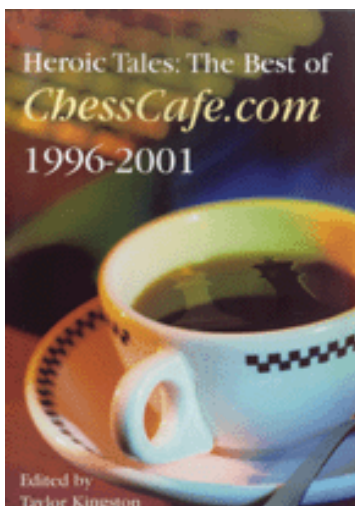




C O L U M N I S T S

*An Arbiter's
Notebook*

Geurt Gijssen



What Shall We Do with a Stinking Player? - Redux

The first time I visited Salekhard, the capital of Yamal – Nenets, one of the autonomous republics of Russia was in 2003. It is located in the North of Siberia and it's the only city on the Arctic Circle. From October 21 – 29, I had the occasion to return for a youth team tournament and I was astonished at how well organized it was. The playing hall, inside of a museum, was excellent. The transportation for all the teams went smoothly despite all the snow and the hotels were very good, although the communication in the hotels was sometimes complicated. The local arbiters were excellent and they understood the Laws of Chess and the functions of the Silver clocks perfectly. By the way, this tournament was a good opportunity to test these clocks, which operated without incident, except that when the clock shows, say, 1.39 it is difficult to see whether it is 1 hour and 39 minutes or 1 minute and 39 seconds. Furthermore, from a distance of about 4 meters and standing behind the board, it is very difficult and sometimes even impossible to see who has the move. Anyway, the organizers prepared an excellent and entertaining program with ice skating, a disco, a visit to an open air museum, a visit to an ethnic museum and the availability of visiting the Karpov Chess School. The school has 8 branches and employs 16 trainers who service 370 pupils. The director, grandmaster Potapov, does an excellent job and, from what I gather, the local government is considering the possibility of implementing chess in the primary schools. I am sure that we will hear from this district in the future. I would also like to mention the very efficient and hard working translators, who ensured an extremely enjoyable stay for the foreigners.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I recently ran a tournament where there was a player with a horrible body odor. It was terrible, but we didn't know what to do. Is there anything in the Laws of Chess that might help in such cases? It was extremely unpleasant for the players and it might have distracted them. Many thanks, **Gregory Anderton (South Africa)**

Answer You did not write whether any of the players complained or protested, but it's clear that something has to be done. The solution is not so easy and requires plenty of tact. I would explain to the player that something was not right with his hygiene and that his odor was a disturbance. I would explain that since I prefer to avoid problems, I advise him to use the shower.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I witnessed a game in the Master class A of the Dutch youth team championships. One player had a king and queen with two seconds left on the clock for the remainder of the game. The other player had a king and 53 minutes left. The first player had a simple forced mate in three, when his opponent, who was on move, offered a draw, moved his king and pushed the clock. In my view, since he had no remaining mating material this offer was incorrect. Luckily the player with two seconds managed to win. My question: is it allowed to offer a draw with no mating material and, if not, what should the arbiter do? **Bernard Bannink (The Netherlands)**

Answer I don't see any reason why it should be forbidden. It's possible that the player with the bare king was unfamiliar with the rule that he cannot win on time, in which case his offer was very fair. Moreover, it's important to me that he did it correctly, so I see no reason to punish him. But if I had been present and had the impression that he was only trying to disturb his opponent then I would have taken some action. One possibility is to grant the first player some extra time.

Question Sir, during a blitz game I unintentionally nudged my rook off the board with my left elbow while making moves with my right arm. Neither I nor my opponent noticed it when it happened, but once we did, we stopped the clocks and called the arbiter. He decided that the game should resume sans the rook, and of course, I lost the game. Was the decision correct? **Eduardo S. Benazzi (Brazil)**

Answer As it was a blitz game the arbiter will only act after a request from either player, which means that many problems can be solved by the players themselves. In the situation you described, I would have explained what happened to the opponent and, if he is a fair player, the problem would have been solved immediately. If he had disagreed with placing the rook back on the board then the arbiter must be called. But if the opponent denies what happened then the arbiter has no choice but to continue the game in the actual position on the board. Removing the piece from the board, even one's own piece, can be considered an illegal action.

Question Geurt, In your September column you reported that the Dresden meetings produced a decision that players may not record a move prior to making it on the board. Since this practice is quite common at tournaments here in the US, can you tell us how local tournament directors will be made aware of the new rule? Is there a process by which the FIDE Rules and Tournament Regulations are disseminated? **Bob Haskell (USA)**

Answer The decision was actually made in Calvia 2004, not during the Congress in Dresden 2005, and the law came into force on July 1, 2005. Each federation differs in how it disseminates information. For instance, in the Netherlands we hold a meeting for all the international and national arbiters,

where they are informed about the latest changes to the Laws of Chess. Afterwards these changes are published in the chess magazine of the federation, which is distributed to all players who are members of a chess club. As I mentioned in the previous Notebook, I gave a seminar about this same subject in Turkey.

However, the rules of the United States Chess Federation may differ from those of FIDE. For instance, they state:

The player may first make the move, and then write it on the scoresheet, or vice versa. (U.S. Chess Federation's Official Rules of Chess, 5th Edition, 2003)

The FIDE laws are posted on the Internet and can be found by going to the FIDE [website](#): – Info – FIDE Handbook – Laws of Chess.

Question Dear Geurt, In a rapid tournament with a time control of 25 minutes plus a 5 second increment per move, must a player continue to record the moves even if he has only 5 minutes or less on his clock? **A.E. Boy Espejo Jr. (The Philippines)**

Answer There is no need to write the moves at all during a Rapid game. I refer to Article B6 of the Rapid Chess Rules:

Players do not need to record the moves.

A game is considered to be a Rapid game if the thinking time + 60 times the increment equals 15 to 60 minutes. In this case: 25 minutes + 60 x 5 seconds = 30 minutes.

Question Hi Mr. Gijssen, I recently moved to the United Kingdom and I was given a scoresheet with an option of filling in the opening. I've never seen that before. My question: is a player allowed to enter the opening during the game, or is this considered taking notes? As I understand it, it is allowed to record the time next to a move and to circle the move you have to make for a certain time control. But is anything else allowed? Am I allowed to circle move-numbers if I think they are particularly interesting? Thanks in advance! **Joris Slegers (England)**

Answer You refer to Article 12.2.a and 12.3:

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

The scoresheet shall be used only for recording the moves, the times of the clocks, the offers of a draw, matters relating to a claim and other

relevant data.

My interpretation of these articles is that it is forbidden to use anything that can be considered as help for the next move(s). These matters are more or less formulated in Article 12.2.a. I assume that the scoresheet only has space in which to write the name of the opening which was played and not the moves themselves. So I do not see any reason to forbid it, because I do not consider it to be taking notes. However, the same does not apply for circling “interesting” moves. I remember a player who had the bad habit of adding exclamation marks to his own moves and question marks after his opponent’s moves. I considered this to be an annoyance.

Question Hello, a recent article in *NIC* told the story of how Fischer, who was in the habit of fiddling with pieces on the side of the board, accidentally did so with his h-pawn against Unzicker, and then chose to move this pawn and lost the game. Would he be forced to do so under today’s rules? In one of my games I captured back a rook on a8 with the wrong colored bishop and my grandmaster opponent forced me to move the f4-bishop instead. In each case the players did not intend to move the touched piece, which is different to the Kasparov and Azmaiparashvili situations. Thank you, **Gerd Lorscheid (Germany)**

Answer First of all I refer to Article 4.3:

If the player having the move deliberately touches on the chessboard

- a. one or more of his own pieces, he must move the first piece touched that can be moved , or*
- b. one or more of his opponent’s pieces, he must capture the first piece touched, which can be captured, or*
- c. one piece of each colour, he must capture the opponent’s piece with his piece or, if this is illegal, move or capture the first piece touched which can be moved or captured. If it is unclear, whether the player’s own piece or his opponent’s was touched first, the player’s own piece shall be considered to have been touched before his opponent’s.*

It is quite difficult to give some guidelines about this matter. Essential to this interpretation is the word “deliberately.” My opinion is that it means a player touches a piece with the intention to play it. The sound judgment of the arbiter, mentioned in the Preface of the Laws of Chess, is again very important.

Let me consider your examples: I would not have forced Fischer to play the h-pawn, because it was very clear that he did not intend to play it. Yet, I

understand his attitude and correctness. Even without any claim, he was ready to accept the consequences of his actions. I would also reject the claim of your opponent in your own situation.

Question Dear Geurt, as captain of a team, if one of my players is in the last 5 minutes before the time control, and therefore not obliged to record his moves, can I record them for him? I understand that I cannot communicate with him about the moves, e.g. how many he has made, but can I just write the moves down where he can see them? Thank you. **Dave Farley (England)**

Answer Nobody can forbid you to write the moves of a game that is still in progress. But, as you mentioned yourself, you cannot communicate with the player about the number of moves already played or still to play. You also cannot show the player the paper on which you write the moves. Even after a flag fall the captain is absolutely forbidden to take any action, including in such situations as overstepping the time limit, when the scoresheet may indicate something about the number of moves played. The arbiter may use your notes following a flag fall, but he is not obliged to do so.

Question Dear Mister Gijssen, During the last phase of a game from our national competition, White had about 1 minute and Black had nearly 5 minutes. The time limit was 40 moves in 2 hours and 1 hour for the remaining moves. White had a king, knight and two pawns and Black had a king and knight. White offered a draw several times, but Black did not react because he thought that if White overstepped the time control, Black would win the game. Fortunately, White checkmated Black's king, but we still have several questions:

- Can White claim a draw only when he has less than 2 minutes left, although he has a large material advantage?
- Could White claim a draw after his flag had fallen? Or is the game lost? How can White win with king and knight?
- How should Article 6.10 be interpreted?

The game is drawn, if the position is such that the opponent cannot checkmate the player's king by any possible series of legal moves, even with the most unskilled counterplay.

We very much appreciate your answers. **Willem Penninck (Belgium)**

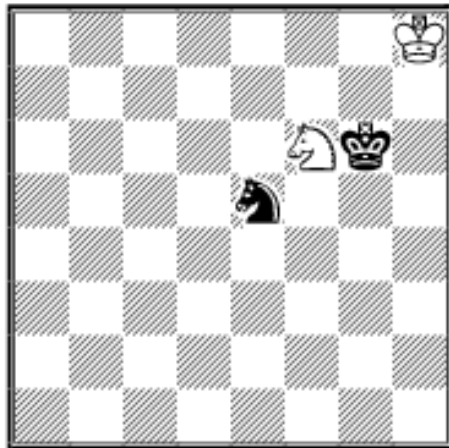
Answer: According to Article 10.2, a player can claim a draw when he has less than 2 minutes:

If the player, having the move, has less than two minutes left on his clock, he may claim a draw before his flag falls. He shall stop the clocks and summon the arbiter.

And although I don't know the exact situation, I believe that White had reason to claim a draw rather than offer it. By the way, claiming a draw is considered to be a draw offer. If his flag falls, then the game would normally be declared a loss for him; however, there are cases when this does not result in a loss. The clearest example is a bare king. In a previous Notebook I made a list of some examples and what should happen if White oversteps the time limit. A "+" means Blacks wins, and a "=" means the arbiter declares the game drawn.

- K+Q vs. K+Q +
- K+Q vs. K+R +
- K+Q vs. K+B =
- K+Q vs. K+N =
- K+R vs. K+R +
- K+R vs. K+B =
- K+R vs. K+N +
- K+N vs. K+N +
- K+B vs. K+B + or = (+ if the bishops are of opposite color; = if the bishops are moving on the same color squares)

Let's consider the position you mentioned. It's possible that White could play so badly that he would lose his two pawns, making the following position from the above list possible.



Suppose White plays Ng8, now Black has Nf7 checkmate. I hope this example clarifies what it means by *any possible series of legal moves, even with the most unskilled counterplay*.

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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