



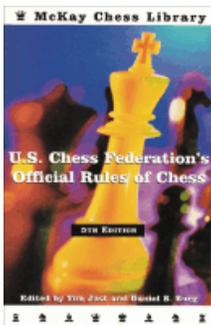
COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen

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Again Blitz and Rapid!

**Question** Dear, Mr. Gijssen, I enjoy your column very much. I would like to know about the history of Article 10.2. When was it first established? Why was it established? What was its evolution, if any? Sincerely, **Juan Arroyo (Mexico)**

**Answer** I am not able to give you a complete answer. Stewart Reuben told me that he first came across this system around 1970 in a tournament in former Yugoslavia. He then introduced it in some tournaments in England. It was introduced in FIDE about 1992. I recall that Article 10.2 was not applied in the Moscow Olympiad in 1994, but it was in Yerevan in 1996. In the Elista Olympiad in 1998, the games were played with an increment. Therefore, Article 10.2 didn't apply in Elista. The same was true in all following Olympiads. A main change was the addition of Article 10.2.d:

*The decision of the arbiter shall be final relating to (a), (b) and (c).*

This was approved in 2000 and came into force in 2001. I can only guess why it was introduced. It happened quite often that players lost their game because of overstepping the time control in a won position. The opponent did not try to win in a normal way, but was only using the time trouble of the opponent. This is exactly what is written in Article 10.2 and in my opinion not unreasonable.

**Question** Dear, Mr. Gijssen. In Article 10.2, when the arbiter postpones his decision he **may** award two extra minutes to the opponent. As an arbiter, when do you give this two extra minutes to the opponent? And, as it depends on the arbiter's decision, which criteria do you consider whether to give the extra time or not. Yours sincerely, **FA Hadi Bakhshayesh (Iran)**

**Answer** Let me quote the relevant Article:

*If the arbiter postpones his decision, the opponent may be awarded two extra minutes and the game shall continue, if possible in the presence of an arbiter.*

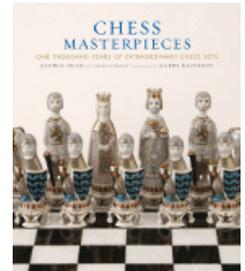
It is very difficult to give precise criteria; however, I will try to give some guidelines:

- It often happens that a claim based on Article 10.2 surprises the opponent, because most of the claims are quite unclear. The opponent can be disturbed by such a claim and also short of time. In such situations it is not unreasonable to give him two extra minutes.
- If the opponent has plenty of time, there is no reason to add time.
- It should never be a punishment to the claimant, because he has the right to claim.

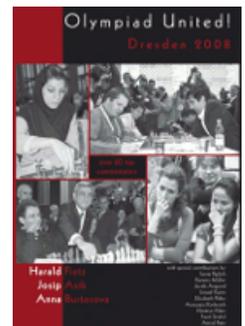
These reasons may not be very convincing, but the whole Article is very difficult to handle.

Recently, I saw a claim in a Rapid tournament. The claimant had seven seconds and the opponent about eight minutes. The arbiter agreed with the claim and declared the game drawn. In my opinion, the decision was correct, because the opponent had no chance to win the game. The woman with the eight minutes explained to me afterwards that her opponent was walking in the playing area most of the time when she had the move. He waited until the moment he had only seven seconds to save the game by claiming a draw. The arbiter was present before the claim was made and he had clearly seen that the

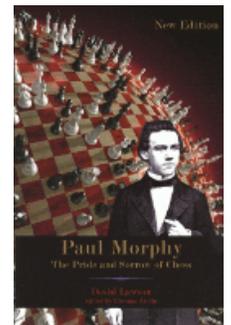
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woman had no chance to win the game by normal means, at least she didn't understand how to win.

**Question** Dear, Geurt. I played in an open tournament in 1999 at Nainital, India. The time limit was one hour for twenty-three moves and then one hour to finish (sudden death). However, the tournament organizers (and players) did not have enough chess clocks, so they introduced the clock, when one was available, with estimated remaining time equal to each player. This is a common practice in India. Is it OK to introduce the chess clock in this way and what should be the minimum time?

In one of my games, when the clock was introduced on the twenty-second move, both players received ten minutes. A strategic game suddenly became a tactical one and my opponent completely outplayed me. We both were moving pieces quickly. Suddenly, I made an illegal move. He claimed for my illegal move and I noticed that his flag had already fallen. When the arbiter came, we both argued for our claim. He needed extra time for my illegal move and I claimed a draw for his overstepping of time. It was clear from the clock that thirty to sixty seconds had passed after my opponent's flag had fallen. The arbiter's decision was to give my opponent extra time and I resigned immediately. Was the decision of the arbiter correct? Thanks.  
Regards, **Lalit Kapoor (India)**

**Answer** If there are not a sufficient amount of chess clocks, and taking into consideration that the decision is announced beforehand, the solution being implemented is not bad. You will understand that such a tournament cannot be rated and cannot be an official FIDE tournament. Nevertheless, an organizer must be praised when he is ready to organize a chess event in spite of a lack of clocks.

As I have said many times, a flag is considered to be fallen at the moment the opponent claims or the arbiter notices the flag fall. I suppose that in your situation it was unclear to the arbiter as to when the flag fall occurred (whether before or after your opponent completed an illegal move). I mention "completed," because you had stopped your clock and started the opponent's. I can agree with the arbiter's decision.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, I am not satisfied with your answers to my previous questions from [October 2010](#). I would like you to explain in more detail. I will try to be more accurate with my questions:

**Question 1** Do we have the result: 0-½ or 0-0 in chess? If yes, give me an example. If not, why not? (I know if a player makes trouble, such as distracting his opponent or some similar behaviour, then the arbiter may punish him with 0 in his result.)

**Question 2** Is it important who talks with the arbiter first? Remember my question: I overstepped the time control, and my opponent did not. There is insufficient supervision. My opponent made an illegal move and pressed his clock. Now it is my move. I stopped both clocks and summoned the arbiter to claim a win.

Now there is a point that confused me: My opponent may observe that my flag is down. Therefore, when the arbiter arrives he also has the possibility to claim a win! Does the arbiter's judgement differ depending on who speaks first? Suppose the opponent doesn't notice that my time is out. What is the result? Does he have the right to claim that my flag is fallen? (It is my move.) Can the opponent summon the arbiter even when it is my move? I think he may do this only when he has the move.

**Question 3** White has only two seconds; Black has ten seconds, Black to move:



[FEN "7N/8/8/4k3/8/3K4/8/r7 b - - 0 1"]

Black plays **1...Ke4**, an illegal move. White doesn't notice it and plays **2.Nf7**. Black stops the clocks and claims a win.

a) Is the claim correct? (Answer for cases with and without adequate supervision.)

b) Suppose Black overstepped the time limit. What will be the result?

**Question 4** Is the following trick legal? White has ten seconds and Black has only one second. It is White's move.



[FEN "7K/3r4/6k1/8/8/8/8 w - - 0 1"]

White plays the illegal **1.Kxd7** and stops the clock. It is clear that Black will overstep the time control. Can White claim a draw? Best regards, **Reza Khalilnejad (Iran)**

**Answer 1** Three Articles came immediately to mind:

*12.3b. 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.*

*12.8 Persistent refusal by a player to comply with the Laws of Chess shall be penalised by loss of the game. The arbiter shall decide the score of the opponent.*

*12.9 If both players are found guilty according to Article 12.8, the game shall be declared lost by both players.*

#### **Explanation of Article 12.3.b**

The player whose phone makes a sound receives zero, but it doesn't mean that the opponent receives one point. Suppose he has only a bare king. In this case he receives a half point. Notice that it is written that he receives a draw, but it is not written that the game is drawn. Therefore, the result is ½-0 or 0-½.

#### **Explanation of Article 12.8**

This is similar to the case described above. A player refuses, even after some warnings, to follow the Laws of Chess. The arbiter declares the game lost for this player, but if the opponent cannot win, the arbiter shall award a half point to the opponent. The result of the game  $\frac{1}{2}$ -0 or 0- $\frac{1}{2}$ .

### Explanation of Article 12.9

In soccer the referee can show a red card to a player and his opponent; for instance, if they began to fight. The same can happen in a chess game. In this case the result is 0-0.

**Answer 2** You mention that you intended to claim a win after your opponent made an illegal move. Therefore, I conclude it was a Blitz game.

In my opinion, the arbiter should listen first to the player who summoned him to the board. In this situation you have the possibility to claim a win because the opponent completed an illegal move. Nevertheless, your opponent may also claim that you overstepped the time control. It is not necessary to have the move to claim something. Overstepping the time control is a perfect example that the player not on move can claim.

As long as a player doesn't claim a flag fall, the flag has not fallen. This means that the illegality of a move is decisive in this case. What remains is to consider what has preference: the claim of an illegal move or overstepping the time control? In my opinion, the first claim should be granted. The reason is that, again in my personal opinion, an illegal move in a Blitz game has the same consequence as overstepping the time control: loss of the game. And as long as there is no claim in a Blitz game without adequate supervision, the illegality of a move or the flag fall has no consequence.

**Answer 3** If it happened in a Rapid game with adequate supervision, the arbiter interjects (if without adequate supervision, he does so if possible). I refer to Article A4c of the Rapid Regulations:

*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.*

I bring your attention to the last sentence. This is a situation where both kings are in check, because they attack each other.

In Blitz games the situation is different. If there is adequate supervision, the normal rules apply. The arbiter has to interfere. With inadequate supervision the situation is complicated. The rules don't mention what to do in this situation. I refer to Article B3c 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.*

Then we have to follow the rules step by step:

- 1...Ke4. Black completes an illegal move. White can claim a win, but he overlooked the illegality
- 2.Nf7. White completed an illegal move. Black claims a win.
- The claim is correct: Black wins.

As a reader noticed (see the question of Mr. Milvang below), it can be discussed whether what Black did is really fair. Should Article 12.1 be applied?

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

I have to admit that this is a very likely possibility.

**Answer 4** I suppose you will understand that your question also contains the answer. It is a trick and, in general, tricks are never legal. Article 12.1 is an excellent Article to apply for this kind of behaviour.

**Question** Dear, Mr. Gijssen. If a player in a Blitz match makes an illegal move in order to provoke an illegal reply, can you then apply the rule "the players shall take no action that will bring the game of chess into disrepute" and declare the game lost for the player? The background for this question is a position from the [October 2010](#) column where Dimitri Logie had an example with white king on f6, black king on h8, and a black pawn on h2.



[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. Your conclusion was that you would have declared the game drawn (and I suppose declared the game a win if White had material to mate his opponent). In my opinion, this opens the door for all kinds of dirty tricks. I want games to be played without cheating, and it is wrong to reward a player who deliberately breaks the rules of chess. I think the arbiter should declare the game lost for White based on the rule mentioned above. Regards,  
**Otto Milvang (Norway)**

**Answer** Yes, I agree that this could be an attempt to provoke an illegal move by the opponent. This means that arbiters have to be very alert in such situations. Thank you for your letter.

**Question** Dear, Geurt Gijssen! I have a number of questions:

**Question 1** Player A makes a move, but does not press the clock. Player B stops both clocks and beckons an official. He claims a draw, because both clocks show 0.00. Player A objects, because with his last move he checkmated Player B's king. The arbiter declares the draw, because Player B made his statement first and the flags for both players fell. Is this the correct solution?

**Question 2** If both flags have fallen in a Rapid or Blitz game using a DGT clock, should the arbiter decide that it is a draw or shall he declare the game lost for the player whose flag fell first? What would happen if a mechanical clock was used? How should the arbiter decide?

**Question 3** In a Blitz game, Player A made an illegal move and pressed the clock. Ten seconds later, Player A stops both clocks and claims a win because Player B overstepped the time control. Player B protests, because of the illegal move, and claims he should win the game. What decision should the arbiter take?

**Question 4** The Russian Chess Federation published a Russian translation of the FIDE Laws of chess. When I translate Article 6.6a back into English, the text is as follows:

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

Do you think this contradicts FIDE Regulations and allows an expansive interpretation of Article 6.6 a. for arbiters? **Dmitry Shakhov (Russia)**

**Answer 1** You don't mention whether it is a normal, Rapid or Blitz game. Or if it is not a normal game, whether there is adequate supervision. However, oddly enough, it doesn't matter in this case. I refer to Articles 5.1a and 6.8 of the Laws of Chess:

*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.*

*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.*

Based on these two Articles the conclusion is that the checkmate stands, because the checkmate finishes the game immediately, and the flag of Player A is considered to have fallen afterwards, as the flag fall was claimed after the checkmate. It may be confusing, but the flag is considered to have fallen at the moment the player claims or, in cases of adequate supervision, when the arbiter notices the flag fall, and not at the moment it has really fallen. This also means that the testimony of a witness has no value.

**Answer 2** If there is adequate supervision the Rules for normal chess have to be applied. I refer to Article 6.11b of the Laws of Chess:

*If both flags have fallen and it is impossible to establish which flag fell first then the game is drawn if it happens in the period of a game, in which all remaining moves must be completed.*

This Article describes what the decision is when both flags have fallen and it is impossible to establish which has fallen first.

If it is clear which clock has fallen first, the arbiter shall declare the game lost for the player who first overstepped the time control. With DGT clocks it is clear who is the loser.

If there is inadequate supervision, Article A.4d.3 has to be applied:

*If both flags have fallen (...), the arbiter shall declare the game drawn.*

In fact, even if the arbiter saw which flag fell first, the game must be declared drawn.

**Answer 3** If it is a game with adequate supervision, the arbiter should reinstate the position before the illegal move was made. He must adjust both clock times and the game shall be continued. With inadequate supervision the decision is quite complicated. Suppose that the illegal move checkmated the opponent's King. For this case, I refer to Article 5:

*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.*

In this situation the illegal move is decisive. The player who completed the illegal move loses the game.

If the illegal move doesn't checkmate the opponent's king, then, in my opinion, the first claim should be valid. This means the player who overstepped the time control loses the game.

**Answer 4** I assume that your concern has to do with the addition "if the arbiter decides otherwise." I remember very well that the President of FIDE was completely against allowing any case where the arbiter could decide that

a player could start the game, even in cases of *force majeure*. In a meeting of the Presidential Board, it was decided that the arbiter has no possibility to accept any late comer. Yes, in my opinion, the Russian text contradicts the FIDE Laws of Chess.

**Question** Dear, Sir. I recently witnessed an example of the inadequacies of the rules relating to the Quick Play Finish. A few weeks ago I was watching the final moves of a game in a tournament with a time limit of forty moves in two hours followed by all the remaining moves in one hour.

The two players had less than five minutes each for all the remaining moves. Player A was obviously winning, having queen, rook, and four pawns versus queen, bishop, and two pawns. Player B made a move with his queen and started the clock of Player A. After a few seconds, Player B announced he had made an illegal move and returned his queen to its previous location, but left the clock of Player A running. Player B then continued thinking about his move, with the clock of Player A running, and only moved after Player A restarted the clock of Player B. The Tournament Director was watching the game, but did not intervene.

Player A had clearly been disturbed by the actions of Player B, as he made a number of poor moves in succession, including one outright blunder. Fortunately, Player A managed to win the game, so Player B did not profit from his actions.

I asked the Tournament Director why he had not intervened in the game and was informed that, as the illegal move had been corrected, no action was required and the actions of Player B did not attract any sanction, as no rules had been broken.

I would have expected the actions of Player B make him liable to some penalty. The lack of such a penalty is, in my opinion, a serious omission in the FIDE rules covering the Quick Play Finish. I would be interested in your opinion. Yours Faithfully, **K.I. Norman (England)**

**Answer** It was a normal game. I refer to Article 7.4 of the Laws of Chess:

*a. If during a game it is found that an illegal move, including failing to meet the requirements of the promotion of a pawn or capturing the opponent's king, has been completed, the position immediately before the irregularity shall be reinstated. If the position immediately before the irregularity cannot be determined the game shall continue from the last identifiable position prior to the irregularity. The clocks shall be adjusted according to Article 6.13. The Articles 4.3 and 4.6 apply to the move replacing the illegal move. The game shall then continue from this re-instated position.*

*b. After the action taken under Article 7.4.a, for the first two illegal moves by a player the arbiter shall give two minutes extra time to his opponent in each instance; for a third illegal move by the same player, the arbiter shall declare the game lost by this player. However, the game is drawn if the position is such that the opponent cannot checkmate the player's king by any possible series of legal moves.*

Using this Article we will review what was right and what was wrong. Player B announced that he made an illegal move. He may do so, because this Article doesn't mention who or how an illegal move should be found. To put the piece on its original square was also correct. The fact that he didn't stop both clocks was a clear mistake. That the arbiter didn't interfere at any moment was also improper. Finally, the fact that the arbiter didn't penalize Player B was the last mistake.

As you can see in Article 7.4b, there is a penalty for making an illegal move. Finally, I would like to point out that the situation you described has nothing to do with a Quick Play Finish. Only a player having the move and less than two minutes may claim a draw based on Article 10, which describes the Quick Play Finish.

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