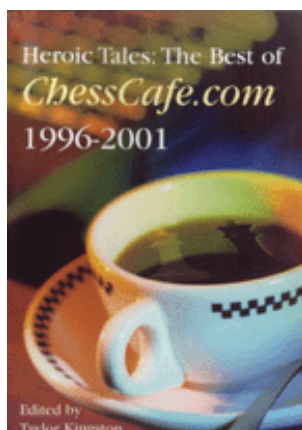




## COLUMNISTS

## An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



## Laws on the Internet

**Mr. Lembit Vahesaar** of **Estonia** informs me that the Estonian Chess Federation was one of those who published an incorrect version of the Laws of Chess. I also received messages from **Mr. Christian Sanchez** from **Argentina** and **Mr. Werner Stubenvoll** from **Austria**. It remains a mystery as to how an incorrect version was published on the FIDE website (see last month's [column](#)). However, I have forwarded FIDE the original version of the Laws (along with a PDF file), so I am sure that the Laws now published on the Internet are correct.

**Question** At a recent tournament, I reached a completely drawn pawn endgame where my opponent's king could not invade my camp, and all I had to do was shuffle my king back and forth between three squares. Unfortunately, I only had seventy seconds left on the clock and he had ten minutes. Because of time trouble, I could not record the moves to call for a triple-repetition or a 50-move-rule draw, so my opponent just kept on playing until I lost on time. What should I have done in this scenario? **Michael K. Lin (USA)**

**Answer** Based on the fact that you had no time to record the moves, I assume it was a normal game, and that it was the last time period of the game. Therefore, it is a typical example for applying Article 10.2:

*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.*

*a. If the arbiter agrees the opponent is making no effort to win the game by normal means, or that it is not possible to win by normal means, then he shall declare the game drawn. Otherwise he shall postpone his decision or reject the claim.*

*b. If the arbiter postpones his decision, the opponent may be awarded two extra minutes and the game shall continue in the presence of an arbiter, if possible. The arbiter shall declare the final result later in the game or after a flag has fallen. He shall declare the game drawn if he agrees that the final position cannot be won by normal means, or that the opponent was not making sufficient attempts to win by normal means.*

*c. If the arbiter has rejected the claim, the opponent shall be awarded two extra minutes time.*

*d. The decision of the arbiter shall be final relating to 10.2 a, b, c.*

**Question** Mr. Gijssen, The rules state: "A player may claim a draw when he has less than two minutes left on his clock and before his flag falls." However, a player claimed a draw and the arbiter said that if the draw was not 100% clear, he cannot accept it. I think if the opponent is not trying to win by normal means the arbiter must accept the offer. What is your view?

In another situation, Player A claimed a draw during the last two minutes of play. The arbiter said to play on, and Player A checkmated his opponent. The opponent then claimed that Player A should only be given a half point, since he claimed a draw earlier. The arbiter refused and awarded the point to Player A. What is your opinion? **Mano (Sri Lanka)**

**Answer** Please refer to my answer to Mr. Lin above. As you can see in Article 10.2, if the arbiter is uncertain that the position is really a draw, he can (and should) postpone his decision.

A claim of a draw is also considered to be a draw offer. Thus the moment Player A claimed a draw, Player B could have agreed. By not doing so, he showed that he was trying to win the game, which also comes with the risk of losing. Therefore, the decision of the arbiter was correct.

**Question** Hi Mr. Gijssen, I have a question related to the role of the captain in a team competition. In the FIDE rules it is clearly indicated that:

*A captain is entitled to advise the players of his team to make or accept an offer of a draw or to resign a game, unless the regulations of the event stipulate otherwise. He must confine himself to give only brief information, based solely on the circumstances pertaining to the match. He may say to a player, "offer a draw," "accept the draw," or "resign the game." For example, if asked by a player whether he should accept an offer of a draw, the captain should answer "yes," "no," or delegate the decision to the player himself. The captain shall abstain from any intervention during play. He shall give no information to a player concerning the position on the chess board, nor consult any other person as to the state of the game.*

Given that a claim of a draw under 9.2, 9.3 or 10.2 is considered to be an offer of a draw, can a captain then advise a player to "claim a draw based on Article 9.2 (or 9.3, 10.2)"? Or is this providing information about the position? Also, do you agree that the statement "he shall give no information to a player concerning the position on the chess board" should be extended to the clock and the scoresheet? Best Regards, **Sergio Pagano (Italy)**

**Answer** You are correct that a remark from the captain to "claim a draw based on Article 9.2, 9.3 and 10.2" would be considered as providing information about the position. To be very precise, a captain may say: "offer a draw," but he may never say: "claim a draw based on Article 9.2, 9.3 or 10.2."

Regarding your remark to add the clock and the scoresheet – it is already covered in the Tournament Regulations:

*The captain shall abstain from any intervention during play.*

**Question** Dear Geurt, In a recent tournament (Group C, Board 4), both players repeated the moves 1.Nf3 Nf6 2.Ng1 Ng8 3.Nf3 all the way to the forty-first move. During which time they left the playing venue (but not the playing area) several times – together! It was obvious that they were watching for the results on Boards 1 and 3, before deciding what to do. Depending on their result, they would both have a chance to qualify for the higher tournament group next year.

The other two arbiters were of the opinion that, "while it is annoying, the only thing that you can do is give them a warning." Is that true? In my opinion, a warning is not sufficient, but declaring the game lost for both players seems to be too harsh a penalty. So I would want to reduce the times of both players. Is it possible to set the clocks of both players back to one hour for the rest of the game (that was the second and final time period in the tournament)?

My argument is that both players would play with only one hour left, as they no longer have time to wait for the other results. What would you have done? Thank you, **Gernot Weiser (Germany)**

**Answer** Why is it too harsh to declare the game lost for both players? In my opinion it is a clear example of a violation of Article 12.1 of the Laws of Chess:

*The players shall take no action that will bring the game of chess into disrepute.*

I would warn the players that if they continued the series of moves as you described, I would declare the game lost for both of them.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, I want to know about claiming a draw in a blitz game via triple-repetition or the 50-move-rule. If these rules are valid in blitz, how can one prove them? Thanks in advance, **Bakhshayesh Hadi (Iran)**

**Answer** This is one problem that is not so easy to solve. In principle we apply the same rules, with a few exceptions, in Rapid and Blitz games as in normal games. One of the exceptions is:

*Players do not need to record the moves.*

And without any written evidence, it is very difficult to claim a draw based on Article 9.2 and 9.3. It is possible to request that the arbiter be present as a witness, and if he sees that there was a threefold repetition or that the 50-move-rule claim was correct, the draw stands. But to be honest, this is not a very practical request, especially in a big tournament.

In the Rapid competition of the Amber tournaments (a private tournament!), monitors show when a threefold

repetition has taken place or when the 50-move-rule applies. The arbiter then informs the players, and either player has the right to claim a draw.

**Question** Dear Mr Gijssen, Yasser Seirawan said in [Inside Chess](#) at [ChessCafe.com](#): “According to the FIDE rules, stopping the clock without permission is a legal way of resignation!” Is that true?

In a previous question I asked what (not “if”) the penalty is for capturing an opponent’s piece with one hand, while replacing it with your own piece with the other. Is it just a warning or can the opponent claim an illegal move? Best regards, **Rosario Araújo (Uruguay)**

**Answer** Stopping the clocks is not a legal way to resign the game. There are situations where a player may stop the clocks with no intention of resigning the game. See Article 6.13.d:

*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 penalised according to Article 13.4.*

One could stop the clocks prior to resigning, but it should immediately be followed by a verbal confirmation of resignation – even better is a written confirmation. In a normal game the players should note the result of the game on the scoresheets and sign the scoresheets. I refer to Article 8.7:

*At the conclusion of the game both players shall sign both scoresheets, indicating the result of the game. Even if incorrect, this result shall stand, unless the arbiter decides otherwise.*

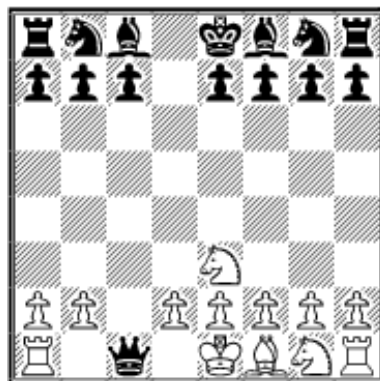
In answer to your second question, I would inform the player that he has to capture and replace with the same hand. I do not consider using two hands to be an illegal move.

**Question** Dear Sir, I have a question concerning Blitz chess. Does a rule like “Matt vor Klappe” exist? For example: White to move is about to mate, but his flag falls. Black claims a win on time, but White claims mate has priority. In Austria I have discussed this many times, but I cannot find such a rule. With regards, **G.H. Brunner (Austria)**

**Answer** The term “Matt vor Klappe” means that an eventual mate is valid, even after the flag has fallen. However, in Blitz games the flag fall must be claimed. If a player mates his opponent’s king, even after a flag fall, and the flag fall has not been claimed, the mate stands.

So in the scenario you describe: a player starts to execute the mating move, but his flag falls before he finishes it (meaning: the mating piece was placed on the new square and the player’s hand released the piece). If the opponent claims the flag fall before the move is finished, the game is lost for the player whose flag fell. If the flag falls after the king has been mated, the mate stands, not only in Blitz and Rapid games, but also in normal games.

**Question** Dear Geurt, Is White allowed to castle queenside (0-0-0) in the following position?



I heard that this happened many years ago, and the arbiter ruled that White could not castle because of Article 3.8(a). What is your opinion? Best regards, **Günther van den Bergh (South Africa)**

**Answer** Article 3.8 (2) a and b states:

*Castling is prevented temporarily*

*a. if the square on which the king stands, or the square which it must cross, or the square which it is to occupy, is attacked by one or more of the opponent’s pieces.*

*b. if there is any piece between the king and the rook with which castling is to be effected.*

As is evident, castling is not possible in this position, because the king is in check, the d1-square is attacked by the black queen, and the black queen is between the king and the rook on a1.

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*Have a question for Geurt Gijssen? Perhaps he will respond to it in a future column. Send it to [geurtgijssen@chesscafe.com](mailto:geurtgijssen@chesscafe.com). Please include your name and country of residence.*

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