



C O L U M N I S T S

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



Arbitrating Draws

Question Geurt, I have a question about what happens in Chess960 (a.k.a. Fischer Random Chess) when a player, intending to castle “a”-side, first touches his king which already sits on c1. In a sense the king will not be “moving” during this castling. Yet by touching the king first, the player might be obligated to move the king to another square if he can legally do so. Can this player legally replace his king on c1, and then hop his rook over to d1? Of course, FIDE rules were not written with Chess960 in mind, but what would be the best ruling under the current laws? Thank you. **Gene Milener (USA)**

Answer I was very surprised that several experts had different opinions regarding castling. According to some experts it is possible to castle without moving the king. Others have the opinion that the king must always be moved. But I can imagine a way to castle without moving the king: with a king on g1 and rook on h1. In this case moving the rook from h1 to f1 can be considered as castling. I found some very good advice when I was searching on the Internet – before castling it’s wise to announce, “I’m going to castle.”

Question Dear Mr Gijssen, My question relates to whether the results of the M-Tel Super Tournament recently held in Sofia, Bulgaria can be accepted for FIDE ratings. For an event to be rated, the FIDE Rating Regulation 2.1 states, “play must take place according to the FIDE Laws of Chess.” And, the FIDE Laws of Chess in Article 9 sets out the conditions when a game is drawn. Conversely, the regulations of the Sofia event modified the draw regulations to state:

The players should not talk during the games; additionally they should not offer draws directly to their opponents. Draw-offers will be allowed only through the Chief-Arbiter in three cases: a triple-repetition of the position, a perpetual check and in theoretically drawn positions.

The Chief-Arbiter is the only authority who can acknowledge the final result of the game in these cases. He will be advised in his decisions throughout the tournament by GM Zurab Azmaiparashvili, Vice-President of FIDE.

Can it be argued that, with the modified draw regulations, play did not take place according to FIDE Laws of Chess and the results are not acceptable for FIDE ratings? Thank you and with best regards, **Eddy Fong (Malaysia)**

Answer I found it strange that the “50-move rule” was missing. Furthermore, a new element has been added – “perpetual check,” since this is not mentioned in the FIDE Laws of Chess.

To clarify these matters I spoke with the event organizer, Mr. Silvio Danailov. We discussed several items, but he first explained his reasons for organizing the event. He noted that the spectators enjoy fighting chess and are always very disappointed when the top players agree to short draws. So, he came upon the idea of utilizing the rules listed above. He also said that he spoke with some FIDE officials about these rules and they had no problems if he wanted to organize such a tournament.

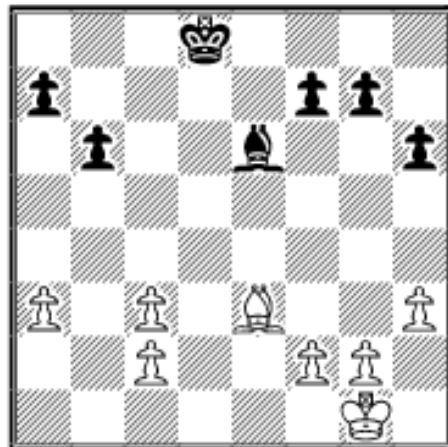
Mr. Danailov indicated that the absence of the “50-move rule” was discovered shortly before the beginning of the event, but that it was too late to change the regulations. He added that if a player had claimed a draw based on this rule, the arbiter should have accepted it. Furthermore, he was unaware that “perpetual check” was not mentioned in the FIDE Laws of Chess, but that, in practice, it is very closely related to the “three repetition rule.”

I asked him if the arbiter disagreed with any draw offer during the tournament and he informed me that it had happened once in the diagrammed position below:

Polgar – Ponomariov

M-Tel Masters 2005

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.0–0 Nxe4 5.d4 Nd6 6.Bxc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 Nf5 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8 9.Nc3 h6 10.h3 Ne7 11.Be3 Bd7 12.Rad1 Kc8 13.Rd2 b6 14.Rfd1 Be6 15.Nd4 Nd5 16.Nxc6 Nxc3 17.Rd8+ Kb7 18.bxc3 Bd6 19.Rxh8 Rxh8 20.exd6 Kxc6 21.dxc7 Kxc7 22.a3 Rd8 23.Rxd8 Kxd8



24.g4 h5 25.gxh5 Bxh3 26.h6 gxh6 27.Bxh6 Bf5 28.Kf1 Bxc2 29.Ke2 ½–½

The refusal had nothing to do with the position, but the arbiter didn't want to accept the draw because Zurab Azmajparashvili was absent at the moment it was offered. Yet as the continuation of the game shows, the players knew very well how to handle the situation.

The Sofia regulations, in fact, are not as

revolutionary as they seem. The only rule that is out of the ordinary is that the players may not talk to each other. It is not in the Laws of Chess, but there is nothing against it either. Still, I remember from some World Championship Matches that draw offers were always made through the arbiter. The only point is that draw offers need the arbiter's approval and I can imagine that in some situations it should be refused.

Once, when I was the organizer and chief arbiter of the World Cup Tournament in Rotterdam 1989, in the game Salov – Vaganian, White played 1 h4 and offered a draw, which was accepted by Black. Acting as the organizer, not the arbiter, I refused this "game." It would have been very bad for the image of the tournament if such a game should be played and published. I also considered that the sponsors would be very unsatisfied with such an achievement and that it would impact the recruitment of new sponsors. The players then played another game, which – unsurprisingly – was also a draw.

I can understand in some cases when players agree to a draw after a few moves, for instance, when qualifying for another tournament. Yet the players need to understand that they make themselves unpopular by doing so. The previous organizer of the Linares tournament had a blacklist of players that did not display fighting chess, and anyone who agreed to a short draw would not be invited back. In my opinion this is the best remedy to avoid short draws.

Question What is the situation if there are no queens available to use during pawn promotions? Yours, **John Hamer (England)**

Answer It is unlikely that no extra queen would be available in the whole hall. In top tournaments, in which electronic boards are used, each set of pieces has an extra queen for each side.

Question Dear Mr.Gijssen! I want to add something to the question of Robin Grochowski from last month's [column](#). This case was discussed on the website of the Katernberg chess club and Mr.Willi Knebel reached the following conclusion:

The first part of the Laws of Chess describes how the game is played. In FIDE 1.1 it is mentioned when a player has the right to make a move. It is when his opponent has finished his move. This is when we just play chess, with or without a clock. The clock is only important for tournaments, but after the player has finished his move by making a regular move and releasing the piece, it is the move of the other player and he therefore has to make a move with or capture a touched piece, if legal. The only thing which has to be assured is that the first player may press his clock in order to complete his move.

Therefore an additional article is not necessary in the laws of chess. Best regards, **Axel Eisengraeber-Pabst (Germany)**

Answer I agree with you that the Laws of Chess are quite clear on this point. Nevertheless, they are not clear enough for many players because there are always problems with this Article. Therefore, as I wrote previously, we should probably add (in 2008): "When a player touches a piece, before his opponent has stopped the clock, he has to play or capture this piece."

Question Hi, Say I fail to notice that my king is in check during a blitz game and I make a move that allows my opponent to capture the king. He does so, and claims a win, but I say he just made an illegal move and claim the win myself. My understanding of the rules is that if I leave my king in check I make an illegal move, but the moment my opponent makes a move he loses the right to claim a win because his capturing of my king is then an illegal move, which gives me the right to claim a win. Many of my older opponents still believe it is OK to capture the king and I have had some quarrels about it. Once even the tournament director didn't know what to do, so I'd like to hear your opinion on the matter! Best wishes, **Jasmin Brumme (Germany)**

Answer The new Laws of Chess, approved during the FIDE Congress in October 2004, are now in effect. So let me quote a part of Article 1.2:

Leaving one's own king under attack, exposing one's own king to attack and also 'capturing' the opponent's king are not allowed.

This is the first time that it is explicitly written in the Laws of Chess that capturing the king is forbidden. Moreover, there is no exception for Blitz and Rapid Games. However, in Rapid and Blitz games, an illegal move is considered to be illegal only after the opponent has made a claim. In other words, the game continues if a player does not claim the illegal move. Therefore, you are completely correct. If a player leaves his king in check he makes an illegal move. But if the opponent does not claim it and captures the king, he forfeits his rights to the claim and is now subject to the claim himself. If the first player does claim a win the arbiter has to accept it.

Question Dear Geurt, In a 5-minute blitz tournament, Player "A" has a king and a pawn, while Player "B" has a king and a bishop. Player "A" lost on time and Player "B" claimed a win. But Player "A" disagreed and argued that Player "B" has no mating material. Hence, the game should be a draw. Player "B" then shows that he can checkmate with the bishop against an unskilled player if the pawn is promoted to an opposite color bishop. As an arbiter, what's your decision? **Leong Voon Choon (Brunei)**

Answer Player "B" is correct, as he is able to checkmate the opponent's king.

Question Dear Mr Gijssen, We propose the following rules in our local chess league, and the National Knockout Championships of UK.

1) If the captains agree, they can act as arbiters in the absence of an arbiter, and draw the attention of players to flag falls and non-compliance with Article 8, etc.

2) We also propose the following rule: A captain may, in the hearing of other players, advise a player on the offering or acceptance of a draw, without commenting on that position or that of any other game still in progress.

I feel that this fulfils the spirit of the FIDE regulations and answer the needs of captains in such a situation. For your information I also attach our code of conduct for dealing with disabled players, which complies with UK Law. Thanks for your time. Regards, **Cyril Johnson (UK)**

Answer It is unclear to me whether you intend for the captain to be the arbiter for the whole event or only a temporary assistant arbiter acting in the absence of the match arbiter. Frankly speaking, I do not like the former situation because it leads to a conflict of interest. If possible, the club should not appoint the captain to be the arbiter.

I have fewer problems if the captain is only temporarily acting as an arbiter, although there still may be conflicts of interest. For example, say there are several games in time trouble and the match arbiter appoints one of the captains to observe one of the games. The captain writes the moves, because both players have less than 5 minutes left and have to complete about 20 moves, and suddenly his player asks the captain, who is at that moment acting as an arbiter: "May I offer a draw?" I hope you understand the problem. I know from my own experience that it is difficult to find capable persons to act as an arbiter, especially in time trouble. And most of the time the captain is the only person who is experienced enough to do this job. In this situation there is no choice, but if there is an alternative another person should do it instead.

I am very happy that you sent me the following helpful guidelines. I promise to do my best to see them published as an Appendix to the Laws of Chess in 2008. By publishing them here I invite readers to provide their input.

Guidelines on Treatment of Chess Players with Impairments

- 1) These guidelines will be used for all BCF events.
- 2) No one has the right to refuse to play another player against whom they have been correctly paired on the grounds of race, gender, age or impairment.
- 3) All chess venues must either be accessible to all, or an alternative venue of at least equal quality with full supervision to be available to those who cannot access the nominated venue.

- 4) A circular to be sent out when all competitors are known, or with any entry forms, asking if any potential competitor has an impairment that will require special circumstances.
- 5) No chess player to be penalised on a time parameter against the normal rates of play because of their impairment.
- 6) Any impaired competitor who reasonably requests the placing of their equipment in a particular seat or orientation, has the right to do so, provided that this does not disadvantage their opponent. The event director has to ensure that the needs of both players are catered for.
- 7) It is strongly recommended that any playing conditions are printed out and placed on all boards before the start of play, including maps of the venue showing the location of toilets, refreshments, bookstalls, emergency exits, etc.
- 8) It is recommended that all events have a first aid kit with the tournament director in case of accident, and that the local hospital/doctor's phone numbers are known.
- 9) If a competitor cannot access the refreshments/bookstall, arrangements should be made for their needs to be met.
- 10) If a competitor cannot press his/her own clock or move his/her own pieces, an assistant should be available if the opponent is not willing to do so.
- 11) If a player has made a prior request, copies of all notices should be available in large print. If a player is unable to read large print, then the notices must be read to her/him before the start of each round, and on request without disturbing other players.
- 12) It is strongly recommended that all congresses adopt these guidelines and include on their entry form a section allowing an entrant to indicate any impairment and the nature of that impairment or remedial actions which need to be taken.
- 13) It is recommended that all team events have the rule that if a visiting team indicates that it has a player with an impairment coming with them giving sufficient notice, that the home team does everything which is reasonable to ensure that that player can participate.
- 14) If there are any problems, please contact the Director of Home Chess or the Disability Officer.

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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