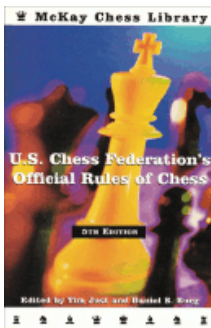




## COLUMNISTS

## An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen

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## What Shall We Do with an Annoying Spectator?

**Question** Dear Geurt, I have four questions for you.

**Question One** A normal game starts. The player with the black pieces thinks that the white pieces belong to him, makes the move e4 and presses the clock. After twenty-five minutes his opponent arrives and calls the arbiter to resolve the problem. What does the arbiter have to do?

**Question Two** I am a National Arbiter and I am looking forward to being an International Arbiter, but as you know, I have to be a FIDE Arbiter first. Would you please check for me in the FIDE records if I have the enough norms for the FIDE title?

**Question Three** Is it true that just the norms are needed or besides the norms do I have to take a test?

**Question Four** Is it possible to send you any questions in Spanish? **Wilfredo Paulino (Dominican Republic)**

**Answer One** Let me refer to Article 7.2 of the Laws of Chess:

*If a game has begun with colours reversed then it shall continue, unless the arbiter rules otherwise.*

In your case the arbiter should start the game again with reversed colours with a reduction of twenty-five minutes on White's clock.

The reason of this suggestion is as follows: Normally when we have to start the game with reversed colours, the initial clock times have to be set on both clocks. The consequence can be that the game finishes quite late and this can influence the schedule of the tournament. In your case this danger doesn't exist.

**Answer Two** I refer to the Regulations of the Titles of Arbiters which you may find in Chapter 05 of the FIDE Handbook:

*Required is experience as chief or deputy arbiter in at least three (3) FIDE rated events (these can be either national or international) and attendance of at least one (1) FIDE Arbiters' Seminar and successful passing (at least 80%) an examination test set by the Arbiters' Commission.*

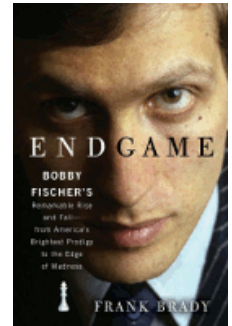
*FIDE rated event valid for a norm is considered any tournament with minimum 10 players in case that it is played with Round Robin system, with minimum 6 players in case that it is played with Double Round Robin system and with minimum 20 players in case that it is played with Swiss system.*

This is the general rule: three FIDE rated tournaments as chief or deputy chief arbiter and a seminar organized by the Arbiters' Commission. Regarding the seminar, I advise you to contact your federation for information about its organization.

**Answer Three** Yes, you have to take a test after the seminar mentioned in Answer Two.

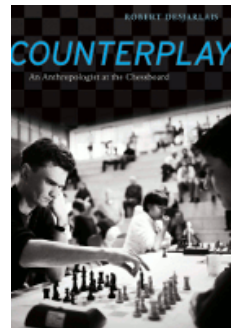
**Answer Four** I prefer the English language.

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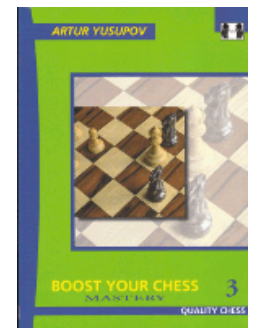
[Endgame](#)

by Frank Brady



[Counterplay](#)

by Robert Desjarlais



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by Artur Yusupov

**Question** Dear Geurt, Are there any rules on how to place the pieces on the board? I am especially thinking about the placement of the knights. To my great irritation, my last opponent placed his knights so they pointed straight forward. When he moved them, he again placed them so they pointed straight forward instead of "looking" to the side. Once, when my opponent had gone for a walk and I had made my move, I turned his knights to the side. When my opponent returned, he placed them "looking" straight forward again. I think it is more difficult to distinguish the forward-pointing knight from other pieces than the "side-looking" knight. Best wishes, **Jeppé Nicolaisen (Denmark)**

**Answer** There are no rules how to place the pieces on the board, except that they must be placed in the center of the square. Especially when electronic boards and pieces are used, this (unwritten) rule is very important. In this case the board may "recognize" the pieces very well. Each player has his own habit regarding the placements of knights. Let me give some examples: Karpov's knights look to the right side. Kasparov's knights look to the left side. Ivanchuk's knights are positioned pointing toward the center of the board. Your assertion that forward looking knights are difficult to distinguish is not very convincing.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, In a tournament I participated in the following incident occurred. Player A's (White) flag fell. After about two minutes, Player B made an illegal move that was noticed. The arbiter and the players also drew attention to the fact that the flag of Player A had fallen. The arbiter decided to add two minutes to Player A and to continue the game. Was that a correct decision? Many thanks. **Nikita Tsjinjarjev (Russia)**

**Answer** I mentioned in a previous column that a flag in a normal game is considered to have fallen when the arbiter or a player notices this fact. The flag fall was noticed after the opponent has claimed an illegal move. The arbiter has in this case to act according to Article 7.4.b of the Laws of Chess:

*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.*

If after the addition of two minutes extra thinking time, the player has still overstepped the time limit, the arbiter has to declare the game lost for this player.

**Question** I have a friend who has no FIDE rating and he will play a closed tournament where there will be eight players without FIDE rating and four with FIDE rating. I know that he needs to score one point (not sure if a half point is OK) and at the end of the tournament he will then have a FIDE rating on the next FIDE list.

Is it necessary that this point is made against a player with a FIDE rating? I think that it is not necessary. By the way, take into consideration that none will make 100% or 0%, so every player will win at least one point at the tourney and none will win more than ten points. (Eleven is the maximum, because it is a round robin tournament with twelve players and therefore eleven rounds.) Regards, **Antonio Mendonça (Brazil)**

**Answer** You can find all the requirements in the FIDE Handbook, Chapter 02: FIDE Rating Regulations. I refer to some Articles of the Rating Regulations, which are in my opinion relevant for answering to your question::

*6.1 If an unrated player scores zero or half in his first event, his score and that of his opponents against him are disregarded.*

*6.3 In a round robin tournament at least one-third of the players must be rated.*

*7.1 The rating is at least the rating floor.*

Some comments on the above:

Article 6.1: It is not written that he has to score a point against rated players.

Article 6.2: The composition of the tournament you have in mind fulfills the requirements of this Article.

Article 7.1: The rating floor is at the moment 1200.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, Suppose that in a normal game that there is a thirty second increment for each move and a player has not recorded some recent moves. What will be your decision when his opponent summons you and informs you about this illegal action? For example, when the player who has not recorded several recent moves (say, ten moves) has only three to four minutes or less on his clock and of course thirty seconds increment for each move. Is it true that the arbiter compels the player to write down all the unrecorded moves on his remaining time, probably ending with his flag falling and loss of game? Thanks in advance. **FA Hadi Bakhshayesh (Iran)**

**Answer** I refer to some Articles of the Laws of Chess:

Article 8.1 (first part):

*In the course of play each player is required to record his own moves and those of his opponent in the correct manner, move after move, as clearly and legibly as possible, in the algebraic notation (See Appendix C), on the scoresheet prescribed for the competition.*

Article 8.4:

*If a player has less than five minutes left on his clock at some stage in a period and does not have additional time of 30 seconds or more added with each move, then for the remainder of the period he is not obliged to meet the requirements of Article 8.1.*

Article 13.1:

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

In my opinion these Articles are very clear. It is a requirement to write down the moves. And the player who doesn't record moves, as it is described in Article 8.1 and 8.4, has the obligation to do so when the fact has been noticed.

Article 13.1 is also clear: the word "strictly" doesn't need any comment.

I would like to add that the player who didn't record the moves has a benefit. He has more time for thinking about his move and in some circumstances his opponent thus has less time.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, In your [answer to Mr. De Sio's question](#) (Player A's phone rings before Player B arrives) you skipped a little marginal question in his second point: Has the game started? Article 1.1 says:

*The player with the white pieces commences the game.*

I understand that it probably refers to the fact that white plays first, but is the closest I could find to a "game start" reference. That would mean that the presence of the white player is needed for the game to start. Following that logic, in Mr. De Sio's question it would matter if Player A is playing white or black. If Player A has the black pieces, then the game has not yet started when his phone rang and there couldn't be a penalty.

**Question One** When does the game start?

**Question Two** When does the game end?

Article 12.3 says,

*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.*

My understanding is that after Player A's phone rang the game was over and the score was settled. And, not having a game to play anymore, it is irrelevant at what time Player B arrives or if he shows up at all. By your answer to Mr. De Sio, I see that you disagree with me. At what point would you say this game ended? And since Article 12.3 only allows awarding Player B a win or a draw, how can we give him a loss without breaking the Laws of Chess? Best regards, **Javier Araujo (U.S.A)**

**Answer One** If one considers only one sentence of Article 1.1, I fully agree with you that its interpretation can be a little bit misleading. Therefore, I would like to quote the whole Article:

*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)*

But if I read the sentence you mentioned in the context of Article 1.1, the real meaning of the sentence is clear. It is just what you stated: the meaning is that white plays the first move. I intend during the FIDE Congress in 2012 to propose to change this sentence:

*The player with the white pieces makes the first move.*

I would also like to mention Article 6.5 of the Tournament Rules, being a chapter of the Laws of Chess:

*At the time determined for the start of the game the clock of the player who has the white pieces is started.*

It is in fact the same discussion we have had several times before, regarding "moving a piece" (Article 1.1) and "completing a move" (Article 6.7). I conclude that a game starts at the moment the clock of the player having the white pieces is started.

**Answer Two** I am afraid you found a hole in the Laws of Chess. It was written before the ruling that a player whose mobile rings loses the game and the arbiter decides the result of his opponent. When we (the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee of FIDE) changed the wording of this Article, we thought that only two results were possible: the opponent wins or he cannot checkmate the player's king by any series of legal moves, resulting in a draw. We really overlooked the third possibility that the opponent can also lose the game, for instance, in case the opponent doesn't show up. But I also have to indicate that a no-show is covered in Article 6.6.a of the Laws of Chess:

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

**Question** Dear Geurt, I have a question about draw offers. This situation came up in a recent game of mine. The time limit was Game/120. Neither player was in time trouble.

Player A's king was in check. He moved the king, then said, "Draw?" and pressed the button on his clock. Player B responded, "What?"

1. Is the response "What?" considered a rejection of the draw offer?
2. Does tone of voice matter? Player B could have been expressing his contempt for the offer.

3. Can Player A repeat the draw offer? He has already pressed the clock.
4. Must Player A repeat the draw offer? In the game in question, Player A examined the position and discovered he was winning a piece, so he did not want to repeat the draw offer.
5. If Player A must repeat the draw offer, how long can he wait before speaking? Player B's clock is running.
6. Should the arbiter adjust the clocks if Player A delays his response, and if so, how much time should he add or subtract?

Thanks for your consideration of my question. **Mike Splane (U.S.A)**

#### **Answer**

1. I agree with you that the question "What?" can be interpreted in several ways.
2. For the moment, I am ready to interpret his question as: Player B didn't understand what Player A asked him.
3. Also, amongst civilized people the normal reaction is to repeat the question immediately. If the situation really was as you described, I can only conclude that Player A, who apparently changed his mind, showed a very unfair behavior.
4. It is in my opinion quite normal to repeat a question if it is unclear what is being asked. See my previous remark regarding unfair behavior.
5. I prefer not to answer this question. First of all there is no applicable rule, but more importantly, it is quite normal to respond immediately.
6. My question is: Did the arbiter notice the entire event? Was he aware that Player A offered a draw? If this is not the case, Player A can deny that he offered a draw. In case the arbiter saw everything, then he can interfere, and even inform Player B that Player A had offered a draw.

**Question** Hi Geurt, I know you're not allowed to distract your opponent in any way, but I get distracted when someone comes up to the table I am playing at and stares at the position over my shoulder. How close can a spectator stand next to you while you're playing? It's very annoying. Best,  
**Brad Ashlock (Australia)**

**Answer** There are no written rules about the distance between a spectator and a player. Nevertheless, you may always summon the arbiter in case you feel disturbed by a spectator, and this spectator can be another player and even the arbiter, who is standing close, in your opinion even too close, to the board.

In professional chess you may notice, quite often in the situation you described, that the player looks up to this spectator and this spectator understands very well that he has to move away.

**Question** Good day Mr. Gijssen, I have two scenarios related to blind players. Player A is blind and Player B is not blind.

**Question One** They are playing in a normal chess tournament with an adaptive board for the blind and a normal board. The time limit is ninety moves in ninety minutes. The board positions of the two players are different and Player B calls the arbiter.

After replaying the game we found that Player B recorded the moves that were called by the blind player, but he did not update his own board. Because of this, he moved a piece that could be captured by the blind player, who has the correct position on his board.

What will the ruling be?

Our ruling was that he must update his board according to his notation and that the blind player had the right to capture the piece.

**Question Two** During the same round, the same players encountered the same problem again.

This time around Player B made an illegal move because he did not update his own board again, but he didn't record yet. Will this be a different ruling? This time around we considered it to be an illegal move and we started the game where he had to update according to the position before he made the illegal move. Because it was also a touch move he had to move that piece. Thank you. **FA Fransie Grobbelaar (South Africa)**

**Answer** I refer to Articles 7 and 8 of Appendix E of the Laws of Chess: Rules for play with Blind and Visually Handicapped -

*If during a game different positions should arise on the two boards, they must be corrected with the assistance of the controller and by consulting both players' game scores. If the two game scores correspond with each other, the player who has written the correct move but executed the wrong one must adjust his position to correspond with the move on the game scores.*

*If, when such differences occur and the two game scores are found to differ, the moves shall be retraced to the point where the two scores agree and the controller shall readjust the clocks accordingly.*

As far I can judge the two situations, the arbiter acted according the Articles I mentioned.

**Question** Mr. Gijssen, I have a couple of cases for your consideration.

**Question One** During a recent weekend Swiss tournament I was directing the following occurred. Player A and Player B are paired with each other, and Player C and Player D are paired with each other. They are on adjacent boards. At the start of the round (the final round in this case) Players A and C are present, but each of their opponents is apparently running late. They both start their opponent's clocks and begin to wait. There is a one hour allowance in the tournament rules before a player is forfeited. Ten minutes after the start of the round, Player D arrives, but he sits down at the wrong board, across from Player A, and they begin to play. Ten minutes after that Player B arrives, realizes what has happened and calls the arbiter.

The decision I made was to abort the game currently being played between A and D, and have Player D moved to his proper board. The clock which was being used for the A-D game was reset so that Player A had full time and Player B, who was twenty minutes late, had twenty minutes less. The other clock was not reset, and Player D began his proper game twenty minutes behind.

My questions are as follows: Do you feel this was the correct decision? Should the arbiter consider the position on the board when making his decision (say a player is up a pawn, or a piece)? If the game A-D had already finished, I would be inclined to keep the score, but if there was still time I would try to have the proper games played, and have A-D rated but not counted toward tournament score, though Players A and D might object. In short, what factors should the arbiter consider when dealing with such a situation?

**Question Two** While playing a game recently I had a complicated position, where I was a piece behind. I had a dangerous attack for the piece, though it was by no means clear my attack would be sufficient, and I saw he had at least one way to potentially get the better of me. My opponent offered me a draw, but without making a move. I requested that he make a move and that I would then think about it. In fact I had already decided to accept if he played one particular move, but I would likely keep playing on any other move. My opponent thought for another ten minutes, played the right move, and I

accepted the draw.

Now for the question: suppose that during his thinking time after having offered a draw, my opponent realizes he is better, and decides he no longer wishes to offer a draw. Is my telling him to make a move a declination of the draw offer? Could it be considered a conditional acceptance? Article 9.1 mentions that a draw offer cannot be conditional; however, it makes no mention of a conditional acceptance or conditional offer to consider the offer. Or is the draw offer not complete until he makes a move? 9.1 also says that draw offers made outside the normal procedure are still valid, and it does not say that I can request my opponent follow procedure. I believe it is in the spirit of the rule that I should be able to ask my opponent to make a move before accepting or declining. Could you give an opinion on this matter?  
**Stuart Brammall (Canada)**

**Answer One** I don't know whether your decision to abort the game A-D was correct or not, but I would make the same decision. In the Laws of Chess I couldn't find any reference regarding the case you mentioned, but this is not so strange, because the Tournament Rules of the Laws of Chess deal only with an individual game. I checked also the Regulations for Swiss Tournaments. In these Regulations nothing has been written about "wrong" pairings. The only, more or less similar case, I could find is Article 7.2 of the Laws of Chess:

*If a game has begun with colours reversed then it shall continue, unless the arbiter rules otherwise.*

Apparently, it is possible to start a new game in case the colours are wrong. Then it must be possible to start a new game in case the opponent is wrong. I cannot believe that anyone will disagree with me.

In your case the wrong pairings were discovered shortly after the start of the round. This makes it even more reasonable to stick to the original pairings.

The position on the board is in my opinion irrelevant.

The most interesting question is what to do if the game A-D is already finished. I am not sure that the game shall be rated if the original games A-B and C-D will be played. I am inclined not to rate this game. It is possible that a player misses a norm because he lost this extra game or just made a norm by winning this extra game. I see a huge danger for cheating when we accept that such a game will be rated. And, in general, a game valid for rating calculation, should also be valid for a norm. I should keep the game A-D and also B-C, if the game had finished.

**Answer Two** Let me refer to Article 9.1.b.(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.*

The procedure of offering a draw is clear:

1. Make a move.
2. Offer the draw.
3. Press the clock.

Although the procedure of offering a draw and pressing the clock is incorrect, the offer is still valid. In both cases the draw offer cannot be withdrawn.

In this Article it is mentioned that no conditions can be attached. It means that the player who offered the draw cannot attach a condition. I have the impression that you interpret that this part of the Article implies that the

opponent cannot attach a condition. This is not true. Finally, I would like to remark that the opponent only asked that correct procedure be followed. By making a move the situation has not changed.

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