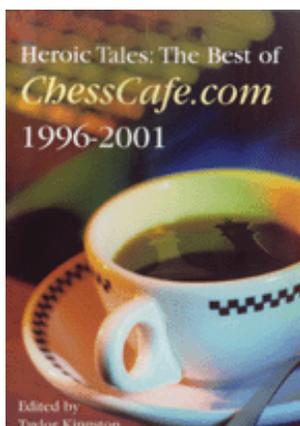




COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



Disputed Rulings

Question Dear Sir, first let me congratulate you for your decision to start the clocks in game five of the Kramnik-Topalov match. You are a great role model to arbiters around the world. It must be understood that the arbiter only implements the law. He does not take decisions such as postponing matches or removing players from a tournament.

On a separate matter, world championship matches always raise the issue of games being won based on home analysis. In the famous Kasparov-Karpov matches some games were prepared right up to the point of resignation. This situation suggests that FIDE take action at some stage. Here are some suggestions:

- Regulating Random Chess; FIDE can select and approve different starting positions. In fact, it is strange that FIDE has never adopted this type of chess.
- Approving a starting setup where White puts his king on d1 and the queen on e1. It can be said that this is already accepted in Rapid and Blitz games, when three moves have passed without a claim.
- Allow castling in the setup in point two. This will promote aggressive play because it will increase number of games with kings castled on opposite sides. This can be immediately implemented for fast games.

Could you please comment on this? Yours sincerely, **Naji Alradhi (UAE)**

Answer One remark about your introduction: Article 13.4 of the Laws of Chess allows an arbiter to remove a player from a tournament. I am not sure if this has ever been put into practice, but it is possible.

I do not understand why you consider home preparation as unfair.

Your remark about Random Chess has some merit and you should propose it to FIDE through your federation. Then it can be discussed in FIDE commissions and at the General Assembly. Also, the regulations for Random Chess are very [well-defined](#).

Question Appendix D (Quick Play finishes where no arbiter is present) states: “A player may claim a draw when he has less than two minutes left on his clock and before his flag falls. This concludes the game.” It later states in the case of a claim that the opponent has been making no effort to win by normal means, “the player must ... submit an up-to-date scoresheet, which must be completed before play has ceased.”

I assume, therefore, that if no arbiter is present (as in most local league matches), and you want to claim a draw inside the last two minutes of your allotted time, you must keep a record of the game right up to the point you claim the draw. Usually you are permitted to stop keeping a gamescore in the final five minutes of a time control, but if that happened and you claimed a draw, you would be in breach of the above rule.

If that's correct, it seems a bit tough. You stop scoring under Rule 8.4, but then find you can't claim a draw, because you haven't been maintaining a record of the game. I feel Appendix D needs to be amended by replacing “...which must be completed before play has ceased” with

something like, "...which should be completed as soon as possible upon conclusion of the game." Regards, **Bob Jones (USA)**

Answer Your assumption is incorrect in my opinion. The Law that a player does not have to record the moves when he has less than five minutes is still applicable. The only problem I can see is with your definition of ceasing a game. A game has ceased when, after the claim, the player has recorded all the moves. By the way, I have no problem with your proposal except for a slight improvement: "...which should be completed immediately after the claim was made."

Question Dear Mr Gijssen, the following situation occurred at the Czech Blitz championship: White checked the black king, Black left his king in check and made another move, after which White's flag fell. Black claimed a win on time, but White claimed a win on an illegal move. The tournament director ruled that a new game should be played, but in my opinion White should win the game. What is your opinion? Yours faithfully, **Jiri Bielavsky (Czech Republic)**

Answer Two Articles are essential in this case:

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.

The flag is considered to have fallen when a player has made a valid claim to that effect.

It seems that both players made a valid claim. This is probably the reason that they were required to play a new game. However, we can also look at it by way of:

- **The order of the events:** Black completed an illegal move and then White's flag fell.
- **The order of the claims:** Black claimed a win on time and then White claimed that Black had completed an illegal move.

In my opinion the order of events is more important than the order of the claims; therefore, I agree that White deserved to win the game.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, the following incident occurred at a tournament in Australia: two players were about to begin their game when they realized that the clock was set incorrectly. One of the players then reset the clock, but failed to include the + 0.30 increments. This error was not detected by either player and was only brought to the attention of the arbiter late in the game.

The arbiter began watching to see if the increment was added after the player moved, but one of the flags fell, which was then noted by the opponent and acknowledged by the player. The arbiter then checked the clock and confirmed that the setting was indeed incorrect.

Nevertheless, the arbiter ruled that the game result would stand and this decision was subsequently upheld on appeal. This decision seems to be reasonable, since any other alternative may have delayed the remaining rounds of the tournament, etc.

My question is: if a clock is set incorrectly, is it the same as having a defect in the clock? A defective clock seems to be the only situation covered explicitly by the rules. Take care, **Phil Bourke (Australia)**

Answer First of all, it is clear that the clock was not defective. So let's analyze the situation. **During the game** it was found that the clock setting was wrong. I assume that the players recorded their moves and that the number of moves was known. Therefore, the missing times on the clocks can be calculated and I do not see any reason as to why the clock times were not corrected. The schedule of the tournament would not have been affected if the clocks were adjusted immediately.

Question Sir, As an organizer of chess tournaments I have experimented with different scoring systems and found that the best procedure was 7 points for win and 3 for draw. I am going to organize a FIDE rated tournament in March 2007 and would like to know if this scoring system can be utilized. Your response will be highly appreciated. Thanks and kind regards, **Darshan Gupta (India)**

Answer I refer to Article 11 of the Laws of Chess:

Unless announced otherwise in advance, a player who wins his game, or wins by forfeit, scores one point (1), a player who loses his game, or forfeits scores no points (0) and a player who draws his game scores a half point (½).

This Article allows each organizer to apply a different scoring system, but it must be announced in advance. For rating calculations the “traditional” scoring system (1, ½, 0) must be applied.

Question I recently played in a lightning tournament (5/0) where a discussion took place at the players meeting regarding opponents who move before the clock is pushed and what the penalty should be. Your opinion would be of great interest. Thank you, **Matthew King (New Zealand)**

Answer I refer to Article 6.8.a of the Laws of Chess:

During the game each player, having made his move on the chessboard, shall stop his own clock and start his opponent's clock. A player must always be allowed to stop his clock. His move is not considered to have been completed until he has done so, unless the move that was made ends the game. (See Articles 5.1, and 5.2)

An accepted interpretation of this Article is that a player can make a move before the opponent has stopped his own clock and started his opponent's clock. And even after the opponent has made his move, the player retains the right to press his own clock. This rule is applicable for all types of games, because there are no exceptions mentioned in the Laws for Rapid and Blitz games.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen is it possible to organize a tournament with “mixed” time criteria, e.g.:

- if mechanical chess clock, then 2h per entire game
- if digital chess clock, then 1h30min + 30s from move 1

I believe this is a common practice in FIDE events in Argentina. Thank you very much for your time and attention. Best regards, **Artur Bartmann Arns (Brazil)**

Answer There may be a problem if players are trying to make a norm. I refer to Article 1.14 of the Title Regulations:

Without an increment of a minimum of 30 seconds for each move the minimum time is 2 hours and 30 minutes.

With an increment of a minimum of 30 seconds for each move, the minimum time is 120 minutes in which to complete all the moves, based upon a game lasting 60 moves.

Examples of standard chess include:

- *All the moves in 90 minutes, but for each move a player receives an extra 30 seconds added to his clock time.*

- 40 moves in two hours, followed by all the moves in one hour.
- 40 moves in two hours, 20 moves in one hour, followed by all the moves in 30 minutes.
- 40 moves in two hours, 20 moves in one hour, followed by 15 minutes plus 30 seconds per move to finish the game.

As you can see, it is not possible to make a norm with mechanical clocks using the time limit you mentioned, but it is possible using digital clocks. This means you have to be very careful with mixed time controls.

Another argument against mixed time controls is that the players using digital clocks are obliged to record all their moves throughout the game. But those using mechanical clocks in your example would be able to stop recording the moves when they have less than five minutes of time remaining. The latter can also claim a draw based on Article 10.2. Based on these two arguments, I would say that playing with mixed time controls is inadvisable.

Question Mr. Gijssen I would like your opinion about a vexatious issue that arose in a primary schools junior chess tournament here in Trinidad. On the first day of the tournament, only three out of four players turned up for our school's team.

On the second day of the tournament, I brought four children, two of whom were not present on the first day. I was given official permission to allow the two new children to play and the two original players remained at the boards that they had played on the first day – board 1 and board 3.

On board 2 was a child that was filling in for an absent friend and board 4 was manned by the boy who was not present on the first day of the tournament. The tournament directors were satisfied with the arrangement and the children proceeded to play five rounds of chess that day.

In the end, my team was declared the third place winners and medals and certificates were awarded. However, when the results were announced in the newspapers several weeks later, we discovered that we had been demoted to fourth place, without ever receiving any communication from the officials.

Here are the issues being debated:

- That bringing in two new players on the second day was “illegal,” even though the organizer approved it, and that the child on board 3 should have moved up to board 2 and the alternate should have played on board 3.
- That board 2 should have been left vacant
- That the organizer was within his rights to overturn the results based on a protest after the event

I would like to know from you whether we were in breach of the rules governing team chess. I look forward to hearing from you. **Arlene Blackman (Trinidad and Tobago)**

Answer I created the following table to illustrate the situation:

	Board 1	Board 2	Board 3	Board 4
Day 1	Player A	Player B	Player C	Vacant
Day 2	Player A	Alternate	Player C	Player D

I do not know how the specific regulations of your event, but let me give you some examples of team events.

- At the start of the Olympiad the team captain delivers the names of the four players and the two reserves in the order they should play throughout the competition. They are numbered from 1 to 6 and they can play only in this order. For instance, if players 2 and 4 do not play, then the board order is 1, 3, 5 and 6.
- In the Dutch league a captain can change the order as much he likes.
- In the regional Dutch league, the team captain delivers the composition of the team before the start of the competition, but he may vary the board order. However, a player may never play more than three places lower than in the original list.

As you can see, there are several possibilities for team competitions. All that I can say is that the decision of the appeals board should have been communicated to you before it was published.

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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