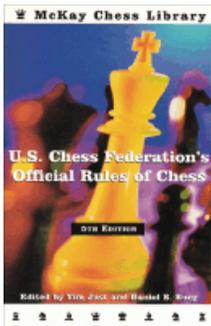




COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



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Something's Wrong with Buchholz

Question In an Open tournament, Jonathan Cruz, who played in a lower rating group than I, had a better Buchholz score than me in the final standings. The total sum points of his opponents was about five or six points less than mine, but his opponent in the first round did not show up. The arbiter explained to me that Swiss Manager (approved by FIDE) gave Cruz seven points out of eight for his Buchholz bye in the first round!

He said that for calculation of the Buchholz score of Cruz in this case was 50% of all possible points (8 in this case, because 8 rounds) = 4 points + 50% of points of the player - Jonathan Cruz (6 of 8 in this case, that means 50% of 6 = 3) = 3. So, 4 + 3 = 7 .

My reaction was that this is absurd!. Still, the arbiter told me that Swiss Manager calculated it according to the FIDE rules. Is it really so? **GM Oleg Korneev (Russia)**

Answer It is clear that something was wrong with the calculation of Buchholz scores. I received several letters about this subject. In Kallithea 2009, a new system was discussed regarding these calculations, but there were a lot of complaints regarding the calculation of unplayed games. The system we discussed, invented by the Dutch NA Wim van Beersum, was accepted.

I spoke with the Chairman of the Swiss Systems Commission and he informed me that it was distributed to the programmers of Swiss Systems, and that some of the programmers have implemented this new system. However, some arbiters may not have updated their programs. We will try to find a way to notify all the programmers to update their programs and for the users to download them. Finally, I can inform you that in your example Mr. Cruz would receive only 4½ points, instead of 7, according to the new calculations.

Question Sir, in a chess tournament of eight rounds in a Swiss system tournament, if Player A gets a bye of one point in his first round and is tied at the end of tournament, how should the Buchholz points be calculated to break the tie. His opponent remains absent throughout the tournament. Thank you. **Debendra Kumar (India)**

Answer The rule was that the unplayed game will be considered as a draw against the player himself. But, as you may see from my answer above, this was changed. The new system seems quite complicated. I will try to explain it in an upcoming column.

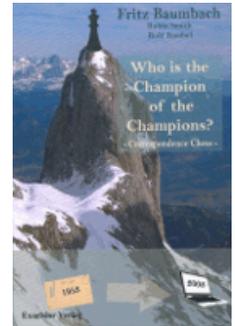
Question 1 In a tournament, two players submitted their result after the match. Five minutes later, one of them returns to protest against another player who is cheating. My question is whether the arbiter has to accept that protest or not? According to my knowledge, the protest is made against an arbiter's decision only, also what would the arbiter decide if the player is really cheating?

Question 2 If there are only eight players in a tournament, is it possible for the arbiter to organize the tournament with only three rounds? **Mithun Baragi (India)**

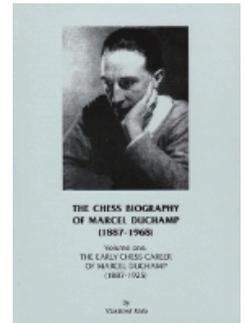
Answer 1 There are several items we have to discuss in your question.

You mention that a player went to the arbiter about cheating in another game. A player who has finished his game is considered a spectator. The question is whether the arbiter must act on the protest of a spectator. My opinion is that

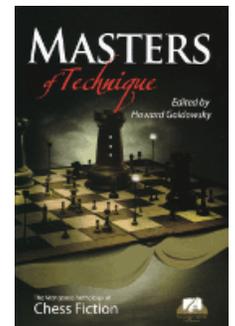
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he is not forced to do so, but it is advisable to investigate the matter.

You point out that it is only possible to protest against an arbiter's decision. In general you are right, but it depends on the specific regulations of the tournament. For example, in the regulations of the world championship match it was written that the Appeals Committee may decide about all matters that the committee deemed relevant. This means the committee can act even if there is no protest.

As I stated, it is advisable that the arbiter investigates the matter. If he learns that something is wrong, he has to take the appropriate measures, provided the matter is under his jurisdiction.

Answer 2 I consider your question to be theoretical, but I shall answer nevertheless. The following is possible: You organise a KO tournament to play only Armageddon games.

- Round One: 1-8, 2-7, 3-6, 4-5. The winners go to the next round. In case of a draw the player of the black pieces is considered to have won the game.
- Round Two: the winners play each other. Winner (1-8) – Winner (4-5) and Winner (2-7) – Winner (3-6).
- Round Three: the winners of Round Two play each other.

In Armageddon games the player of the black pieces receives less reflection time than the player of the white pieces.

Question 1 In a round at a rapid tournament, the chess clock was defective: when I pressed the button, the opponent's clock started, but my clock did not stop (i.e., both clocks were going). I observed this for about ten minutes after the start of the game. Thus, my time was far less than it had to be. I informed the arbiter and he replaced the clock, but he did not change the clock times, because it was impossible to determine the "true" time. Despite that I had four minutes and my opponent had ten minutes, I finally won the game.

Suppose I noticed the clock's defect only after my flag had fallen. Does the arbiter have to add some time (because my flag should not have fallen if the clock was working properly) or is the flag considered fallen and I would lose on time?

Question 2 Suppose that Player A (white) and Player B (black) play a tournament game and the following position is on the board:



[FEN "k7/8/8/8/8/Bp6/pP6/K2b4"]

This position is a "dead draw" according to Rule 5.2 rule, though the players continue to play. Suppose now that Player A's phone rings. According to Rule 12.3b, the result should be 0-½. But according to Rule 5.2b, the game concluded when the drawn position arose and the result is ½-½. What is the correct decision? **Dmitry Hohryakov (Russia)**

Answer 1 I refer to Article 6.10 of the Laws of Chess:

a. Every indication given by the clocks is considered to be conclusive in the absence of any evident defect. A chess clock with an evident defect shall be replaced. The arbiter shall replace the clock and use his best

judgment when determining the times to be shown on the replacement chess clocks.

b. If during a game it is found that the setting of either or both clocks was incorrect, either player or the arbiter shall stop the clocks immediately. The arbiter shall install the correct setting and adjust the times and move counter. He shall use his best judgement when determining the correct settings.

The first section of this Article does not mention "if during the game...", as it is written in the second section. Nevertheless, in my opinion, a correction is possible even after a flag fall. Furthermore, it is implicitly mentioned in Article 6.10.a:

Every indication given by the clocks is considered to be conclusive in the absence of any evident defect.

My explanation is very simple: the indication that a player's flag has fallen is conclusive if it is clear that the clock is not defective. In your case the clock is defective; therefore, a correction must be made after the chess clock has been replaced. This can only take place immediately after the (incorrect) flag fall.

Answer 2 This question is a variation on the theme of a game finishing by checkmate, stalemate, or dead position, but it goes unnoticed and the game continues. It is only after the game "finished" that it was noticed. There are two possibilities: it is noticed immediately after the game or after some span of time. As I have previously written, no change should be made to the tournament table, but for rating calculations the unnoticed result should be counted.

Question 1 Dear, Mr. Gijssen. If in a normal game a player did not record some moves on his scoresheet, is it the arbiter's duty to inform the player to complete his scoresheet or does the arbiter have to wait for a claim from the opponent?

Question 2 Suppose that in a normal tournament the player has to be in the tournament hall within one hour after the start of the round. Is it the duty of the arbiter to announce that the absent players have lost the game?

Question 3 In a normal tournament a player's mobile rings. The arbiter declares the game lost, but the opponent prefers to continue the game. Is this possible?

Question 4 The time control is sixty minutes without increment for each player. Is the arbiter entitled to announce a flag fall? Best Regards, **Wilfredo Paulino (Dominican Republic)**

Answer 1 There are arbiters who believe that in such situations the arbiter should act only after a claim from the opponent. I disagree. I refer to Article 13.1 of the Laws of Chess:

The arbiter shall see that the Laws of Chess are strictly observed.

According to the Laws of Chess, a player has to record the moves, unless he is in a phase of the game that does not require it. If he doesn't record the moves, then the arbiter has to instruct him to obey the rules.

Answer 2 The arbiter should stop the clocks and write the result on the scoresheet. The opponent and the arbiter should then sign for the result.

Answer 3 The arbiter has to follow the rules. Article 12.3 of the Laws of Chess states

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.

Answer 4 I refer to Article 6.8 of the Laws of Chess:

A flag is considered to have fallen when the arbiter observes the fact or when either player has made a valid claim to that effect.

It is clear that after observing a flag fall, the arbiter has the right to announce the flag fall. The fact that you mentioned the time control of sixty minutes for the whole game suggests that you thought a game with this time control is a rapid game. This is not the case. A sixty minute game is a normal game. To be a rapid game a player must have less than sixty minutes for the whole game.

Question Dear, Mr. Gijssen. Paul Dargan comes with an interesting situation in your [June column](#):

"[...] when players incorrectly capture a king I doubt that they ever stop their clock [and thus can still take back their move]. Therefore, in most cases they wouldn't lose, but could instead claim a win when the arbiter arrives."

Your answer was

"You are right that it is only possible to claim an illegal move after it has been completed. You are also right that taking the opponent's king is an illegal move. And finally you are right to wait with a claim until the opponent has completed his move; i.e., has pressed the clock."

But you didn't answer the last part of his question: "... but could instead claim a win when the arbiter arrives." Is this really so? I looked into the appendices of the Handbook, Article B.3.c.:

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.

Isn't there a difference here between "completed" and "made"? The player that took the king may not have completed his move, but he certainly made a move, although illegal. At least, he performed an action that has consequences; i.e., he has to move the piece that took the king, if possible.

Suppose you made a legal move, and before pressing the clock you notice you could have made a claim. Can you still do so? Not according to B.3c.

You could argue that after taking the king, the situation has been corrected by letting the player take back his move, after which it wasn't "made." That would give the player of an illegal move an advantage over the player of a legal move. So, can the king taker successfully claim a win? **Frits Fritschy (The Netherlands)**

Answer Your remark is very interesting. For the benefit of the readers, let me first explain the difference between a made move and a completed move. A move has been made when the player's hand releases a piece on a square. A move has been completed when a player has made the move, stopped his own clock, and started the opponent's clock. Let me quote Article 6.7.a of the Laws of Chess:

During the game each player, having made his move on the chessboard, shall stop his own clock and start his opponent's clock. A player must always be allowed to stop his clock. His move is not considered to have been completed until he has done so, unless the move that was made ends the game. (See the Articles 5.1.a, 5.2.a, 5.2.b, 5.2.c and 9.6).

To avoid any misunderstanding, we discuss a situation in a Blitz game with inadequate supervision.

Relevant is also Article B.3.c 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, 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 unless mutually agreed without intervention of an arbiter.

Let us assume that the player of the white pieces exposed his king to check and completed his move. He completed an illegal move. At this moment the player of the black pieces could claim a win. Instead of claiming a win, he takes the white king. He did not press the clock. He only made an illegal move; he did not complete an illegal move. He lost his right to claim a win by making a move. Furthermore, the player of the white pieces cannot claim a win as long as the player of the black pieces has not pressed his clock; i.e., as long as he did not complete an illegal move. In this situation there are several possibilities:

1. The player of the white pieces keeps silent and waits until the flag of his opponent falls.
2. The player of the black pieces presses the clock.

In both cases, the player of the white pieces can claim a win.

3. The player of the black pieces realizes that he made an illegal move. In this case, he has to play the same piece if possible, but he is not allowed to take the white king. The white king is still attacked and the player of the white pieces has to make a move, which brings his king out of check. It would be quite unfair to give the player of the black pieces the opportunity to claim the win after he himself had made an illegal move.

It is also possible for the players to agree that the player of the white pieces can also correct his illegal move. This is possible without the intervention of the arbiter.

Question In view of the very short draw in the Dutch championship:

Van Kampen,R (2481) - Smeets,J (2659)
ch-NED Eindhoven (9), 20.06.2010
Ruy Lopez [C65]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 ½-½

Does the arbiter have the power to intervene and, for example, record it as a loss for both players? Should he intervene? It is not draws that spoil our game, but draws without at least some semblance of a game. **Steven Dunning (UK)**

Answer I refer to Article 9.1.b of the Laws of Chess, because this Article applies in this event:

If the rules of a competition allow a draw agreement the following apply:

1. A player wishing to offer a draw shall do so after having made a move on the chessboard and before stopping his clock and starting the opponent's clock. An offer at any other time during play is still valid but Article 12.6 must be considered. No conditions can be attached to the offer. In both cases the offer cannot be withdrawn and remains valid until the opponent accepts it, rejects it orally, rejects it by touching a piece with the intention of moving or capturing it, or the game is concluded in some other way.

I assume that the draw was correctly offered, and was not agreed to before the start of the game. In that case there is nothing wrong with this offer. The only question is whether everyone, except the players, is happy. I understand the situation. The player of the black pieces only needs a draw to retain his title of Champion of the Netherlands. He doesn't want to take any risk. But I can also understand the sponsors of the tournament like fighting chess and publicity.

I understand your remark, but as far as I can see, nothing can be done in this

case. If the organisers are against such short game, they can apply Article 9.1. a of the Laws of Chess:

The rules of a competition may specify that players cannot agree to a draw, whether in less than a specified number of moves or at all, without the consent of the arbiter.

Question In blitz chess, specifically five-minute games, should a player be penalised if he accidentally knocks the clock from the table? If so, what penalty should be imposed? And what should happen if there is the suspicion that the player knocked the clock off the table intentionally? **Paul Stokes (UK)**

Answer It is reasonable that a player who is disturbed by his opponent will be compensated, even if there was no intention for the disruption. In such a case, one extra minute is OK in my opinion.

If the arbiter is absolutely certain that the player acted intentionally, say, for instance, the player picked up the clock and smashed it to the floor, there is only one penalty: the game should be declared lost.

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