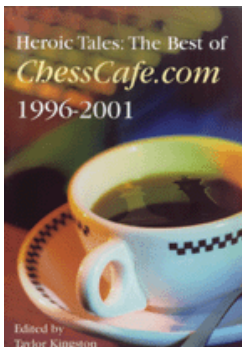




COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



CHESSTHEATRE

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Title and Rating Regulations

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I have a simple question with regard to *à tempo* moves and recording ones moves. In a recent game (playing tempo 1.30 h. + 30 sec. per move) I was pretty short on time and answered *à tempo* on a capture my opponent made, without recording either move. Upon my *à tempo* reply, my opponent also replied *à tempo*, also without recording. That was the “third ply” in our exchange of *à tempo* moves.

As I understand the rules, a player is allowed to answer one move *à tempo* without recording (like an obvious recapture); upon which both players first have to record their moves before any further moves can be made. Am I correct here? However, further increasing my time trouble, my opponent made a third move, when I had to record all three plies in my scarce time, while at the same time getting annoyed by the behavior of my opponent, who according to me had not only broken the rules, but had also plenty of time left.

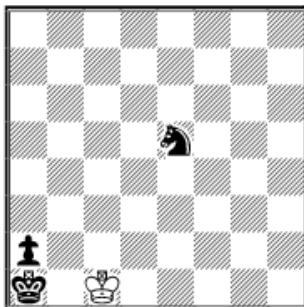
I did not know how to react. Push the clock and tell him he had to finish recording? Call the arbiter? I just didn't know and verbally addressed him saying he was breaking the rules and that he could not keep playing *à tempo*, which further agitated me and disturbed my concentration, as my opponent just did not react in any way. Could you indicate the correct rules and procedures? Thank you and regards, **Pieter-Henk De Jager (The Netherlands)**

Answer First, I refer to Article 8.1:

A player may reply to his opponent's move before recording it, if he so wishes. He must record his previous move before making another.

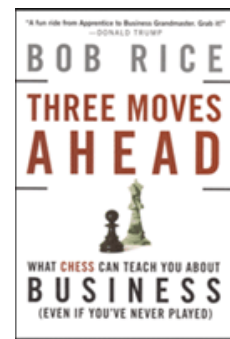
This means that if you did not write your opponent's move and made your own move immediately, you have to write these two moves. If your opponent violates an Article of the Laws of Chess, the best reaction is to stop the clocks (your and your opponent's clock) and to summon the arbiter.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I have a question for you regarding a recent tournament ruling that occurred when my son was playing black in the following position.



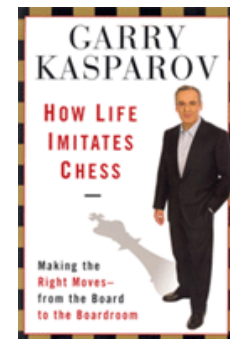
The time control was G40. The players did not use delay on their clock. My son had only a couple of seconds left when his opponent ran out of time. I think it's an automatic loss if a player runs out of time. But the TD

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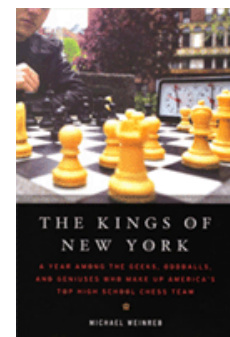
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ruled that it was a draw. My son was certainly upset. When I asked the TD about it, he said my son couldn't checkmate his opponent in the amount of time he had left on his clock. To me this is irrelevant. The TD also said that there might have been fifty moves before a pawn move or there might have been a threefold repetition. However, since both players stopped recording after they only had five minutes left and no TD was constantly observing their game, there is no evidence to support such a statement.

I think the major reason that the TD ruled a draw is that he doesn't think my son can checkmate his opponent with what he had on the board, since his opponent was just moving his king back and forth on c1 and c2. I went over the endgame with my son and he could checkmate, even though he couldn't do it in a couple of seconds. If you could shed some light on this situation, it will be greatly appreciated. **Sam Sun (USA)**

Answer If there was no claim from the opponent with regard to Article 10.2, then I do not understand the TD's (i.e., arbiter's) decision. By the way it is quite an interesting position. It depends on who has the move whether it is winning for Black or a draw. If it is White's move, Black has a winning position; for example, **1 Kc2 Nc6 2 Kc1 Nb4**. But if it is Black's move, it is a draw so long as White simply plays the king to c1 and c2.

Question My question concerns the application of Article 13.7. If a spectator or someone else observes an irregularity and informs the arbiter, is the arbiter obliged to make use of this information and to stop the relevant game to check if an irregularity occurred or may he use only this information to make a decision on his own? Should the arbiter give the spectator a warning not to repeat such an action? I think that arbiters must be very careful to avoid the immediate application of this article and only make use of any information to take a final decision after a flag fall.

Viron Tsorbatzoglou (Greece)

Answer The foremost meaning of this Article is to forbid spectators or other persons from interfering in a game. It is absolutely forbidden for any person, except the arbiters, to approach or to speak to any player.

Secondly, if a spectator observes something illegal or something wrong in a game; for example, a wrong clock setting, an illegal move, wrong initial position, or a malfunctioning clock, he *may* inform the arbiter and no one else. By the way, this also applies to team captains in a match event.

The arbiter is not obliged to take immediate action, but it depends on what happened and the situation of the game itself whether he will take any action. Generally, it is advisable that the arbiter goes to the board to see whether what the spectator told him is true and to consider what to do.

Question Hello Geurt, regarding about Article 12.3:

The scoresheet shall be used only for [...] matters relating to a claim...

Does this really mean that during a game you can mark on the scoresheet the positions where the same position has occurred twice? This could be very handy when your opponent is maneuvering to and fro trying to find a win and repetitions take some studying of the scoresheet when you want to claim a draw. It's an easy thing when it is at moves 50, 52 and 54, but it's quite different when it's at moves 42, 50 and 56 (with different moves), as I once experienced. Luckily, I had enough time, but I thought making marks on the scoresheet would be against the rules. Is this rule meant to mean "matters relating to a claim *that has been made*" opposed to "a claim you might want to make in the future"? **Frits Fritschy (The Netherlands)**

Answer Let me quote Article 12.4:

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

Some marks are apparently acceptable. And one of them is related to a draw claim. It is not specified at which stage of a game these specific marks are allowed. Therefore, in my opinion, there are no objections to making them during the game.

Question Dear Geurt, I recently witnessed a team chess tournament in which the following incident took place. I would very much appreciate if you could share with me your wisdom and experience and decide on the nature of the decisions taken. I attach the tournament rules as published by the organizer so to have a complete look before answering. The text of the case I'm interested in is also copied below:

A Case in a Team Event:

Three teams (four players each) met in a small tournament. They played one round against each other and the first two were to qualify in a final. The scoring system was 3 for victory, 1 for draw, 0 for loss. One of these teams scored very well and qualified in the final without problems. The other two teams (Team A and Team B) were tied and the chief-arbiter asked the team leaders if they agreed to settle the tie by another match with the same conditions. They agreed. The tiebreak match started. Half way through the arbiter discovered that Team B switched their top board and second board players thus not respecting the tournament rule stipulating that the order of the players on boards must correspond with their exact order given on the registration form at the start of the competition. The match was allowed to continue with the final result 7-4 for Team B with the following score in detail:

Team A - Team B	
Board 1	0-3
Board 2	3-0
Board 3	0-3
Board 4	1-1
Final Score	4-7

However, immediately after the match, Team A learned of the switched players on the top boards and filed a written appeal to the organizers claiming that the tournament rules were clear and that Team A should be declared winner and allowed in the finals, while Team B sent home.

The arbiters recited to Team B the following paragraph from the tournament rules:

Team Composition & Board Order
A team shall consist of 4 players and 1 reserve, who shall be listed in a fixed order before the competition begins. No change of players is allowed and no change in the board order is allowed after the start of Round 1. The reserve must play on the last board. For each wrong placing in the team, a zero point shall be imposed on the team and one point awarded to the opposing team.

With this rule in mind, the arbiters received the appeal and formed an impromptu appeals committee. None of its members were present in the playing hall at any time during the event and have not read all documents regarding the case and none heard the case put forward by Team B (justice is served only when justice is heard – principle). The chief-arbiter revealed the decision very shortly. They changed the score of the match as follows:

Team A - Team B	
Board 1	1-0
Board 2	3-0
Board 3	0-3

Board 4 1-1
Final Score 5-4

Team B filed a protest immediately basically arguing that if the rules of the tournament are to be respected to the letter as published, then they should be penalized only with 1 point on boards 1 and 2 and not in the way the appeals committee decided. A response letter informed them however that the paragraph in question contained an error and was actually meant that Team B should be receive 0 points on Board 1 and 2 and Team A should receive 3 points (the equivalent for a victory) on each of these boards. The case was then closed based on the argument put forward by the organizers according to which there was provision for reversing a decision taken by an appeal committee.

Question 1 Was the Team B player who played on top board wrongly placed according to regulations? (While the player designated to play Board 1 could never play on Board 2, the player designated to play on Board 2 has the theoretical option of advancing one board in the case the top player decides to rest. This is also important in order to quantify the punishment applied).

Question 2 Was the appeals committee decision correct? By their written appeal, Team A legally claimed for strict application of the published tournament rules. They received more than what the paragraph in question allowed.

Team B informed the officials of the error present in paragraph four and instead suggested another tie (a blitz match between the leaders of each team) as the most sportive way to settle the matter. Team A rejected the proposal and asked for a strict application of the tournament rules. Team B – in their protest – asked for nothing else than a strict application of the same rules even if the official document was marred by a serious error that was left unnoticed by all sides prior to the event. It was not the fault of Team B that the tournament rules were flawed. It was the fault of the organizers/arbiters. Much obliged, **Juli Angsani (Indonesia)**

Answer If what you wrote in your letter really happened, then there are many strange things. I do not understand why the arbiter did not take action when he discovered the wrong order of Boards 1 and 2 during the match. Furthermore, after the finish of the match, he did nothing and left it to Team A to discover the wrong board order. And finally, no one, the arbiter included, noticed the error in the regulations of the event.

I agree with you that Player 2 could play on Board 1, but to make it more complicated he can play on Board 1 only if Player 1 does not play at all. In this case Player 3 has to play on Board 2, Player 4 on Board 3 and the reserve player (Player 5) on Board 4.

But perhaps I should only consider the switch of Boards 1 and 2, simply considering it as a mistake of the captain of Team B. Or was it a trick? In reading your letter, I have the impression that the whole discussion was only about the results on Boards 1 and 2. Apparently both teams accepted the results on Board 3 and 4.

My next step is to consider the result on Board 2. Team A won on Board 2. Team A did nothing wrong. Why should Team A suffer for the fact that Team B made a mistake? It is my firm opinion that the result on Board 2 stands. If Team A had not won this game, I would change my opinion. The only thing we have to discuss is the result on Board 1. I mentioned already before that Player 2 may play on Board 1. I also mentioned that the captain of Team B was perhaps tricky. I will explain what I mean. Team A and B already played two matches and I assume that each player played one game with the white pieces and one with the black pieces, provided both teams played without reserves. In this case it is possible that this was the reason of the switch. Something else is also strange. All teams already played two matches. Everyone, the players included, knew

and could see how everybody played in previous rounds.

Therefore, I am inclined to punish Team B for the wrong team composition and to change the result on Board 1. It does not matter whether it should be 1-0 or 3-0. In both cases Team A wins.

Question In the second highest level for teams in Sweden, in a last round match between Örebro SS and Rödeby SK, the following occurred:

Both teams coaches talked about making a deal before the match. Then they both approached the arbiter asking if it was OK to make a deal for the result 4-4. Only this result would make both teams not risking moving down. The arbiter answered absolutely no. The match began. Twenty-two minutes later all games were drawn. The final standings were 4-4. The shortest game was three moves and the longest ten moves. One club therefore got degraded.

Some argue that this is the most crystal clear case of making a deal. If it's legal, any deal is possible if both parties agree. Others argue that players are free to make a draw whenever they want. And that it can't be wrong asking an arbiter a question.

Question 1 Is this acceptable?

Question 2 If not, what should be the appropriate result of their actions?

Question 3 Any other aspects? **Lars Dock (Sweden)**

Answer I can imagine that many will think that it was an arranged result, but it is very hard to prove. Two Articles of the Laws of Chess come to mind:

Article 5.2.c: The game is drawn upon agreement between the two players during the game. This immediately ends the game. (See Article 9.1)

Article 12.1: The players shall take no action that will bring the game of chess into disrepute.

In team competitions it happens very often that both teams are satisfied to make a draw, because in this case both teams achieve something they want; for example, to maintain their standings in their league. So they do not like to take any risk and they make only draws.

It is very difficult, in fact almost impossible, for the arbiter to prove that it was prearranged. The arbiter was right not to accept eight draws in advance, because according to Article 5.2.c it must be agreed *during* the game, but, if the evidence is not clear, the arbiter has to accept the results.

I remember my appearance as captain of the Dutch team during the European Team Championship in Plovdiv 1983. In the last round of this event the captains of the USSR team and the Hungarian team walked together from board to board and informed the players to agree to a draw. Only Romanishin refused. I was furious and apparently naïve, because according to the arbiter nothing was wrong. The final result was that the Dutch team came fourth instead of third. I can imagine that the team mentioned in your question, which has to play in the next competition in a lower league, was not very happy and had a good reason to protest.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I have a question regarding blitz. If a player made an illegal move, say, he played the light-squared bishop to a dark square and there was no claim immediately after the move was completed, is it possible to claim later in the game that a player has two dark-squared bishops? Thanks. **Tareq Mohamed Abedallah Khoori (Abudhabi)**

Answer I refer to Article C3 of the Blitz Rules:

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. Once the opponent has made his own move, an illegal move cannot be corrected.

As you may see, a player has the right to claim an illegal move, before he has made his own move. This means that it is impossible to claim an illegal move later in the game.

Question Hi Mr. Gijssen, I have a question about blitz games. Imagine in a blitz game we have a position that White checkmates the black king, but the white king is in check. It means that White made an illegal move, but he checkmates his opponent's king. Who is the winner in this position? Black claims that his opponent played an illegal move because his opponent's king is in check, but White says that he mated his opponent. Please answer my question. **Mohammad (Iran)**

Answer It is clear that the player of the white pieces played an illegal move, because his king was attacked. This means that the player of the black pieces may claim a win according to Article C3 (see previous answer). But Article 5.1.a is also relevant:

The game is won by the player who has checkmated his opponent's king. This immediately ends the game, provided that the move producing the checkmate position was a legal move.

Essential is that the move that produces the checkmate position is legal and you pointed out yourself that this move was illegal.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I thought that to conform to the Laws of Chess one had to disable the move counter of an electronic chess clock (otherwise, the clock could indicate to a player whether he has reached the time control).

Moreover, there are many problems that can occur during the course of a game if the count becomes unreliable because of player's mishandling. Some clocks will just stop working if it considers that one player lost on time, or not indicate that one has overrun the time limit.

However, I have not seen this rule anywhere; not even as a suggestion or recommendation. Is there a reason why one should or must not deactivate the move counter? Does this rule have any chance to appear in the laws of chess someday? Best regards, **Michel Arseneault Gatineau (Canada)**

Answer To be very precise, during the FIDE Congress in Turin 2006 it was decided that the move counter should not be used. Yet it would seem that this decision is apparently not well known. And to be honest it is also very difficult to apply some regulations without applying the move counter. Let me give you an example. In the regulations for the Grand Prix Tournaments the following time control is mentioned:

Time control: 120 minutes for the first forty moves, 60 minutes for the next twenty moves and then each player will be allotted 15 minutes after the second time control and an increment of 30 seconds per move will be allowed from move 61 onwards.

The difficult point is how to install the clock if it is mentioned that from move 61 a different type of time control applies: in period 1 and 2 it is mentioned a time control without increment, but in the third period there is a time control with increment.

From July 1, 2009 only the following time controls are applicable for tournaments in which a title norm can be achieved:

1. 90 minutes with 30 seconds cumulative increment for each move starting from first move (This time control is valid only until 30.6.2010.)
2. 90 minutes for 40 moves + 30 minutes with 30 seconds cumulative increment for each move starting from the first move
3. 100 minutes for 40 moves followed by 50 minutes for 20 moves, then 15 minutes for the remaining moves with 30 seconds cumulative increment for each move starting from first move
4. 40 moves in 2 hours followed by 30 minutes for the rest of the game
5. 40 moves in 2 hours followed by 60 minutes for the rest of the game
6. 40 moves in 2 hours followed by 20 moves in 1 hour followed by 30 minutes for the rest of the game.

With these time controls we do not need the move counter.

Notice that in the time controls mentioned in the **Title Regulations** there are two possibilities:

- a. increment from move 1
- b. no increment at all.

To avoid all misunderstandings, the requirements for rating tournaments are different. I quote the **Rating Regulations**:

For a game to be rated each player must have the following minimum periods in which to complete all the moves, assuming the game lasts 60 moves.

1. Where at least one of the players in the tournament has a rating 2200 or higher, each player must have a minimum of 120 minutes.
2. Where at least one of the players in the tournament has a rating 1600 or higher, each player must have a minimum of 90 minutes.
3. Where all the players in the tournament are rated below 1600, each player must have a minimum of 60 minutes.

Games played with all the moves at a rate faster than the above are excluded from the list. Where a certain number of moves are specified in the first time control, it shall be 40 moves. Players benefit from uniformity here.

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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