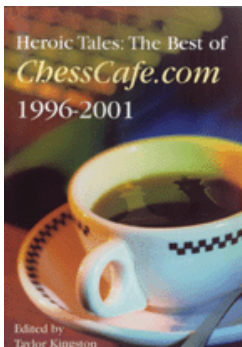




COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



CHESS THEATRE

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FIDE Forfeitures

**Question** With the new Laws of Chess, a player *may* stop both clocks to claim according to Article 9.2, 9.3, and 10.2. If the player does not stop both clocks, is it the duty of the arbiter to stop them before considering the claim? **Pierre Dénoyée (Canada)**

**Answer** Let me first explain the background of this change. It happened quite often that arbiters refused to check the correctness of a claim if the claimant did not stop the clocks. To avoid these situations it was changed so that a player *may* stop the clock. In my opinion, it is very logical that the arbiter should stop the clocks the moment he begins his investigation and/or discussion with the players.

**Question** Hello Geurt, Concerning the changes in the Laws of Chess, I have two questions.

**Question 1** I do not understand the additions to the rules under A4d.1 and A4d.3. They seem to contradict each other. According to A4d.3 the arbiter *must* declare the game drawn, but according to A4d.1 he seems to have freedom of action (“he may do so”). What is the reasoning behind this rule? I can understand play shouldn’t go on endlessly, but that seems highly hypothetical. What’s the use of playing on when your opponent can claim a draw anytime? Both players hoping that the other will miss a mate in one? Play will only go on for the time players won’t *notice* the flag fall, and I can’t imagine that takes more than 5 minutes in rapid games or 1 minute in blitz games. If just your flag has fallen, you can win by mating your opponent before he notices, but when your opponent’s flag has fallen as well, he can’t lose anymore – that seems illogical to me.

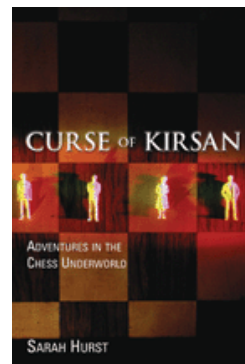
**Question 2** Do I understand it correctly that in a blitz final of a knock-out tournament (*adequate supervision*) it is now possible to claim a draw based on Article 10.2 (opponent only tries to win on time)? In my opinion this would be a good way to avoid discussions like at the last Women World Championship (the “Socko case”). Such games are quite different, both in the way of supervision and importance, compared to games in blitz tournaments. On the other hand, Article 10 pertains to quickplay finishes, which seems a bit confusing. I wouldn’t call such a blitz game a “quickplay finish,” although the definition in 10.1 may not preclude this. **Frits Fritschy (The Netherlands)**

**Answer 1** Let me mention that Article A4 describes the case when there is inadequate supervision. If one arbiter supervises multiple games at the same time, there are going to be situations when he has to be concentrated on a single game. At such times it is often impossible to see what is going on in other games. In these situations it is possible that the arbiter will not consider the announcement of a double flag fall as a top priority.

In case of a claim, the arbiter must act and take a decision. And the decision is of course a draw, provided that the game was not finished in another way (mate).

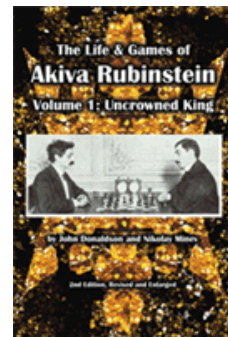
**Answer 2** I discovered that in Blitz games Article 10.2 completely disappeared. In my opinion this is an omission. I remember that Appendix A and B was discussed very briefly (too briefly, I believe). In the old rules (valid until July 1, 2009) it was clearly written that Article 10.2 does

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not apply. I sent a letter to the members of the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee, mentioning that something was wrong. Unfortunately I have not seen the minutes of our meeting, but one of the members remembered very well that in case of adequate supervision, Article 10.2 will apply, but not in case of inadequate supervision. It was his own proposal. I will request that the Presidential Board correct the situation.

**Question** Dear Geurt, thanks very much for writing about the changes in the chess rules in your [January](#) column. Two things confuse me:

**Question 1** The new article 12.b “Without the permission of the arbiter a player is forbidden to have a mobile phone or other electronic means of communication in the playing venue, unless they are completely switched off. If any such device produces a sound, the player shall lose the game. The opponent shall win. However, if the opponent cannot win the game by any series of legal moves, his score shall be a draw.” And your comment: “Any sound has as consequence that the player involved loses the game.” What is the sound “produced by the device”? If I had a mobile phone completely switched off, and it fell to the floor and produced a sound of plastic hitting wood, would you declare the game lost for me?

**Question 2** Rapid: A3 Where there is adequate supervision of play, (for example one arbiter for at most three games) the Competition Rules shall apply. Blitz: B2 Where there is adequate supervision of play, (one arbiter for one game) the Competition Rules and Article A2 (no obligation to write the moves GG) shall apply. Does that mean that in rapid play with adequate supervision recording moves is mandatory? Writing the moves down is more often helpful when there are too few, not too many arbiters.

**Question 3** I laughed loudly upon reading the case of a missing king in a rapid game. I can imagine such a situation; for example, if a player accidentally starts the game with two queens. However, I see a solution. Since the object of a chess game is to checkmate the opponent’s king, the players playing without one or both kings must be playing something else, not chess. Therefore, you may state that since the game is not chess, there is no such thing as “a game of chess with at least three moves completed,” and thus start the game from the beginning. Best regards,  
**Wojciech Pietrzak (Poland)**

**Answer 1** I assume you know the answer. Of course not.

**Answer 2** Do not worry, in Rapid and in Blitz games there is no obligation to record the moves by the players.

**Answer 3** An excellent idea. I think you are right. **Mr. Siegfried Hornecker** from **Germany** also wrote about this subject. He mentioned that the player with king can never win the game, even when the kingless player oversteps the time – because the player with the king can never checkmate an absent king. Therefore, the game is draw after the kingless player has overstepped the time. But, as a matter of fact, I prefer your solution.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, I find one thing about time controls unfair: if the position is such that the player who oversteps the time cannot avoid checkmating the opponent, he still should win. Why does FIDE only allow a draw here? Such a situation is easy to create; for example, a check that only can be countered by checkmating. **Siegfried Hornecker (Germany)**

**Answer** I agree that it is very easy to create such a position, but the question remains whether it is fair to grant the win to the player who overstepped the time. In my opinion, time is an essential part of the game, although I admit mating the opponent’s king is more essential. Nevertheless, to declare the game a draw seems to be an acceptable compromise.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, Regarding your answer to Piero Galli's question in the [November 2008](#) column, I must agree with Piero that Player A can make no legal move at Step 3. If he did make any move, you say that Player B cannot claim a win at Step 4 because "it is nonsense," but you do not give enough supporting reasons. I can imagine a possible one would be that the position arisen after Step 3 is legal, but one cannot use it as a rule because many illegal moves can lead to legal positions. In other words, the fact that the position arisen after Step 3 is legal does not imply that the last move was legal. Although it is not explicitly mentioned in the rules, it seems that you cannot make any legal move in a position where it is your turn and the opponent's king is in check. Thank you in advance, **Daniel Sottile (Argentina)**

**Answer** Let me try to explain generally what is going on in Rapid and in Blitz games. First of all an arbiter may not intervene when he notices an illegal move. There are two exceptions: when both kings are in check and when the pawn that reached the last rank is not changed into a knight, bishop, rook or queen. These are illegal positions.

In all other cases the rule is – if the opponent does not claim that the player made an illegal move, the opponent accepted the illegal move and made it by definition legal. It is very clear that in almost all cases, the illegality of the move was not noticed

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, imagine a player scoring 7-9 in a tournament, which would have been a GM norm if the tournament had been one round longer, with a zero score in the 10th round against, for instance, GM Vesilin Topalov. I think it is a good idea to have the right to add a virtual game with a zero score against a GM in order to get a GM norm. What do you think, does the player scoring 7-9 deserve the GM norm? Regards, **Paul-Peter Theulings (The Netherlands)**

**Answer** Sorry, I have to disagree with you. A score of 7 out of 9 is really impressive, but not always sufficient for a GM norm. One of the conditions is that the player needs sufficient opponents with a title. Secondly he has to achieve a TPR of at least 2601. Nevertheless, there is a case similar to what you suggest.

Suppose there is a 10 round tournament. After 9 rounds a player's score is 7 points. In the last round the opponent does not show up. The player receives 1 point, but the score of this game will not be taken into consideration for a norm. In this situation, FIDE accepts the norm if a score of 7 out of 10 is a norm and the opponent, who did not show up, is included in the list of opponents. One final remark: this rule is only valid if the scheduled opponent of the last round does not show up.

**Question** Dear Geurt, as arbiter of a section at an under-9 junior tournament, I was called over to settle a dispute. The black king (Player A) was on the back rank. White played Qc8, which would have been mate. Player A claimed the white queen had been on a7 and so Qa7-c8 was an illegal move. Player B claimed the queen was on c7. Player A insisted the game continue with Qb8 check, which gave his king a flight square. I suspected Player A of cheating, but had no proof. Neither player was recording the moves. I allowed the game to continue, and in the end Player A was checkmated. Obviously the moral of the story is that players should record their moves to avoid this. However, in this case, what action, if any, would you have taken? Regards, **Sam Wheeler (England)**

**Answer** Let me begin with your last remark. If the game was a Rapid or a Blitz game or a normal game and both players had less than 5 minutes left, there is no obligation to record the moves.

My second remark is that Player A cannot force the opponent to play Qa7-b8. He can insist that Player B move the queen, but he may not claim a specific move. Furthermore, I understand that you accepted Player A's

claim that the queen was on a7, although you had the impression that Player A was cheating.

The only thing you could do in this situation is to try to reconstruct the last moves with the help of the two players, although it is not likely that you will find out what really happened.

The only thing you can do is to annul the game and start a new game with limited time.

**Question 1** According to the World Championship rules, there is a drawing of lots to decide who is white in the first game. But are these rules strictly applied? Or do you know any case where it was decided by the drawing of lots who has the right to choose which color the player prefers in the first game?

**Question 2** In the Anand-Kramnik match, the order of colors was reversed at the middle of the match. Was this the first time that was done or are there other cases? Thanks very much. **Ignacio Palacios-Huerta (Spain)**

**Answer 1** As far as I know, the drawing of lots was never done in the way you mentioned. In recent matches for the World Championship title there was a possibility for such a situation. If after normal games and after Rapid games the standings were still level, a so-called Armageddon game had to be played. In this case the winner of the drawing of lots would choose the color he prefers, with the additional remark, that in case of a draw, the player of the black pieces is the winner of the match.

**Answer 2** It was not the first time. The same also happened in the match Kramnik – Topalov, Elista 2006. The reason is as follows: the schedule of the matches was two playing days followed by a rest day. If the colors were not reversed in the second half of the match, the same player would always have white after a rest day, and the opponent would always have black. If I remember correctly, the idea of reversing colors in the second half was discussed for the first time in the aborted match Kasparov – Kasimdzhanov (Dubai or Turkey 2005).

**Question** Geurt, in team play in a developmental league, a captain fielded his players in the (wrong) sequence as follows: Board 1, Board 4, Board 3, and Board 6. The captain of the opposing team reported this to the arbiter, who immediately declared Board 3 lost because of the wrong board assignment. Was he correct? **Rudy Ibanez (Philippines)**

**Answer** It is difficult to answer. It depends of the tournament regulations. I give you two examples: In the Dutch league it is permitted to change the sequence of the team composition for each round. The order you mention is allowed. In the Olympiad it is forbidden to change it. In case board 2 does not play and a team has 4 players and 2 reserve players the sequence can be only 1,3,4,5 or 1,3,4,6 or 1,3,5,6 or 3,4,5,6. If the regulations of the tournament involved stipulate that it is forbidden to play in the sequence 1,4,3,6 the question is of course, why the arbiter did not inform the captain that the sequence in which the team was fielded was not permitted. In my opinion, this is the most logical action of the arbiter. As a matter of fact, it is correct that the game of the player on board 3 was declared lost.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, I have a question about the application of two regulations in a tournament. In our tournament we have inserted these regulations:

5 rounds; 100'+30"; omologated FSI-FIDE  
Tournament A Elo rating >2000  
Tournament B Elo rating 1500-2000  
Tournament C Elo rating <1600

## PAIRINGS

Pairings will be made following the Swiss Lim System. The standings after the last round, in case of players with the same number of scored points, will be determined following one of these methods: 1. Buchholz FIDE, ARO; 2. Buchholz Cut1, ARO; 3. Most win, APRO. The method will be chosen by drawing of lots. Pairings in the first three rounds will be determined by using the “accelerated system.”

## DRAW NORMS

Players will not be allowed to agree to a draw within the 25 moves.

## POINTS

Standings will be determined by attributing the following points for each result: victory: 3 points Draw: 1 point Loss: 0 point The Italian federation does not approve Pairing and Draw Norms.

We have changed:

PAIRINGS Pairings will be made following the Swiss Lim System.

The standings will be determined:

1. Buchholz FIDE, ARO; The method will be chosen by draw. Pairings in the first three rounds will be determined by using the “accelerated system.”

DRAW NORMS cancelled.

Is our system correct? There are several tournaments in Europe that implement these standards, excluding elite tournaments and the Olympiads. Thank you! Kind regards, **Alberto Secondi (Italy)**

**Answer** I understand more or less why the Italian federation is against accelerated pairings. If the tournament only has 5 rounds, I think that accelerated pairings will produce incorrect final standings. Although the 2008 Dresden Olympiad must still be evaluated, probably one of the minor points was accelerated pairings in rounds 1 and 2, combined with only 11 rounds.

I understand why an organizer likes to decide by drawing of lots for the tiebreak criteria. In this case the players have to fight until the last move, because they cannot make calculations whether a draw is sufficient to win the tournament.

Finally you mention the fact that it was forbidden to agree to a draw before move 25. This is a difficult point. In my opinion it is strange that in some tournaments (for example, Olympiad and Grand Prix Tournaments) this rule applies. From July 1, 2009 it is in the Laws of Chess. I myself was an arbiter in the second Grand Prix Tournament and I had the feeling that, if the players wanted to agree to a draw, they knew exactly how to force it.

**Question** Dear Geurt, FIDE recently decided to automatically forfeit a player if he arrives at the board after the clocks are started. Please comment on this rule, as some players are suggesting that it is in force now, while others are saying it will apply after July 1, 2009. Regards, **John Mazziere (Australia)**

**Answer** Nothing has been decided so far. For the moment Article 6.7 still applies:

*Any player who arrives at the chessboard more than one hour after the scheduled start of the session shall lose the game unless the rules of the competition specify or the arbiter decides otherwise.*

However, it is very important to understand that each tournament committee (not the arbiter) may specify something different, for example, 30 minutes, 5 minutes and even 0 minutes. There is a meeting of the

Presidential Board in March that will decide which rule will apply from July 1, 2009.

**Question** We were in quickplay finish (no blitz), White had one minute, Black had 6 seconds left. White played 1.g6. Black stopped the clocks, called the arbiter and asked for a draw, which was granted. My Question could the arbiter do that *before* seeing White shuffling pointlessly after g6? Another arbiter told me that it was an extremely well-known drawn position between two players at Elo of 2200 and that White could not possibly win by normal means. However, this requires an evaluation of the position by the arbiter and a presumption that Black will not blunder. Is that really what the Laws of Chess allow? I know there is no appeal against a 10.2 decision, so rest assured that it's not the point! Very best regards, **Ivan Briery (UK)**

**Answer** I can imagine that the arbiter immediately agrees when strong players reach well-known drawn positions. I understand that it was a very well-known pawn ending and players of the strength you mentioned know how to play it. I think the decision of the arbiter is reasonable.

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Have a question for Geurt Gijssen? Perhaps he will reply in his next **ChessCafe.com** column. Please include your name and country of residence.

*[Yes, I have a question for Geurt!](#)*

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