is how a forfeited game should be treated. By the way, the forfeited game will not be rated. Therefore, the same players can be paired against each other in subsequent rounds.

Regarding your second question, I agree with the arbiter’s decision and would have done the same myself in that circumstance. The fact that his opponent was angry to “meet” the same opponent again is not a good reason to change the pairings. Moreover, there are situations that might cause the other players to be angry if the pairings were changed. Let me give you two examples:

- The two players involved are the only players who have 3 points and they can be paired against each other. A change in the pairings would mean one player has to meet an opponent with 3½ points (he floats up) and the other one has to play against a player with 2½ points (he floats down).
- Or suppose that after the penultimate round these two players are the only leaders – of course they have to play each other.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, what happens in a blitz tournament when it is found that only one clock is working? For instance, a player claims that his clock has 3:31 and his opponent’s clock still has the full 5:00 minutes. How many minutes should the arbiter give to both players? Many thanks in advance. **Lucas Mendoza (Spain)**

**Answer** It is very important to discover what went wrong. There are several possibilities:

- One player may not have stopped his clock after he made his move, in which case the game should simply continue.
- If both players pressed the clock correctly, but one clock kept running,

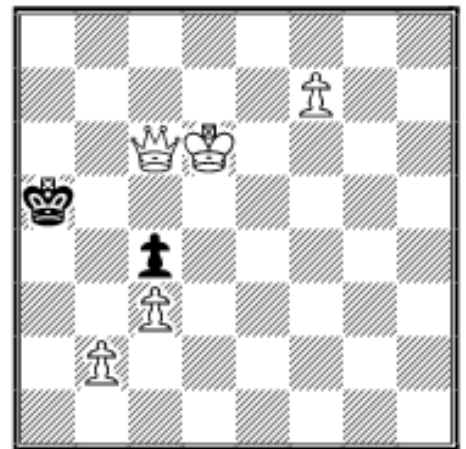


then the arbiter has to replace the clock and use his best judgment to correct the clock times. It is not unusual to divide the used time equally in such cases. It is clear that the game started 89 seconds earlier. So I would give both players 4 minutes and 15 seconds.

- A third possibility is that one clock was running only when it was the player's move and the other clock did not run at all. In that case the arbiter has to replace the clock and keep in mind that one player has used 1 minute and 29 seconds on his clock. Since it is quite normal in a blitz tournament for all the games to start at the same moment, the arbiter can compare the total reflection time in other games with the time used in this game, and then calculate the time that was used by the player whose clock was not running.
- Finally, when it is absolutely impossible to discover the correct times, the arbiter should rule that a new game be played.

It does not make any difference that this was a blitz game instead of a "normal" game. Only in case of a wrong clock setting would it be impossible to make changes, provided both players have completed three moves.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, I would like to inform you about a situation that recently occurred during a rapid tournament in Brazil, as some of the international arbiters have differing opinions. It was Black's move in the diagrammed position and Black resigned, but the arbiter overruled the resignation and decided the game was drawn because of stalemate.



Was this decision correct? Can the arbiter even take such a decision without a claim from one of the players? What would happen in a "normal" game? Does the position on the board (stalemate) have priority over a resignation? Thank you very much for your attention. Best regards. **Estevão Tavares Neto (Brazil)**

**Answer** The following articles are essential to this situation:

*5.1.b. The game is won by the player whose opponent declares he resigns. This immediately ends the game.*

*5.2.a. 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.*

In this case there is no difference between a “normal” game, a rapid game, or a blitz game. Usually a player resigns when he has the move and in the situation you describe the stalemate is already established, so the game is over. Therefore, according to Article 5.2.a the game is drawn. It is irrelevant that a player resigned after the game was legally finished.

**Question 1** Dear Geurt Gijssen, I have some questions regarding Swiss tournaments. In a ten round FIDE rated Swiss system tournament the following rule was instituted:

*A half point bye will be given for any two rounds in a ten round FIDE rated classical chess tournament of two hours duration for each player if the player applies in advance before the commencement of the first round.*

Is this rule correct, can a player receive one point without playing two rounds in a FIDE rated tournament? Won't this disturb the ranking order of the players after the tenth round?

**Question 2** Which is the best Swiss pairing software available for a FIDE rated classical chess tournament?

**Question 3** The Swiss pairing program SP98 allows the pairings to be changed manually and this could be exploited by an unethical organizer to favor certain players in order to obtain a higher FIDE rating; meaning that one could pair someone against weaker players by manually changing the pairing. Can you suggest a foolproof Swiss pairing program to avoid such a situation?  
**S. K. Talwar (India)**

**Answer 1** The rule regarding half-point byes is not forbidden. However, these byes are, of course, excluded from the rating calculations. I know of several tournaments in Holland that use the same rule.

**Answer 2** It is very difficult to recommend a Swiss pairing program. At the moment there are two Windows-based programs and both have demos available for download:

- The Austrian program [Swiss Manager](#)
- The Dutch program [Swissmaster](#)

I have worked with both programs and I was very satisfied.

**Answer 3** I understand your problem, but all Swiss pairing programs allow for the pairings to be changed manually. In fact, it is a necessity. There are instances in which a pairing may need to be changed for political reasons or if players from the same federation cannot be paired against each other. These

are the only reasons to change pairings as far as I know.

It is unethical to change the pairings to benefit certain players and I can assure you that the majority of arbiters don't do it. FIDE has issued a statement that they will not rate a tournament if it is discovered that an arbiter has been cheating in such a way.

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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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