



C O L U M N I S T S

*An Arbiter's
Notebook*

Geurt Gijssen



The Turin Olympiad

Number of teams and pieces

Never before have so many teams participated in an Olympiad: 148 teams in the general competition and 103 teams in the women's competition. A fantastic record, but apparently the organizers did not expect such a turn out. A few hours before the start of the first round they realized they did not have enough chess sets. To solve this problem, we were forced to use some pieces that did not satisfy the requirements of the FIDE Handbook. There were some complaints about these pieces in the first round, but all teams finally played; however, some teams refused to play with these pieces in the second round. The only option I had was to let them play with non-electronic pieces and to manually enter these games into the computer. Finally, we managed to use "normal" pieces on all boards.

Playing Hall

The playing hall was more than adequate; it was the best I have ever seen in any Olympiad. There was a very clear separation between players and spectators (blue and red zones), but the spectators were able to watch all the games. In addition, there was a gallery from which spectators could watch the players, but not follow the games. There was plenty of space, but this proved to be a slight disadvantage. In the course of my duties inspecting all the boards, checking whether the arbiters saved the games, and checking the clocks, I had to walk about 1km. Each inspection took about 20 minutes, so no one will be surprised when I say that I lost many kilos in Turin.

In another part of the building (next to the playing hall) it was possible to follow some games displayed on a big screen. This part of the building was also used as an analysis room. This should be considered a model for all Olympiads in the future. Congratulations to the Italian organizers.

Bathrooms

Before the start of each tournament, I always ask the organizers to show me the bathroom. And in Turin, the building management had decided that the players could only use the bathrooms on one side of the building, even though there were more available. I voiced the opinion that we needed to use these additional facilities, but they were afraid that they could not supervise the building. However, after round two, they agreed to use the extra bathrooms.

Reserve players

Another initial problem was where reserve players and players who had finished their games could watch games that were still in progress. The organizers thought that this would only be possible from the galleries. However, I suggested that the red zone of the spectator's area was more appropriate and following round two the management and organizers agreed. By the way, it was more difficult to convince the building management than the organizers. Nevertheless, the building management was very cooperative. When we had differing opinions, their objective was always on making things as comfortable as possible for everyone – especially for the players. My problem was to convince them that chessplayers (although sportsmen) required an approach similar to, say, skaters.

Announcements

It was very difficult to make public announcements in the playing hall because the loudspeaker system was inadequate for the size of the hall. I often had to repeat my announcements on an individual basis. Moreover, when I made announcements, I could not see the playing area.

Olympic Village

There were varying opinions about the Olympiad Village. I heard many complaints about the apartments in which the teams were located. There were no refrigerators, no TV, in many cases a lack of tables, and so on. In the end, about ten refrigerators were provided, based on medical need. Still, many players were also happy with their lodgings. This may have had something to do with which building players were lodged in, as there were many different types of buildings.

Food

Another complaint was the long wait for meals, but this was resolved after the second captains' meeting, organized by the players after the second round. Personally, my impression was that the quality of the food was OK, but there was little variety.

Captains' Meeting

Before the start of the first round there was a captains' meeting where I announced the time control, the doping controls, and the changes in the pairing regulations. There were no questions or remarks at that time, but I will address the time control and doping controls later in this report.

Pairing System

Historically, with the exception of Elista 1998, fourteen rounds have been played in the Olympiads. However, the Turin organizers requested that thirteen rounds be played. To compensate for this "lost" round, the Chairman of the Pairing Committee proposed to the Presidential Board to use a system of accelerated pairings in the first two rounds. This was approved, but when I announced the change during the captains' meeting, there were many protests.

The main complaint was not about the merits of the proposal, but that no one had been informed beforehand. However, after consulting with the members of the Presidential Board and realizing that the majority of the captains were against the proposal, I announced that the pairings would be done as in previous Olympiads.

Doping Controls

There were no problems with the doping control. Just before the round Dr. H.J. Hofstetter and I made the drawing of lots to determine who would be tested, and everyone complied. I informed the match arbiters involved and explained how the procedure would work.

Time Control

It was not clear as to which time control we should play in Turin. However, everyone I consulted agreed that the time limit that was used in Calvià should also be applied in Turin: 90 minutes for the whole game with an increment of 30 seconds from move one. Furthermore, there were no questions regarding the time control in both captains' meetings.

I was therefore quite surprised when I was informed about a protest after round four, filed by the Georgian captains, stating that they wanted to apply a different time control. The Appeals Committee decided that from a practical point of view it was impossible to use a different time control at that point, but it also mentioned in the decision "that the time control was chosen, based on documentation susceptible to equivocal interpretations, received by the chief arbiter."

Questionnaire about the time limit

During the last round the players were asked for their opinion regarding the time control. The results are shown in the following table:

	Men	Women	Total		
90 minutes + 30 sec from move 1	75	71	146	33%	1 woman marked also 7 hours
90 minutes for 40 moves + 15 minutes + 30 sec. from move 1	36	47	83	19%	4 women marked also 7 hours
90 minutes for 40 moves + 30 minutes + 30 sec from move 1	120	60	180	41%	13 women marked also 7 hours
7 hours games	27	5	32	7%	
Total	258	183	441		

Pairings

The members of the Pairing Committee were Mr. Burstein (chairman), Mr. Hamid and Mr. Herzog, and I enjoyed good cooperation with this Committee. Nevertheless, I would like to especially commend Mr. Herzog, the programmer of Swiss Manager for a fantastic job. All my requests regarding pairings, team compositions, team standings, individual results, norms, titles (FM, WFM, CM, WCM), TPRs and so on were satisfied – even though this was not the responsibility of the Pairing Committee.

I well remember the night before the first round, when Mr. Herzog and I worked until 6 o'clock in the morning to discern the number of teams that had already arrived in Turin or were on their way to Turin. An incorrect team composition was published twice and, in both instances, the opposing captains accepted the mistake and the fact that the teams were changed without objection. The only problem was finding the captains...

There was one case when a player became seriously ill and had to be brought to the hospital. This occurred after the team compositions were published, and when I spoke with the captain of the opposing team, he accepted the change in the spirit of *Gens Una Sumus*.

Some Italian arbiters helped the Pairing Committee every day, when the team compositions had to be prepared. They were present every morning and even in the middle of the night before the last round to accept the team compositions from the captains. Some of them assisted the Pairing Committee in preparing the team composition protocols. As far as I could see, they worked without making any errors. Bravo!

Incidents

There were very few incidents, especially considering that 5,700 games were played. One game was declared lost because of a ringing phone. Yet, before each round, I made an announcement that everyone had to switch off their mobiles, including the built-in alarm. It should be noted that I implicitly allowed the players to bring mobiles into the playing hall, because I fully understood that leaving mobiles in the rooms of the Olympic Village was not an option. I am really surprised that players still forget to switch off their mobiles.

I was summoned twice to solve a problem with a completed illegal move, and the players and captains agreed with my decisions in both cases. There is a common misconception that a player has to claim that the opponent made or completed an illegal move. However, this is only the case in Blitz and in Rapid games, not in “normal” games. See Article 7.4:

If during a game it is found that an illegal move, including failing to meet the requirements of the promotion of a pawn or capturing the opponent's king, has been completed, the position immediately before the irregularity shall be reinstated.

There was a protest alleging that some of the last round results were incorrect. I investigated this very carefully, listening to the captains, checking the scoresheets and asking the opinion of the neutral and very experienced press officer, GM Cebalo. He confirmed my opinion that there was no reason to doubt the results and the plaintiffs accepted my decision.

In one game a player made a move, but did not press the clock. His hand did not release the piece, he returned it to the original square, and then played another piece. The opponent protested and lost on time. However, he signed the scoresheets and the captains signed the protocols. So when they approached me with their protest, I explained that after they had signed the scoresheets and the protocol, protests were impossible. Nevertheless, they went to the Appeals Committee the next day, which affirmed my decision.

Arbiters

Seven senior arbiters were appointed, as opposed to four, and this was a real improvement. Generally, I was satisfied with the arbiters. They did their jobs quite well, although they had some problems adjudicating the instances with an illegal move. Many of the Italian arbiters worked very hard and also assisted the Pairing Committee.

Franca Dapiran, deputy chief arbiter of the Women's Olympiad deserves special mention. She was really outstanding. As a matter of fact, she did many of the jobs that really should have been the responsibility of the organizers.

Volunteers

Without the numerous volunteers, especially the retirees, this Olympiad would not have been possible. They were responsible for transportation, security, hospitality, accommodations and many other things. Their work was outstanding.

Norms

The number of norms achieved in the Olympiad:

GM	IM	WGM	WIM	Total
16	21	5	13	55

In previous Olympiads, a norm made in 13 or 14 games meant the title. Here, a norm based on at least 9 games is now considered as a 20 game norm. Moreover, the number of titleholders is irrelevant. The only criterion was the Tournament Performance Rating (TPR), which includes the score of the player and the average rating of the opponents.

Titles

FM	WFM	CM	WCM	Total
21	16	130	80	247

Candidate Master (CM) and Women's Candidate Master (WCM) are new titles.

The regulations state that for the FM and WFM title a player has to play at least 9 games and score 66.67% or more. *6/9 is sufficient for the title.*

One player scored $7\frac{1}{2}/8$, 2 players scored $7/8$, 4 players $6\frac{1}{2}/7$ and 1 player $6/7$. Although they did not play the required number of games, I recommend awarding the FM title to these players.

The regulations state that for the CM and WCM title a player has to play at least 7 games and has to score 50% or more. *3½/7 is sufficient for the title.*

There was one player, who scored $3\frac{1}{2}/6$ and another player scored $3\frac{1}{2}/5$. I hesitate to propose the same as for the FM title. It is reasonable that a player should play at least 50% of the possible rounds, which means 7 rounds.

Conclusion

The plusses outweighed the minuses in this Olympiad, making it a very successful event.

The Congress and the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee (RTRC)

The Congress was in the Olympic Oval, quite far from the Olympic Village and the playing hall. So I had no time to attend it, especially as the playing day started at 8:30 AM and finished at about 11:00 PM. Of course, the main aspect of the Congress was the presidential elections. I understand that so many discussions erupted about the electoral procedures that some points of the agenda fell by the wayside. For instance, the revision of the Tournament Regulations, proposed by the RTRC, will be discussed at the next Presidential Board during the Topalov – Kramnik match in Elista. I expect they will be approved. We also discussed the [Godino question](#). Do you still remember? A player claims a draw pursuant the 50 moves rule. But the intended move produces checkmate. Is the game won by the player or is it a draw? Wait and see.

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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