



Blitz, Blitz, Blitz

Question Geurt. In a blitz game, consider the following position with White to move:



[FEN "7k/8/5K2/8/8/8/7p/8 w - - 0 1"]

White plays **1.Kg7**. Black plays **1...h1Q** and presses his clock. White claims a draw, because Black has made an illegal move and White has no material to checkmate his opponent.

What do you do as an arbiter in such a case? Can a king attack another king, and is this called check? If so, then the claim is valid, because Black's king is checked by White's king. If not, then h1Q is a legal move.

I consider h1Q a legal move. I also believe that if Black's king is in check, then White's king is as well. The problem is that Black has no legal way to get out of check, which in fact is mate. As Black completed a move, and therefore lost his right to claim the illegal move, he is unable to undo White's move. And, last but not least, Black is obliged to claim the win, if he doesn't want to lose or draw, since he has no legal move. I feel that this is also wrong, a player should never be in a position that he is required to claim. A claim should always be a choice.

Shouldn't it be specified in the laws of chess that a king can't check the opponent's king?

Sincerely, **Dimitri Logie (Belgium)**

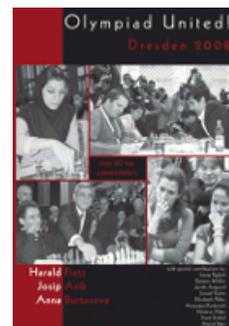
Answer I can understand that some illegal moves can go unnoticed by an opponent, but for 1.Kg7 to go unnoticed as an illegal move defies belief. With regard to whether kings may attack each other: of course, they cannot. See Article 1.2 of the Laws of Chess:

Leaving one's own king under attack, exposing one's own king to attack and also 'capturing' the opponent's king are not allowed.

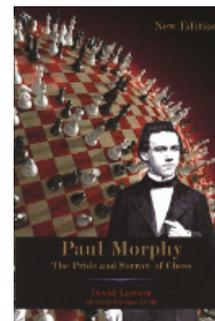
After Black played 1...h1Q, Black has forfeited his right of claiming an illegal move, but a king move was not possible. Oddly enough, this scenario is mentioned in Article 4c of the rules for Rapid Chess:

*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 are in check** or the promotion of a pawn is not completed, **the arbiter shall intervene, if possible.***

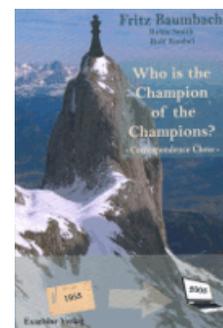
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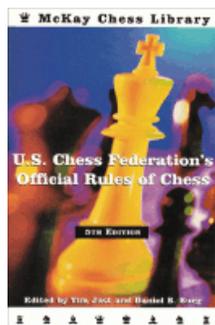
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In my opinion this Article covers the fact that both kings are in check. This includes situations in which they attack each other. I would also like to refer to the last sentence of Article B3c of the Rules of Blitz chess, appealing to the sound judgment of both players:

Once the opponent has made his own move, an illegal move cannot be corrected unless mutually agreed without intervention of an arbiter.

The Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee of FIDE will have to consider adding the phrase of two attacked kings to the Blitz rules as it is described in the Rapid rules. Finally, If I had been the arbiter, I would have declared the game drawn.

Question Hi. I have some questions about blitz games. I'm a club player and these issues arose in my games:

Question 1 My time is out and my opponent's time is not. He made an irregular move and stopped his clock. Can I claim a win?

Question 2 My time is out and my opponent's is not. I have no legal move (meaning with time on my clock it would be stalemate). Can I claim the draw?

Question 3 Is it legal that my opponent touches his pieces before I stop my clock? This always happens in five minute blitz. Can I stop the clock and call the arbiter to penalize him? **Reza Khalilnejad (Iran)**

Answer 1 I will assume that there is inadequate supervision in each case. I refer to Article B3c of the Blitz rules and Article A4d.1 of the Rapid Rules, which is also applicable for Blitz Chess:

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.

The flag is considered to have fallen when a player has made a valid claim to that effect. The arbiter shall refrain from signalling a flag fall, but he may do so if both flags have fallen.

As long as a player has not claimed a flag fall, the flag has not fallen. Therefore, the player can claim a win.

Answer 2 Again, as long as the opponent has not claimed the flag fall, the result produced on the board stands. In this case it is stalemate.

Answer 3 This an old question. I refer to Article 6.7a 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)

The practice is that the arbiter doesn't interfere when a player starts his move before the opponent has stopped his clock. But in this situation, the opponent always has the right to stop his own clock and to start the player's clock.

Question Hi, Geurt. I am certain this question has popped up a lot and will continue to do so! In a quick play (thirty minutes, no increments), the players were down to their final seconds. A ten-year old junior was mauling his vastly experienced 2175-opponent, when he touched a piece. Realising to his horror that he would be mated on the spot, he agonised for a bit before finding the only move that didn't allow the mate: a rook capture that pinned the opponent's queen. His opponent played the "mate" anyway, an illegal move. I

am sure the child was so confused that he shook his opponent's hand. It was pointed out straight away by other players watching, after hands had been shook, that the move was illegal. The arbiter was called and adjudged the 2175 to have won because the child hadn't indicated that the queen move was illegal and had shaken hands. Was the arbiter correct and did the onlookers act improperly? Yours sincerely, **Graham Taylor (Denmark)**

Answer Yes, such questions arise quite frequently. There is only one way to be sure that a player truly resigned: a piece of paper showing the names of the players and the result, signed by both players. See Article 8.7 of the Laws of Chess:

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.

Instead of scoresheets a simple piece of paper with the data mentioned is also sufficient. I have my doubts whether the spectators acted properly. The correct way is to inform the arbiter and not the players.

Shaking hands as a sign of resignation is quite common, but there are always those who will try to trick an opponent. For instance, they resign verbally so that only the opponent can hear them, and then they shake hands and declare that they agreed to a draw. I even know professionals who tried this kind of trick.

Question Hi, Geurt. My friends and I play blitz regularly, and I have three questions about FIDE tournament rules:

Question 1 Is it legal to capture an opponent's king when they do not notice that their king is in check? I've heard that during tournament blitz you cannot take an opponent's king. You have to stop the clock and claim a win. If you capture an opponent's king, you make the last illegal move and, consequently, you lose the game. Is this true?

Question 2 What is the general rule for "mate on the move"? Is it valid only when the person on move releases the mating piece before their opponent calls them on time? Meaning, it doesn't matter if you picked up the piece and are in the process of mating ... flagging on time means you lose the game.

Question 3 Can you use two hands when taking an opponent's piece? I've heard you can use two hands only when you castle. Please advise. Thanks much, **R. Quebral (USA)**

Answer 1 I refer to Article 1.2 of the Laws of Chess:

*The objective of each player is to place the opponent's king 'under attack' in such a way that the opponent has no legal move. The player who achieves this goal is said to have 'checkmated' the opponent's king and to have won the game. **Leaving one's own king under attack, exposing one's own king to attack and also 'capturing' the opponent's king are not allowed.** The opponent whose king has been checkmated has lost the game.*

This article is applicable for all types of chess, including Blitz. The procedure you describe is correct, with only one qualification: You have to stop both clocks, your clock and your opponent's clock.

Answer 2 The move producing mate must be made. This means that the piece mating the opponent's king must be moved from its original square to the destination square and released on that square. There is no need to stop both clocks in this situation.

Answer 3 In all situations you may use only one hand, castling included.

Question 1 Dear, Geurt. I thought I had lost a game, so I shook the hand of my opponent. However, I realized that I was not checkmated. Does the handshake mean that I lost the game? Where in the rule book can I find this?

Question 2 Is there a rule that stipulates that the player must make sure that the settings of the clock are correct before the game starts? If not, what will happen if the arbiter sets the clock incorrectly, the players complete the game, and the loser wants to replay the game because his clock's settings were wrong? Assume that they have a time constraint. Chess greetings, **Fransie Grobelaar (South Africa)**

Answer 1 I refer to my answer to Graham Taylor. I understand that you didn't want to cheat your opponent. However, your intention was to resign. Then you discovered that your game was not lost, so you tried to nullify the resignation by using the fact that you didn't resign formally.

Answer 2 I refer to Article 6.10b of the Laws of Chess:

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.

Notice that it is written that corrections are only possible if the mistake was found during the game. Therefore, it is important that both arbiters and players check the clocks during the game.

Question Dear, Mr. Gijssen. I would like to ask you a simple question: Is a player having the move allowed to stand up and talk with people nearby? I found Article 12.2, but there is no strict answer about it:

Players are not allowed to leave the 'playing venue' without permission from the arbiter. The playing venue is defined as the playing area, rest rooms, refreshment area, area set aside for smoking and other places as designated by the arbiter. The player having the move is not allowed to leave the playing area without permission of the arbiter.

With regards, **GM Martin Mrva (Slovakia)**

Answer It is not forbidden for a player, having the move, to stand up and walk in the playing area. It is *not yet* explicitly mentioned in the Laws of Chess; however, in my opinion it is forbidden to talk to other players. The arbiter has the possibility to apply several Articles to forbid these conversations:

12.3a. During play the players are forbidden to make use of any notes, sources of information or advice, or analyse on another chessboard.

The arbiter can contend that the player may gain advice from a person with whom he is speaking:

12.6 It is forbidden to distract or annoy the opponent in any manner whatsoever. This includes unreasonable claims, unreasonable offers of a draw or the introduction of a source of noise into the playing area.

In my opinion, when a player, having the move, talks to other people, it is distracting to the opponent, as well as annoying:

13.7a. Spectators and players in other games are not to speak about or otherwise interfere in a game. If necessary, the arbiter may expel offenders from the playing venue.

This article is very clear. The player can claim that he is not discussing the game, but the arbiter cannot reasonably ascertain this. Therefore, he forbids all talk between any player and another person.

Question 1 Dear, Mr. Gijssen. A player moved a pawn to the eighth rank and pressed the clock. I, as arbiter, declared the move illegal and began to set the clock. At that moment the opponent resigned.

a) May he resign?

b) Which would be the last move of the game?

I thought it appropriate to ask the player which piece he intended to promote.

c) Was I correct to ask? (The player said "queen.")

d) What would then be the last move of the game?

Question 2 Now a hypothetical question: Would my questions be more important if the promotion stalemates the opponent?

Best regards, **Christian Sánchez (Argentina)**

Answer 1

a) A player has the right to resign at any moment during the game.

b) The promotion of the pawn was not completed. Therefore, this move was not part of the game.

c) Why did you ask to which piece he intended to promote? The answer is irrelevant, as the promotion is complete only once the new piece touches the promotion square.

d) See answer b.

Answer 2 No. As long as I don't know which piece he intends to promote to and this piece has not touched the promotion square, I don't know whether it is stalemate.

Question Dear, Mr. Gijssen. In a recent game between a GM and an IM in Spain, the arbiter declared the loss of the game because he thought a sound came from the cell phone of a player. Even after this player showed that his cell phone was off and offered the arbiter the opportunity to confirm for himself that it was completely impossible that the sound came from his cell phone. Do the rules allow this, even without any investigation by the arbiter? Thank you, **Luis Santos (Portugal)**

Answer An arbiter has to be very careful before he takes any decision. He has to be even more careful in situations in which he has to decide that a game is lost for a player. An arbiter must be completely sure that he punishes the right person.

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