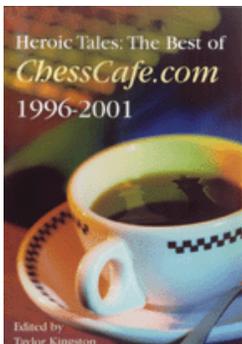




COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



CHESSTHEATRE

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FIDE Presidential Board Meeting

The meeting of the FIDE Presidential Board was held in Istanbul in which a number of Articles of the Laws of Chess were finalized, among them Article 6.7. First, I give you the original text of Articles 6.6 and 6.7 valid until July 1, 2009:

6.6 *If neither player is present initially, the player who has the white pieces shall lose all the time that elapses until he arrives; unless the rules of the competition specify or the arbiter decides otherwise.*

6.7 *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.*

There were two proposals to change Article 6.7:

The Rules Committee's proposal

*Any player who arrives at the chessboard after the start of the session shall lose the game, unless the arbiter decides otherwise. Thus the default time is 0 minutes. The rules of a competition may specify a different default time.*

The President's proposal

*Any player who arrives at the chessboard after the start of the session shall lose the game.*

After long discussions the following text was approved:

6.6a *Any player who arrives at the chessboard after the start of the session shall lose the game. Thus the default time is 0 minutes. The rules of a competition may specify otherwise.*

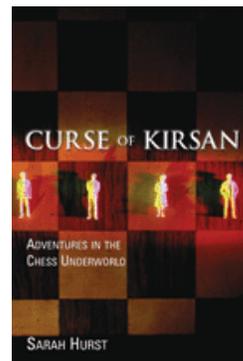
6.6b *In case the rules of a competition specify otherwise, if neither player is present initially, the player who has the white pieces shall lose all the time that elapses until he arrives; unless the rules of the competition specify or the arbiter decides otherwise.*

I hope it is clear that a player arriving late for the game will lose under Article 6.6.a, even when there is a *force majeure*, unless it is otherwise specified. During the discussions it was mentioned that circumstances must be taken into consideration; for instance, the Dresden Olympiad was a frequent example, where some teams stayed next to the playing hall, while others had to drive for more than an hour to the playing hall. Let us wait and see what the consequences of this Article will be.

As to Article 6.6.b, let me give an example:

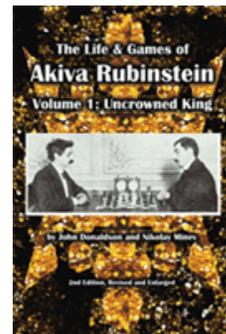
Suppose the regulations of a competition specify that a player will lose the game if he arrives more than twenty minutes after the start of the game. Say after sixteen minutes the players scheduled to play against each other arrive together in the playing hall. The player of the white pieces will lose sixteen minutes, because his clock was started when the

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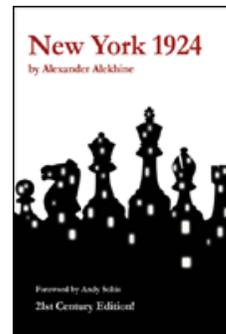


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round began. His opponent still has all his time available. However, the arbiter can decide to split the time between both players and each will lose eight minutes of the total available time.

One omission in the Blitz rules was corrected:

*Where supervision is inadequate Article 10.2 does not apply.*

The Presidential Board accepted the Rules of Chess960 (Fischer Random Chess) as an Appendix to the Laws of Chess.

The Appendix “Adjourned Games” was removed from the Chapter Appendices, but remains as “Guidelines in case a game needs to be adjourned.” The purpose being that a game can be adjourned in very special circumstances; for instance, if the light in the playing hall is suddenly insufficient. However, with the approved time controls a game can only be rated if it is played in one session.

### **Boris Yeshan, R.I.P.**

Boris Yeshan, one of the friendliest persons I ever met in the world of chess, passed away. He lived in St. Petersburg and did a lot for chess. He was the first in Russia to produce electronic clocks and chessboards.



*Boris Yeshan*

I had the pleasure to work with him at two important events: the match Karpov – Kamsky, Elista 1996 and the match St. Petersburg – Paris in 2003. For the second event he introduced a very special innovation. The match was played on the Internet. The two teams played in their own cities, but I, being in St. Petersburg, could see what was going on in Paris. The player in St. Petersburg made his move on an electronic board and the move was shown in the display of the chess clock in Paris. An assistant then made the move on the board in Paris.

I had many discussions with him about the future of chess and he had many brilliant ideas. It is a pity that he did not have the chance to realize all of them. May he rest in peace.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, I’d like to comment on the suggestion that no game of chess was played in the following Q&A in your [February 2009](#) column:

**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 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.

I'd like to object from a philosophical point of view that has very practical implications. The philosophical point: as is known from blindfold games, no pieces are needed at all to play a game of chess. If chess is played with real persons on the market square, there is hardly ever a true king or queen available, neither black nor white. So the "pieces" just denote kings and queens in the same way as drawing a digit on a sheet of paper denotes the digit rather than that the drawing is the digit. That means a game starting with a queen piece on d1 and another on e1 is actually a game of chess. The piece on e1 simply denotes the king, and even though it looks like a queen, strong players would not find it difficult to play. The practical implications: It's hard to imagine that you reach a promising position after which your opponent chooses to inform you that we are not playing chess because your king looks odd.

The Laws of Chess don't mention size, shape and color (except for light vs. dark). The FIDE [standards](#) state in Article 1

*The chess equipment offered by the organizers (hosts) of a FIDE or Continental Championship, Olympiad and other FIDE registered tournaments shall conform with the standards mentioned below, and shall be approved by the Chief Arbiter.*

I didn't find a rule for a situation in which the chief arbiter failed to do so and opponents refused to remedy the situation amicably. Can you help with any advice? This also relates to the widespread practice of using an upside down rook when a second queen is not immediately available. Does the game stop being a game of chess then? I think not. Sincerely,  
**Stephan Busemann, (Germany)**

**Answer** With regards to your final remark, FIDE tried to ban the practice of using an upside down rook. Article 6.13.b has been applicable for a long time:

*A player may stop the clocks only in order to seek the arbiter's assistance, for example when promotion has taken place and the piece required is not available.*

I would also like to mention Article 4.4.d (new version):

*If a player having the move promotes a pawn, the choice of the new piece is finalised when the new piece has touched the square of promotion.*

This last Article was introduced to avoid the situation where a player first states that he would like to promote his pawn to a queen, but then changes his mind, say, upon discovering that it results in stalemate. There were always discussions as to what was valid: his first statement or his final choice.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that for "normal" games the whole matter is a bit academic. I refer to Article 7.1.a:

*If during a game it is found that the initial position of the pieces was incorrect, the game shall be cancelled and a new game played.*

The problem can only occur in Rapid and Blitz games. See Article A4.a:

*Once each player has completed three moves, no claim can be made regarding incorrect piece placement, orientation of the chessboard or clock setting. In the case of reverse king and queen placement castling with this king is not allowed.*

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, the [solution](#) proposed by Mr. Wojciech Pietrzak in case a rapid or blitz game begins without one of the kings is excellent. But what to do in the following situation: in Rapid and Blitz tournaments the chessboards are often located very close to each other. In case of promotion a player will take a queen from another board, provided the game on this board is finished of course. Say he mistakenly takes a king instead of the queen, and to make it more complicated, the “original” king was very close to the square of promotion, so that after a few moves it is unclear which king was the original. Finally, one of the kings is checkmated. What is the correct decision? **Jos van Doorn (The Netherlands)**

**Answer** In soccer the moment the referee sees two balls on the playing field, he interrupts the match and has one of them removed. It is clear that the player with two kings made an illegal move. In my opinion, the arbiter has to interfere as soon as he witnesses this illegal move, and it should be treated the same way as in Article B6:

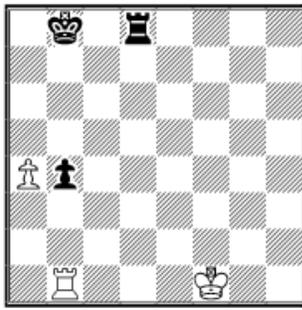
*An illegal move is completed once the opponent's clock has been started. The opponent is then entitled to claim that the player completed an illegal move before the claimant has made his move. Only after such a claim, shall the arbiter make a ruling. However, if both Kings (this Article means of course the white and the black king) are in check or the promotion of a pawn is not completed, the arbiter shall intervene, if possible.*

Note that a claim is not necessary. The arbiter may intervene and try to discern the correct situation. If it is as you describe, the game should be annulled and a new game should be played.

**Question** Dear Geurt, at a recent scholastic tournament, one of my players was in a section where the time control was G/65. At the start of the third round, the TD decided to change the time control to G/60. At the start of the fourth round, my player set the clock to 65 minutes for both sides because he did not understand that the G/60 decision applied to the rest of the tournament. Later, with less than five minutes showing on his clock, my player had a winning (but not quite won) game. His opponent called the arbiter and claimed a time forfeit since my player's clock was under five minutes. His reasoning was that my player had used more than 60 minutes, the declared time control. After some discussion, the arbiter declared a draw based on the idea that my player would have played faster had he known about his time problem. Although my player was disappointed to see his winning game declared a draw, I am satisfied with the decision. However, I wonder what you think of this. What was the right way to proceed? **Gary Connors (USA)**

**Answer** Normally an arbiter checks all the clocks several times during the round. And with the time control of 65 minutes it is very easy to check the clocks. Apparently the arbiter in this tournament never checked the clocks; otherwise he would have discovered the discrepancy. In my opinion, in the given situation (at the end of the game) the arbiter should allow the game to continue with the actual setting that is on the clock. I would also like to mention that if the arbiter changes the regulations of the tournament while it is in progress, he should post it clearly and not limit it to a verbal announcement.

**Question** Dear Geurt, I see some rewording of the FIDE Articles in your [January 2009](#) column. However, I am still not clear on Article 9.2, as to whether “possible moves” means “physically possible moves” or “legally possible moves.”



Previously, I believe you declared that position in the diagram with Black to move is not the same depending on whether Black still has the right to capture *en passant* (even if it is illegal in the diagrammed position). Is the FIDE intention to change this distinction or to maintain it? Regards, **Guy Haworth (UK)**

**Answer** The whole matter of taking *en passant* in connection with threefold repetition of position was not discussed in Dresden. In my opinion, the discussion regarding castling confirms what I stated before: the position in the diagram is different if in one case Black has the right to capture *en passant* and if in another he does not. To reiterate what was stated in my [December 2006](#) column: in general, a player loses his right to a move (i.e., castling or *en passant*) with his own move and not by an opponent's move.

**Question** Consider the following situation in a Swiss tournament. The second round begins at 10 a.m. with Player A at Board #5, but Player B is missing. Player C is at Board #17, but Player D is missing. Player B arrives and mistakenly sits at Board #17 and begins a game with Player C. Player D then arrives at 10:30 a.m. and together with the arbiter determines that Player B is at the wrong board. What would you do? Best Regards, **Edgar Murray Ortiz (Puerto Rico)**

**Answer** With the round only thirty minutes underway, I would put each player at the correct board, but with thirty minutes less on the clock for Player D. If the mistake was not discovered until after the round, and the players had not faced each other in a previous round, which is very unlikely, then I would change the pairings and the results count.

**Question** Hi Geurt, I was directing a tournament and after a game had finished one of the players informed me that during the game his opponent pressed the clock before making his move. This player was not making a claim but rather asking my opinion as to what could have been done at the time. After checking with the [USCF Official Rules of Chess, 5th Edition](#), I told him that I would have considered this practice an illegal move and would have, if he had made a claim, added two minutes to his clock. Is this a correct application of the illegal move rule? Thanks. **Dan DeLuca (USA)**

**Answer** I agree fully with the penalty you had in mind, but I have my doubts whether it is a correct application of an illegal move. It is an illegal action. If you consider this illegal action as an illegal move, the consequence should be that if the opponent repeats this illegal action twice, you have to declare the game lost. Furthermore, to my mind it is very important what kind of tournament it is. If it is a scholastic tournament, I am more flexible than in a tournament with only rated players.

**Question** Dear Geurt, Article 8.7 states

*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.*

What happens if my opponent writes with a pencil, which can easily be erased? Do I have to sign this easily modified scoresheet? Can I say that I will only sign his scoresheet if it is written with a pen? Best regards,  
**Christian Schmidt (Germany)**

**Answer** As a matter of fact, both players sign both scoresheets. This means your opponent signs your scoresheet. Moreover, in tournaments the arbiter takes and keeps both scoresheets. I assume that signing the scoresheets and handing them over to the arbiter happens in the presence of both players. Thus, if your opponent plans to cheat you afterwards, it is clear that he needs the help of the arbiter, and this is very unlikely.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, I have a question regarding scoresheets. Is it allowed to mark move forty by drawing a line or something similar? I've seen it done many times, but the Laws of Chess state

*E 12.3 The scoresheet shall be used only for recording the moves, the times of the clocks, the offers of a draw, matters relating to a claim and other relevant data.*

*E 12.2a During play the players are forbidden to make use of any notes, sources of information, advice, or analyse on another chessboard.*

Regards, **Øyvind Malin (Norway)**

**Answer** Yes, I consider the marking of the time control as relevant data. Since so many tournaments use different time controls, it is wise to write the time control on the scoresheet and to mark the relevant moves for it. In fact, Ivanchuk recently lost almost a game because he incorrectly believed there was an increment in the first period of the time control. Differing time controls can be very confusing for professional players, since in one game the first and second periods may not have an increment, but the third period does. This means that in these games the players do not have to write the moves when they have less than five minutes in the first and second periods, but in the third period they are obliged to record the moves as long as the increment is thirty seconds or more. In my opinion, it is best to play with an increment in all periods!

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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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