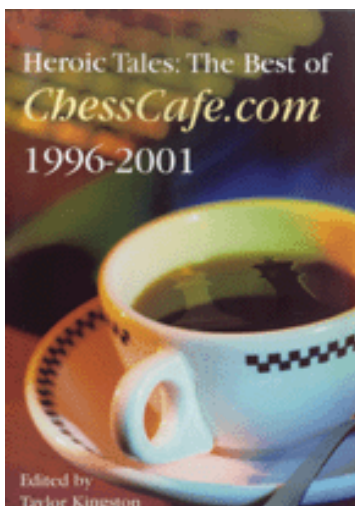




COLUMNISTS

*An Arbiter's
Notebook*

Geurt Gijssen



Recording Moves, Mobiles, and Article 10.2

I received many reactions to last month's [column](#) about the possibility of a checkmate position being declared a draw, and I have decided to bring it to the attention of the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee. I will publish the Committee's response, along with those from the readers, following the FIDE Congress in Turin, which takes place in June.

Meanwhile, the 5th Aeroflot Festival took place in Moscow, with 608 players from 52 countries participating in 4 tournaments. The venue was the Hotel Delta of the Ismailovo Tourist Centre, which is about 15 minutes from the center of Moscow. We used a beta version of Swissmaster for the pairings, and I was very satisfied with its performance.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, Is there any FIDE-approved program for tournament management designed for the Pocket PC, excluding Smart Phones, which are forbidden by the Rules of Chess? Best regards, **Milen Petrov (Bulgaria)**

Answer The following programs are approved by FIDE:

Program	Swiss System
Swiss Master	Dutch System
GMB	Lim System
SWISS CHESS	Dutch System
SVBOSS	Dutch System
VEGA	DUBOV System
Swiss Manager	Dutch System

Furthermore, the Monroi Personal Tournament Manager is also endorsed by FIDE. For further information I refer you to the Monroi [website](#).

Question Could you comment on the following incident regarding rule 12.2.b:

It is strictly forbidden to bring mobile phones or other electronic means of communication, not authorised by the arbiter, into the playing venue. If a player's mobile phone rings in the playing venue during play, that player shall lose the game. The score of the opponent shall be determined by the arbiter.

I was playing a game in a regional tournament in Portugal and was about to deliver checkmate in three moves against a lower rated opponent, when suddenly my mobile phone made a start-up sound. I had turned it off at the start of the round, as I always do, but it was somehow activated while in my pocket. Because of this, I was informed by the arbiter that I had lost the game. Is this what FIDE had in mind when they instituted this rule? I hope not, because this is not fair chess.

Let's have a closer look at the wording in rule 12.2.b: *It is strictly forbidden to bring mobile phones or other electronic means of communication, not authorised by the arbiter, into the playing venue.* Well, since the arbiter tells the players to turn off their mobiles at the start of every round, he is authorizing them to bring their mobile phones into the playing venue.

The second part of the rule states: *If a player's mobile phone rings in the playing venue during play.* However, my phone did not "ring," it made a start-up noise. The rule does not specify "if a player's mobile phone makes any kind of noise." There is a clear difference.

The third part of the rule states: *that player shall lose the game.* "Shall lose" is different from "must lose," and it would seem that the arbiter can exercise some discretion. For example, my mobile only made a noise because it suddenly turned on, and my game was clearly at the end. Losing the game in this way shows that either the rule is wrong or it has been wrongly interpreted by the arbiters. I made an initial protest, but it was rejected by the regional federation. Best regards, **Francisco Castro (Portugal)**

Answer Thank you for your interesting and well-documented letter. In my opinion, FIDE's intention was to avoid having players communicate with persons outside the playing area.

From what I understand, there is a clear difference between the sound of a phone starting-up and its ring tone, which provides a good reason not to declare the game lost. However, I believe that when a phone truly rings the arbiter must declare the game lost.

The best way to avoid such situations is to not bring the phone into the playing hall, although I understand that, if the players are staying in a hotel, they do not like to leave their phone in the hotel room.

Question Dear Geurt, Can you clarify the correct procedure for the recording of moves? For example, if a game starts 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6, does Black have to record White's move before making his own, or can he move and then record both moves at the same time? Many thanks, **Michael Waters (Ireland)**

Answer The second paragraph of Article 8.1 of the Laws of Chess states:

A player may reply to his opponent's move before recording it, if he so wishes. He must record his previous move before making another.

So it is clear that both methods are allowed.

Question I would like your thoughts concerning the scoring of draws. As it stands now, we get a half point for a draw; however, not all draws are equal and it is not fair that the better player has to share all of his points. For instance, in a stalemate, one person actually came closer to winning; therefore, he should get at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of a point, with the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ going to the opponent who has the bare king. A quarter-point should also go to the player who forces a three-fold repetition. Or, say, a 1500 player holds a 2000 player to a draw. The 1500 deserves to be awarded $\frac{3}{4}$ of a point, unless, of course, the point came as a result of a stalemate, in which case we would award the $\frac{3}{4}$ point to the stronger player. **Ken Driscoll (USA)**

Answer I am not in favor of your proposal and here's why:

Let's consider the stalemate finish. I refer to Article 1.2:

The objective of each player is to place the opponent's king 'under attack' in such a way that the opponent has no legal move. The player who achieves this goal is said to have 'checkmated' the opponent's king and to have won the game.

Well, in case of stalemate the player failed to achieve his aim of checkmating the opponent's king. So why should he be awarded extra points? As for a three-fold repetition, if we adopted your proposal, a player would be punished for correctly claiming a draw, in a situation where his opponent probably wants to do the same thing.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, During a recent FIDE tournament (90 min + 30 sec each move), I was in "time trouble" and just playing within the 30 second increment. My opponent, an experienced player, wasn't recording the moves, so I stopped the clocks and complained to the FIDE International Arbiter. Then, while waiting the 3 or 4 minutes for the arbiter to appear, my opponent took advantage of the situation to complete his scoresheet.

However, I was very surprised that the arbiter only gave him a "warning"!

When I voiced my objection, he told me, “The first offence is a warning.” I expected to be awarded a minimum of 2 minutes extra. After all, I have complied with the rules by keeping my scoresheet up-to-date, and if “the first offence is a warning,” then why should I bother? The FIDE rules are quite “severe” in other matters (like mobile phones), so why are they lax here? Another issue is that some players write “undecipherable moves,” and receive no penalty. The notation should be “legible.” Best regards, **Roberto Alvarez (Argentina)**

Answer In most cases the Laws of Chess do not describe an explicit penalty for a rule infraction, and the arbiter can apply one or more of the following penalties mentioned in Article 13.4:

- a. warning,*
- b. increasing the remaining time of the opponent,*
- c. reducing the remaining time of the offending player,*
- d. declaring the game to be lost,*
- e. reducing the points scored in a game by the offending party,*
- f. increasing the points scored in a game by the opponent to the maximum available for that game,*
- g. expulsion from the event.*

I understand that you are unhappy with the arbiter’s ruling, but he was not wrong. Although awarding you 2 extra minutes was a viable option.

Question Hi Geurt, I have recently been appointed arbiter at my local chess club and, even after reading the FIDE rules and trawling the archives of your columns, there are a number of scenarios I would like clarified.

I. Blitz – king captures and the clock

Player A makes an illegal move that leaves him in check. Player B captures the king and *stops* both clocks. According to Appendix C3, Player B has not yet played an illegal move because he hasn’t started his opponent’s clock – how is this resolved? As far as I can discern, stopping the clocks is allowed only when claiming a draw or to summon the arbiter. Is it implicit that, without any other indication, Player B wishes to summon the arbiter? And, once the arbiter arrives, what should his decision be?

II. Article 10.2

I have read many debates on this rule, but I am still unsure about how to determine whether or not a player is trying to win by “normal” means. For example, say, Player A claims a draw under 10.2, and I defer my decision and observe the game as it progresses. Player B plays passively, but insists that he was playing to win “by normal means” after Player A’s flag falls. Should the arbiter then ask Player B to justify his assertion? Where is the burden of proof in this rule? Does Player A need to prove that Player B was only trying to win on time? This rule seems so ambiguous that it will inevitably cause animosity

on the part of whichever participant is ruled against. Thanks in advance, **Neil Benn (Norway)**

Answer 1 I refer to Article C3 of the Blitz rules:

An illegal move is completed once the opponent's clock has been started. The opponent is entitled to claim a win before he has made his own move. However, if the opponent cannot checkmate the player's king by any possible series of legal moves with the most unskilled counterplay, then the claimant is entitled to claim a draw before he has made his own move. Once the opponent has made his own move, an illegal move cannot be corrected.

Let's summarize: Player A completed an illegal move that leaves him in check. Player B did not make a claim, but instead made an illegal move by capturing the opponent's king, and then claimed that Player A had made an illegal move.

It is clear from the last sentence of C3 that Player B has lost his right to claim an illegal move. Therefore, he has no reason to stop the clocks. In this connection Article 6.13.d is important:

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.

So the arbiter must decide what penalty should be given to Player B. Most likely he would award Player A two extra minutes on the clock. Once this has been done and the clocks have been restarted, Player B has two options:

- He can press the clock to start his opponent's clock, at which moment Player A can claim a win because of Player B's illegal move. Or,
- Player B corrects his illegal move (capturing the king), makes a legal move, and the game continues.

Answer II The easiest way to avoid any controversy connected with Article 10.2 is to use Fischer-mode in the final phase of the game. Yet, this is too simple an answer, and I realize there are fewer digital clocks than mechanical ones.

I agree that it is almost impossible to satisfy everyone when applying Article 10.2. However, the arbiter should never ask the players' opinions or discuss his decision. Moreover, the position on the board is irrelevant. The only thing the arbiter has to do is observe whether the non-claiming player is trying to make progress. Admittedly, there are situations where it is (almost)

impossible to make a clear-cut decision.

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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