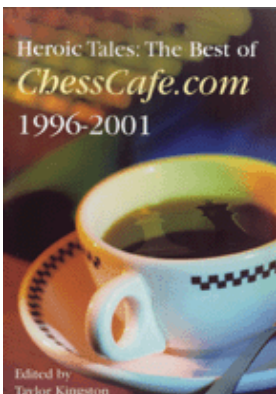




COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



Strange Cases and 10.2

Question Is there some way to include official interpretations in the FIDE handbook? As you know, different arbiters will make different decisions when ruling on the same situation. For instance, some arbiters have disagreed with several of my decisions, because there was nothing clearly written in the Laws of Chess! I think this is a big problem. Thank you. Best regards, **Viron Tsoibatzoglou (Greece)**

Answer Grandmaster Macieja from Poland also proposed the same idea and I agree that we should publish interpretations and explanations of the Laws of Chess. I will propose it during the next meeting of the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee. The only question that remains is how to distribute this material.

Question Last [month](#) you wrote, "I am inclined to forbid all mobiles in the playing hall. There are too many ways for players to use their mobiles surreptitiously."

I sympathize with this view, but who wants to leave their mobile in a hotel room? Also, some of us need to be available by mobile for at least a portion of the day. It's one thing to have it turned off for the duration of a game, it's quite another to be without it for the best part of a day. **Tim Spanton (London)**

Answer You are completely correct; and where to store the mobile is a difficult question. I often leave it in the safe in the hotel room. If a safe is not available, it is possible that the arbiter or tournament director could be responsible for holding them, but this would be problematic at a big Swiss tournament.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I witnessed a very curious situation in a 5-minute game:

Player A had a winning position, while Player B only had his king. Player A then promoted one of his pawns into a queen. However, he chose a queen of the wrong color! (Either by accident or the proper queen was not available, but I don't think that matters.) After a couple of more moves Player A then moved his wrong-colored queen and replaced it with one of the correct color, after which Player B claimed a win because that was not a proper move. Some questions arise:

- If an improper move is not claimed, is there any way to correct it? Asked in a different way: did Player A gift a new queen to Player B?
- If Player B had made the claim at the moment of promotion, he would have only received half a point, correct?
- Is Player B correct to claim a win?
- Does the arbiter have any leeway when making a decision? It does not seem that Player B should get a full point in this way.

Regards, **Joachim Heuser (Germany)**

Answer Let us analyze the situation:

1) By promoting to a queen of the wrong color and pressing the clock the player completed an illegal move. Relevant to Articles 3.8c, 4.6c and C3:

*When a pawn reaches the rank furthest from its starting position it must be exchanged as part of the same move for a new queen, rook, bishop or knight of the **same** colour.*

The move is considered to have been made when all the relevant requirements of Article 3 have been fulfilled in the case of the promotion of a pawn, when the pawn has been removed from the chessboard and the player's hand has released the new piece after placing it on the promotion square. If the player has released from his hand the pawn that has reached the promotion square, the move is not yet made, but the player no longer has the right to play the pawn to another square.

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

It is clear that the player completed an illegal move. Normally the opponent can claim a win, but because of a lack of material he can only claim a draw. In my opinion, after the player has pressed his clock, there is no possibility of correcting the situation.

2) The opponent did not make a claim and the game continued. After some moves the player discovered his mistake and tried to correct it by exchanging a queen of the correct color. As I mentioned, this is not possible, but is it an illegal move? I believe it is not. Therefore, the opponent cannot claim a win, but he can claim that the player did something incorrect. The arbiter should penalize the player by giving him a warning or awarding some extra time to the opponent.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, My question is about the “handling of the chess clock.” In a rated tournament (90 minutes + 30 second increment per move from move 1), Player A was pressing the clock (a [DGT 2000](#)) so gently that the increment was not being added after some of his moves. Neither the arbiter nor the players noticed it until the opponent claimed a win on time, with the clock showing the (-) sign. The arbiter arrived, and upon seeing the clock sign, he approved the game result. My questions are:

- After checking the Fide rules (especially Article 6), there is no clear and direct indication as to who is *directly responsible* for handling the clock.
- Once the game is declared as a loss on time for Player A, can the arbiter investigate the claim about the clock and resume the game? If yes, what should the arbiter do if Player B refuses to resume the game?

Thank you very much. **Charles Kayle (Lebanon)**

Answer As far as I can see, nothing was wrong with the clock. The only mistake was that Player A did not press the lever completely. This means that his clock was still running after he pressed the lever. The only person directly responsible was Player A himself. This situation is comparable with someone failing to press the clock after making a move. There is no reason for the arbiter to take action after the flag fall.

However, an arbiter checks the clocks during the rounds many times. It is possible that the arbiter noticed that the lever on Player A’s side was down and that the clock was still running. If such was the case, then the arbiter should check what was going on.

Question Dear Geurt, The following situation occurred in a 5-minute blitz tournament:

Player A was checkmated, but he made an illegal move by capturing his opponent’s queen. Player B then captured the king and Player A claimed an illegal move. What should be the result of the game? If checkmate ends the game, then no more moves were possible. After several minutes of discussion, Player B was declared winner. Kind regards, **Fabien Krzewinski (Belgium)**

Answer It seems quite complicated, but let’s take a closer look:

Player A’s king was mated, but apparently he did not notice it, and he made an illegal move by capturing Player B’s queen.

Player B did not claim the queen capture as an illegal move, but instead captured Player A’s king.

Player A then claimed that Player B made an illegal move by capturing his king. Given that this claim is correct, Player A should be declared the winner, provided he has sufficient mating material, otherwise it is a draw. It is essential in Blitz chess that claims must be made.

Question Dear Geurt, The application of Article 10.2 can place the arbiter in an uncomfortable situation, since there is no restriction as to when a player can make a claim. For instance, something similar to the following happened just recently: Player A only needed a draw to win a tournament, but Player B was in a must-win situation. Player A had a much better position during the last phase of the game, but he did not want to risk a blunder, so he waited until he had two seconds left on his clock, and then claimed a draw under Article 10.2

Therefore, I propose the following: On request of the arbiter, the claimant must be able to play ten moves without appreciably weakening his position. Best regards, **Michel Piguet (Switzerland)**

Answer I agree with you that in many situations the arbiter is in a difficult position in regards to Article 10.2. However, in your example his task is not so difficult. Let’s examine the text of Article 10.2a:

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.

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.

Your example is a clear case for rejecting the claim, because Player A never gave Player B the opportunity to “make no effort to win the game.” In my opinion, we do not need to add your proposal to the Laws of Chess.

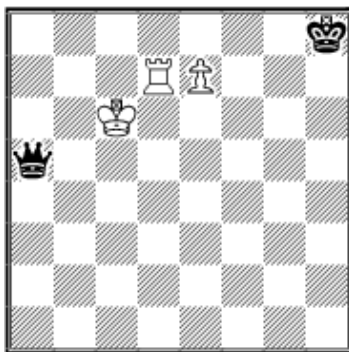
Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, In regards to last [month's](#) question from Mr. Charles Kennaugh England (UK), where a player makes his first move as white and then his phone rings. If Player A loses the game at that point (because of the ring), it means that the game is finished and that the time on the clock is irrelevant, because the game finishes when the arbiter realizes the infraction. If the game finishes at that moment, the final score should be 0-1, regardless of the physical presence of Player B. Your answer suggests that the arbiter should wait until Player B's time is over to decide Black's score, but this would mean that the game did not finish with the infraction. So, what determines the end of the game? The only additional scenario would be if Player A makes his first move, then the phone rings and then the arbiter realizes the infraction once Player B's time is over. In this case, Player A could claim a win and, at the same time, the arbiter could declare that Player A should lose because of the phone. What is the correct decision? Thank you for your answer. **Miguel Manuel Murillo Martin (Spain)**

Answer I advise you to read my answer to Mr. Kennaugh's question very carefully. In my opinion you make a key mistake. When the mobile of the white player rings, the result is not automatically 0-1. The result is that White loses the game, but not that Black wins. I refer to the last sentence of Article 12.2b:

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.

Therefore, the presence of the black player is very relevant.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I am confused about last [month's](#) follow up to Matt vor Klappe:



White to move. White plays 1 e8, picks up a queen, touches it to the square, but before he releases the queen, White's flag falls. Is it mate or did White lose on time? The move 1 e8Q cannot be changed.

I refer to Article 4.4d:

If a player promotes a pawn, the choice of the piece is finalized, when the piece has touched the square of promotion.

You only refer to the promotion being finalized. However, am I correct in interpreting that the first player loses on time? Respectfully yours, **Joshua Marquez (Papua New Guinea)**

Answer You are correct that my answer was incomplete. I did not express my opinion that the mate stands, because the move was finalized (provided it is a legal move). It is analogous to making a move that delivers mate (which finishes the game), although the player then oversteps the time once he has executed the move.

Question I am the director of a Chess Festival that will take place in July 2008. I would like to know if FIDE regulations allow national federations to reject sending a tournament report for FIDE rating purposes on the grounds that it takes place on the same dates as another tournament that is played within 30km. There is a regulation in Catalonia (Spain) in this respect; tournaments that do not fulfill this condition will not be reported for rating purposes.

I have seen in the FIDE Handbook (B.03) that it is possible to register a tournament before it has been played, and I want to know how I can register our tournament. Thanks for your time, **Ivan Aguilar (Spain)**

Answer In the same chapter you refer to in your question I found the following points:

FIDE provides an umbrella for vital services such as categorisation of tournaments and title norms. For these services FIDE should be properly funded. On registration FIDE shall supervise the proper scheduling of important events to avoid conflicts in the chess calendar.

Registration shall consist of:

(a) Certification by the national federation that it approves the event.

(c) The national federations in whose territories international chess competitions are held, are to register these tournaments at the FIDE Secretariat; a list of the registered tournaments will be published

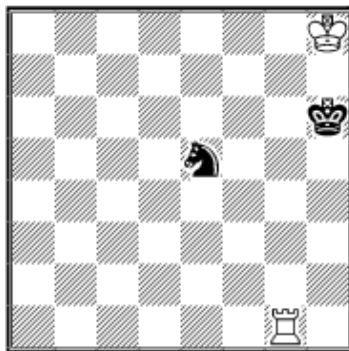
regularly; the federations will be invoiced once a year, effective with events beginning on or after January 1st, 1981.

It is very clear that the approval of the national federation is required for registration of a tournament and that the rating report must be sent to FIDE by the national federation. This means that it is impossible to organize a FIDE rated event without the approval of the national federation.

Question Dear Sir, I am having difficulty understanding the correct interpretation of the 10.2 draw by adjudication rule. I have asked several arbiters and international players to explain it clearly, but I have received various definitions for the term “win by normal means.”

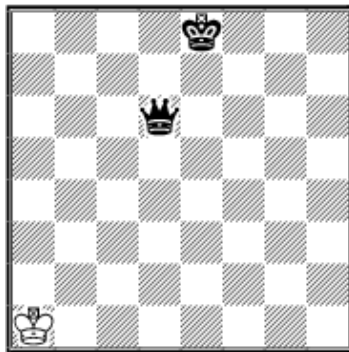
In some of your articles you have used the term “with the most unskilled play” which is very self explanatory; however, “normal means” is not so clear. Can you please define this term in the simplest way possible and cite examples so that I may obtain its true definition. Thank you, **Deborah Richards (Jamaica)**

Answer I am afraid that my answer may not satisfy you. Nevertheless, I will try. First, in general the arbiter should not judge the position. The term “10.2 draw by adjudication” is erroneous in my opinion, with one exception. The exception is if the position is such that the opponent cannot win, even with the most unskilled play; for instance, if the opponent only has a king. Other examples are: K+Q vs. K+B, K+Q vs. K+N, K+R vs. K+B, **but not K+R vs. K+N**. Here is an example of this last case.



If White plays 1 Rg8, then Nf7 is mate. But in the other cases the player with less material cannot win “by normal means.” So the only possibility is to win the game on time when the player who has the superior position oversteps the time limit.

Here is another example in which a player can claim a draw, although his opponent has a winning position:



Suppose the game continues 1...Qa3 2 Kb1 Qb3 3 Kc1 Qc3 4 Kd1 Qd3 5 Ke1 Qe3 and so on. Black has plenty of time, but White has only a few seconds. Assuming that the arbiter is present and sees what is going on, if White claims a draw after, say, twenty moves, the arbiter should agree. I hope that these examples have helped you understand Article 10.2.

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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