



COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook
Geurt Gijssen



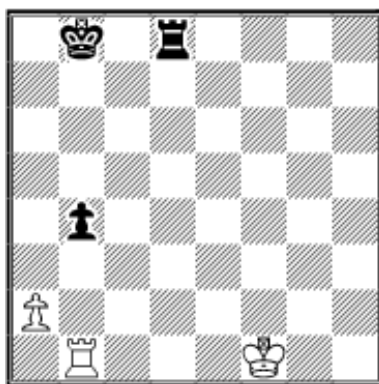
Interpreting the Rules

In a previous [Notebook](#), **Rosario Aráoz** from **Uruguay** asked whether there is a penalty when capturing for removing the opponent's piece with one hand, while replacing it with your own piece with the other. I replied that "one would expect that the answer to your question could be found in Article 4 of the Laws of Chess: 'The act of moving the pieces,' but this is not the case." However, this was purposefully incorrect as I wanted to see whether the readers would check this for themselves. Well, **Gernot Weiser** from **Germany** indicates that the correct answer can be found in Article 4.1:

Each move must be made with one hand only.

I would like to commend Mr. Weiser for his diligence.

Question I'm doubtful about your [reply](#) to the query on three-fold repetition in regard to *en passant* captures which are initially impossible because of a pin. The example given was the following position:



White plays 1 a4, with the same position occurring twice more.

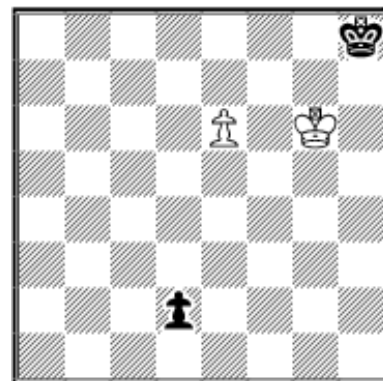
The list of legal and potential moves for both players is the same in all three positions and therefore the repetition seems clearly valid according to 9.2.

The situation with the castling example is, in my opinion, significantly different. In this case it is only the act of moving the king on the first move which changes the list of potentially legal moves (admittedly, this is unavoidable, but that's not the point – if I drop a glass from a considerable height on to concrete it may be unavoidable that it breaks, but nevertheless it hasn't actually broken until it hits the floor). Best wishes, **John Nunn (England)**

Answer While I did frame my answer in the context of castling, I also noted that the *en passant* situation is completely different. Nevertheless, in reviewing the previous questions and answers, I agree that all the requirements of Article 9.2 are fulfilled.

Question If Black were to move in the following position, could he claim a draw based on the insufficient mating material rule, by claiming that both players could promote to bishops, resulting in a drawn position. Thank you. **Pranesh Yadav (India)**

Answer Black would not need to claim a draw because he has a winning position, which can be easily verified. Nevertheless, Articles 10.2 or 9.6 are not applicable in this position. Article 9.6 could only be applied once both players promoted to a bishop:



The game is drawn when a position is reached from which a checkmate cannot occur by any possible series of legal moves, even with the most unskilled play. This immediately ends the game, provided that the move producing this position was legal.

Question Dear Mr Gijssen, I played in a five-minute Blitz tournament, and with ten seconds on the clock, I reached a position of king + two knights versus king in the middle of the board. Could I have claimed a draw based on Article 10.2? How about with K+B versus K+B of opposite color, or K+N versus K+N, with the king in the center of the board in each instance? With regards, **Bernard Bannink (The Netherlands)**

Answer I refer to Article C2 of the Laws of Blitz Chess:

Play shall be governed by the Rapidplay Laws as in Appendix B except where they are overridden by the following Laws of Blitz. The Articles 10.2 and B6 do not apply.

As is evident, claims based on Article 10.2 are invalid.

Question Hello Mr. Gijssen, I was playing chess with my nephew and had captured all of his pieces except his king. He then told me that if he were to move his king to the last rank he could acquire a new rook, and that this could happen repeatedly. Is this true? Thank you in advance for your response. Sincerely, **Tony Cirasuolo (Canada)**

Answer I have never heard of this rule before and I am certain that it does not exist. Nevertheless, one could accept it in the spirit of fun competition for children and to add an extra dimension to the game. Still, I would be very clear that it is not an official rule.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, in tournaments with a sudden-death finish, the rule states that a player may stop keeping score when he has less than five minutes left on his clock, while the opponent must continue keeping score until his own clock reaches five minutes. However, it often happens that both players stop keeping score. I have seen the player with less than five minutes then insist that his opponent fill in the missing moves on the his own time. Upon which the opponent then marks down illegible squiggles to “complete” the missing moves. What should the arbiter do to enforce compliance in such cases? Should he insist that each move be entered legibly and correctly, or impose a time penalty? **Frank Snyckers (South Africa)**

Answer The rule is very straightforward, but the application of it sometimes causes problems, especially in large open tournaments, where it is more difficult for an arbiter to notice when a player has stopped recording the moves. It is easy to tell a player to update his scoresheet, but it is a matter of interpretation as to what constitutes “as clearly and legibly as possible,” as in Article 8.1. Nevertheless, the arbiter can compensate the player with less than five minutes remaining by giving him, say, one extra minute.

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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