



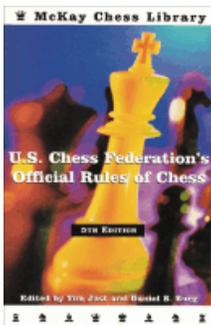
COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen

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What Shall We Do with a Talking Player?

Question There is an Internet discussion about the position shown below with Black to move:



[FEN "k7/Pp4q1/1P6/8/5p1p/5B1P/5BPK/6QR b - - 0 1"]

Black plays 1...Qg3+, with checkmate on the next move. But before the player of the black pieces can press his clock, his flag falls. The question is who can claim a win: Is it the player of the white pieces, because the player of the black pieces overstepped the time limit, or is it the player of the black pieces, because the player of the white pieces cannot escape from being checkmated?

I believe that the result of the game is a draw based on Article 6.9 of the Laws of Chess:

[...] if a player does not complete the prescribed number of moves in the allotted time, the game is lost by the 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.

After 1...Qg3+, the player of the white pieces cannot checkmate his opponent by any possible series of legal moves. Best regards, **Jos Vlak (The Netherlands)**

Answer I share your opinion. This is a clear case that White cannot win by any series of legal moves, his position is even lost. In this case, we have to apply the second sentence of Article 6.9 of the Laws of Chess: the result of the game is a draw.

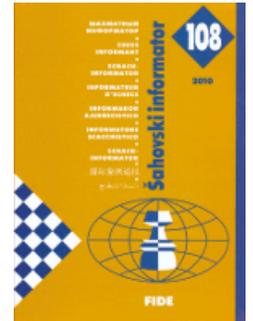
Note that if there is no white pawn on a7, the result is 1-0, because after 1...Qg3+ 2.Bxg3, Black is not forced to take on g3, as he can play 2...Kb8.

Question Good day, Mr. Gijssen. Consider the following fabricated scenario:

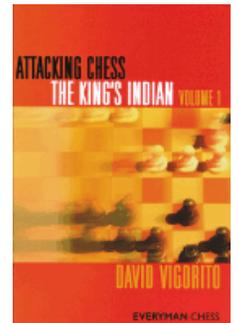
The time control for a tournament is forty moves in the first time period and sudden-death in the second period. According to the score-sheet, thirty-eight moves have been made, but the pre-programmed clock shows forty moves. The time for Player A has expired and Player B claims a win on time. You establish that the clock was pressed twice incorrectly and the other opponent started the clock again.

The question: How do you reset the pre-programmed clock to show the correct amount of moves? In reality, how many arbiters apply the rules to add or subtract time for incorrect claims when using electronic clocks? Thank you. **Fransie Grobbelaar (South Africa)**

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Answer I assume that **both** score-sheets show thirty-eight moves and that the arbiter has checked that thirty-eight moves were actually played. The move counter of the clock shows forty moves and one flag is down. Your remark that the clock was apparently pressed twice incorrectly is correct. This is the only possibility in such a scenario. In this situation it is advisable for the opponent to call the arbiter and not to press the clock. The arbiter then has the possibility to correct the clock times and the move counter and this avoids situations such as you describe.

Assuming that the clock worked correctly and was installed correctly, and taking into account all the assumptions made here, in my opinion the arbiter has to declare the game lost for the player who overstepped the time control.

The DGT clock allows for the possibility to correct the number of moves. So if a player claims immediately that the opponent pressed the clock without making a move, the arbiter has the opportunity to correct the times and the move counter.

Question Dear Geurt, I've never quite understood why, in order to claim a draw by threefold repetition, the player who claims should do this *before* he makes the move that creates the threefold repetition of the position. Why can't he claim *after* having made the move? Thank you. With best wishes, **Peter Boel (The Netherlands)**

Answer In my opinion, the most obvious reason is to avoid having the opponent make a move before the player has summoned the arbiter to make his claim. I am sure that someone would make the argument that the opponent cannot make a move before the player has pressed the clock, but this is not true. I refer to 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)

Question Dear Sir, I was studying the Rules of Chess and have two questions:

Question One Article 1.1:

The game of chess is played between two opponents who move their pieces alternately on a square board called a "chessboard." The player with the white pieces commences the game. A player is said to "have the move," when his opponent's move has been "made." (See Article 6.7)

Should the reference not be to Article 4.6?

Question Two Article 9.2 mentions the following:

When a king or a rook is forced to move, it will lose its castling rights, if any, only after it is moved.

Why is "forced to move" used, instead of "has moved"? Do voluntary moves not count? Perhaps I do not comprehend the meaning correctly. **W.**

Hoogendoorn (UK)

Answer One In the past there were many discussions about "making a move" and "completing a move." The discussion was always that in Article 1.1 it should be written that a player has the move when the opponent's move has been completed. The point being that one can only speak about completion when involving the clock. As you can see, the clock is not mentioned in the basic chess rules. Therefore, to avoid misunderstanding, there is a reference to Article 6.7 in Article 1.1.

Answer Two There are positions in which the king or one of the rooks has to move, because another legal move is not possible. Here are examples of both cases with White to move:

Diagram One



Diagram Two



It is clear that in Diagram One the only legal move is a king move and in Diagram Two the only legal move is a rook move. Although the player of the white pieces will lose the right to castle in both diagrams on the next move, the rule states that *in the actual position* the player has not yet lost the right to castle. This means that if same positions appear again on the board, these positions will be considered as different.

I illustrate it with Diagram One: Suppose the continuation is **1.Kf1 Bf4 2.Ke1 Bg3+ 3.Kf1 Bf4 4.Ke1**. Now Black plays **4...Bg3+** and the same position appears for the third time. Can Black claim threefold repetition of position? The answer is "No." Because when the position first appeared White had not lost his right to castle. Therefore, it is not a threefold repetition of position.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, In a team tournament a player may consult his captain about accepting an offer of a draw. In this situation can the captain first look at the position on the board of that player, or even the other boards of his team players and then give his opinion?

If your answer is "no," then I refer to a case where the captain is playing during the same round and he can look at the positions of his team mates during the game, which means he can state his opinion having considered the positions on the boards.

But when the captain is not playing and is far from the tables, then he does not enjoy the same privilege as a playing captain. Though I think when the captain is not playing he may look at the positions as a spectator. Thanks in advance. **FA Hadi Bakhshayesh (Iran)**

Answer I received a similar question from **Mr. Koos Abee** from the **The Netherlands**. I am afraid that the problem of the role of the team captain can never be solved. I refer to some rules:

Article 12.3.a of the Laws of Chess:

*During play the players are **forbidden to make use of any notes, sources***

of information or **advice**, or analyse on another chessboard.

Article 15 of the Tournament Rules:

*A captain is **entitled to advise** the players of his team to make or accept an offer of a draw or himself to give only brief information, based solely on the circumstances pertaining to the match. He may say to a player, "offer a draw, "accept the draw, or "resign the game. For example, if asked by a player whether he should accept an offer of a draw, the captain should answer "yes, "no, or delegate the decision to the player himself.*

The captain shall abstain from any intervention during play. He shall give no information to a player concerning the position on the chess board, nor consult any other person as to the state of the game.

The problem is the contradiction in these two Articles. Even if the captain doesn't give any precise line on how the player should continue the game, he nevertheless gives a kind of advice.

The situation where a player asks whether to accept or refuse a draw offer, and then the captain watches the position is not acceptable in my opinion. The captain, when asked for advice, should reply immediately. In fact, I do not see a real solution to the problem, unless we declare that a captain has no right to communicate with his players.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I have a couple of questions for you.

Question One I would like to know your opinion about the following statement contained in the Laws of Chess, Article 4.6:

The move is called legal when all the relevant requirements of the Article. 3 have been fulfilled.

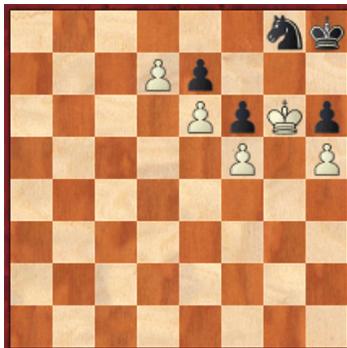
In my opinion, the term "relevant" is unclear and could cause different decisions depending on the arbiter's interpretation. For instance, I discussed this statement with several Italian arbiters, and our opinions differ about penalties to be applied or not in situations such as the following:

- incorrect castling (by moving the rook before the king).
- move executed using both hands.
- incomplete promotion.

I'm interested to know what is "relevant" and what is not in Article 3.

Question Two I'm referring to the question from Mr. Christian Sanchez in your [October 2010](#) column. Your answer was that it is usually possible to know if a stalemate will occur after a promotion, only after knowing which new piece will be substituting the promoted pawn.

I would like to know your opinion about situations such as the following:



[FEN "6nk/3Pp3/4PpKp/5P1P/8/8/8/8"]

If White moves the pawn d7 to d8 (or even simply touches such pawn intending to move it), can we immediately consider the position as "dead" or a

"stalemate," even if the promotion has not been completed? I think so, because the only possible move will be the promotion, causing a stalemate, no matter which piece will appear in d8. Do you agree? Thanks in advance.

Sergio Pagano (Italy)

Answer One The word "relevant" means "bearing upon or connected with the matter in hand" according to an English Dictionary. In my opinion, "relevant" in Article 4.6 means that the requirements must be fulfilled that are connected to a specific item. For instance,

- castling: only Article 3.8 is relevant for castling
- promotion: only the Articles 3.7a, c, d, and e are relevant.

I would also like to mention something regarding penalties: it is impossible, even inadvisable, to make a long list of infringements and the kind of penalties for these infringements. For some infringements the penalties are described in the Laws of Chess. For example, wrong castling and incomplete promotions are considered as illegal moves (See Article 7.4 of the Laws of Chess).

Answer Two Yes, I agree, even if he didn't touch the pawn on d7.

Question Sir, Consider the situation in the following diagram:



The player of the white pieces, in terrible time pressure and no increment, moves his b2-pawn to the middle of the squares b3 and b4 and presses the clock. If he moved the pawn to b3, it is a stalemate. So what will be the arbiter's decision and why? **Akash (India)**

Answer I assume that this happens in a normal game. If I had been the arbiter, I would have restarted White's clock and asked him what he intended to play: b2-b3 or b2-b4. I realize that in doing so I take the risk that he will overstep the time control, and in this situation the game is a draw, because the player of the black pieces cannot win by any series of legal moves. If a black pawn were on, say, h7, Black would win the game.

I can imagine that some arbiters would stop the clocks to ask the same question. But, in this case, it gives the player additional time to think about the move while his clock is not running.

Question Hello, Mr. Gijssen. I would like to ask you about a blitz game (three minutes):

We are playing an ending with rook, bishop, and pawn against rook and bishop (opposite colours). I have the side without pawns, but my adversary has some few seconds left. I am trying to win on time.

All of a sudden, my opponent stopped the clocks and said that the game is drawn because I cannot win. I answered that this is a blitz game and have the right to continue until he loses on time.

Do I have the right to continue playing with this material or my adversary is right? Up to which moment in blitz and rapid games do we have the right to continue playing? Thanks a lot for your answer. **A. M. Georgy (Belgium)**

Answer It depends on the circumstances. If there is adequate supervision (one arbiter for one game), Article 10.2 applies. If there is inadequate supervision (meaning that one arbiter has to supervise more than one game), Article 10.2 doesn't apply. For the record I quote Article 10.2 (in part):

If the player, having the move, has less than two minutes left on his clock, he may claim a draw before his flag falls. He shall summon the arbiter and may stop the clocks.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I would welcome your observations on two incidents which occurred in a recent FIDE rated open tournament I participated in London.

1) In a completely drawn position, I had thirty seconds left before the fortieth move time control to make my fortieth move. A spectator approaches my opponent (it was subsequently revealed he was a friend) and speaks to him in my thinking time – my opponent acknowledges this communication, but then signals him to leave. I am not only distracted by this, but lost all sense of thought, realise I now only have ten seconds left, and panic and make any move to avoid losing on time. The move loses my queen on the spot – my opponent sees this incident has caused me to blunder, and apologises – but then plays the winning move. I realise I should not have moved, stopped the clock, and summons the arbiter when the talking incident occurred – but was too panicked to do so and the arbiter was not standing nearby. I resigned immediately in disgust at the incident, but refused to sign the score-sheets (again in disgust at my opponent), to which my opponent summons the arbiter. The arbiter listens to the situation, and allows the result to stand – knowing I should not have moved when this incident happened, I am understanding of the situation the arbiter is in.

Is it not a glaring discrepancy in the rules of chess that if his mobile phone rings (regardless of whether he answers it), the game is lost, but if someone comes over and speaks to him at the board (and they could be discussing the position – I could not tell, but irrespective they can see it is in the opponent's thinking time and time trouble), and he answers/acknowledges them, the situation is less clear and requires action on the part of his opponent, when he may only have seconds left on the clock, to seek appropriate action?

2) At the same tournament, going to the bathroom, I see one of the players on the board next to me in the foyer speaking on his mobile phone – his game is still in progress. What course of action would you recommend for me in this situation, and the arbiter, were I to report it?

Am I right in understanding that FIDE is in the process of banning competitors from talking during games? What is the proposed timing for implementing this rule? Many Thanks. **Paul Heaton (UK)**

Answer I agree fully with the arbiter's decision. The only thing you could do in this situation is to stop both clocks and to summon the arbiter. It was your full right to do this in my opinion. I refer to Article 6.12.b of the Laws of Chess:

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.

Regarding the phoning player, you should inform the arbiter about what you noticed. If it is then evident to the arbiter that the player was calling someone, the arbiter should declare the game lost for this player.

During the FIDE Congress in 2012 there is a possibility to revise the Laws of Chess. The revised Laws will then come into force on July 1, 2013.

Question Dear Geurt, your answer in November's column about the Monroi did not alleviate my confusion. I understand well the fact that the players have to write the moves on the score-sheet prescribed by the competition, but if the player wants to use the Monroi as a second score-sheet in a FIDE rated event,

how can the arbiter prohibit it? The FIDE that approves the Monroi is the same FIDE that allows the arbiter to prohibit it? This does not make any sense to me.

I know that Article 12.3b may come into play here, but that's an issue that FIDE had to address when Monroi was reviewed prior to its approval. You say that the arbiter has to check the Monroi device during the game. I think that's part of the arbiter's job and if it brings too many problems to the arbiter, then FIDE should take a look again at the device. You also say that a player may "write" a move in advance and has the possibility to analyze a future position and although I think you have a really good point here, this is covered in the Laws of Chess in Article 8.1 and that's something the arbiter has to check. Also that point has to be addressed by FIDE, not by us, because the device is already approved. So we have to deal with the device until FIDE decides otherwise. Best Regards, **FA Edgar Murray Ortiz (Puerto Rico)**

Answer The main reason why I am personally against the use of two score-sheets, with one of them being the Monroi, is that the arbiter has to constantly check that it will be properly used by the player. I also wonder why a player likes to use two score-sheets. The only reason I can imagine is that he likes to save the game in his personal Monroi. But, in my opinion, it is very easy to put the whole game into the Monroi afterwards.

Finally, I agree that FIDE approved the Monroi. This means it can be used as an official score-sheet in a tournament. If it is used as the official score-sheet, there is a permanent check that it is used properly. If it is used incidentally, this supervision is absent. I would like to emphasise that this is my personal opinion.

Question Dear Sir, I was recently assisting in officiating a local kids tournament. At the start of the tournament the chief arbiter announced some rules, especially regarding illegal moves. One of the rules stated by him was that merely touching a piece that could not make any legal moves constituted an illegal move. I went through the laws of chess, but could not find any article that mentioned anything like this. Was the chief arbiter correct in his point? Also, is touching a piece when it is your opponent's move considered an illegal move? Will he have to play that piece on his next move? Kindly reply. Regards, **Sahaj Goyal (India)**

Answer You are correct that the statements of this chief arbiter are not covered in the Laws of Chess. Nevertheless, I understand his purpose. You mentioned that it was a local chess tournament for children. Apparently, he wanted to teach the children that they have to think before they touch any piece. If you consider his statements as part of a process on how to behave in a "normal" tournament, it is not so bad.

Question Hi, Geurt. Is it legal to write punctuation marks against moves (such as "!" or "?") during a game? It seems inappropriate, but such marks aren't usually considered "notes." Thank you, **Paul Epstein (UK)**

Answer I refer to Article 12.4 of the Laws of Chess:

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.

As you may notice, punctuation marks are not mentioned in this Article. If a player were to write these marks, I would forbid it. In my opinion, it is also a kind of intimidation. It is very unpleasant for an opponent, although he has no right to watch the opponent's score-sheet, to notice that the player marks his own move with an exclamation point and his opponent's with a question mark. Even the opposite is possible: It can be very misleading for a player to make a move and immediately add a question mark to it.

Have a question for Geurt Gijssen? Perhaps he will reply in his next [ChessCafe.com](#) column. Please include your name and country of residence.

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