



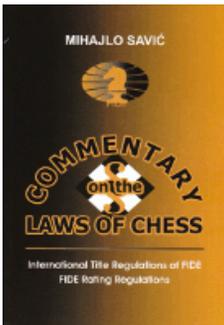
COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



Translate this page



**Free Shipping!**  
**On all Orders**  
**More than \$95!**

**UPS GROUND or Media Mail.**

Hide the Scoresheet!

**Question One** Dear Geurt, There is a situation I have concerns about and would appreciate reading your opinion on the following.

Article 7.4 b states

*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.*

In other cases of violations against the Laws of Chess (for example, Articles 12.3.b and 12.8) the punishment is always the same, regardless of the position on the board. In article 7.4.b however the offender receives a lesser punishment – not a loss but half a point – depending on the situation on the board (when the opponent cannot checkmate).

In my opinion it is the seriousness of the offense that counts, not the circumstances on the board or environmental factors. Therefore, when the opponent can't checkmate, the offender should be punished with a loss and the opponent should get half a point, as is the case in 12.3.b. Do you agree?

**Question Two** Article 5.2 a states

*The game is drawn when the player to move has no legal move and his king is not in check. The game is said to end in 'stalemate.' This immediately ends the game, provided that the move producing the stalemate position was legal.*

In a logical sense, when a game is ended, there can be no player to move. So, wouldn't it be better to rephrase this article, for example as in 5.2 b, starting with, "The game is drawn when a position has arisen... etc"?

**Question Three** In my opinion Article 4.2 doesn't belong in Chapter 4 but instead should be situated close to 7.3 and 7.5. **Angelo Spiler (The Netherlands)**

**Answer One** No, I do not agree with you. There are two types of violations:

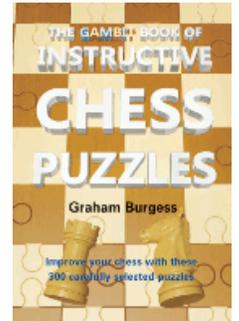
1. Violations on the board (illegal moves).
2. Violations showing bad behavior.

**Type One** I am confident that in general a player does not make an illegal move on purpose in a normal game (blitz games can be another story). I am also entirely certain he will not when he has a position where he cannot lose by any series of legal moves. As a matter of fact, he can even claim a draw. In my opinion it is unfair in this situation to declare the game lost for this player.

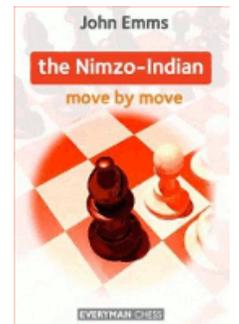
**Type Two** Bad behavior should be punished in another way. In my opinion the way an offending player will be punished in this case is also quite fair. I discuss as an example the ringing mobile.

In this case the game will be declared lost for the offending player. The Laws of Chess do not state that the game will be declared won for the opponent. And in these cases the arbiter has to investigate the actual position of the game. Can the opponent win the game by any series of legal moves? If the

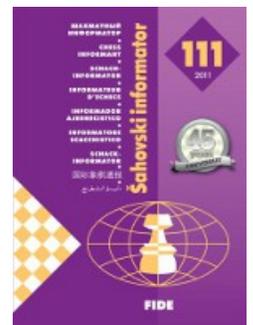
Purchases from our [chess shop](#) help keep [ChessCafe.com](#) freely accessible:



[Gambit Book of Instructive Chess Puzzles](#)  
 by Graham Burgess



[Nimzo-Indian: Move by Move](#)  
 by John Emms



[Chess Informant #111](#)  
 by Branko Tadic

answer is "Yes, he can," then the opponent receives a full point. If the answer is "No," he receives only half a point with the offending player receiving a score of zero for the game. I repeat: it is fair to penalize in this way. If the opponent does not have sufficient material to win the game, it is correct to award half a point.

**Answer Two** Although I have the opinion that the current text is very clear, I have no problems in rephrasing this Article in line with Article 5.2.b.

**Answer Three** All of Article 4 has to do with the behavior of the players. Therefore, it would be quite logical to move the whole of Article 4 to the Tournament Rules. But, on the other hand, it is very basic that, for instance, a touched piece should be played or captured. I would like to discuss this matter with my colleagues on the Rules and Tournament Regulations Commission.

**Question** Dear Geurt, One of my opponents in our chess club records the moves of his games in a little booklet, but there is nothing to indicate the number of moves played. I noticed this when I was in time trouble and I was quite annoyed because I could not check whether we had recorded the same number of moves. We play without an arbiter.

Is it an obligation to record the moves in the sequence they are played and is it allowed to record the moves on an unnumbered scoresheet? Best regards,  
**Peter Boll (The Netherlands)**

**Answer** Let me quote the first sentence of Article 8.1:

*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.*

As you can see in this Article, the moves must be written in the sequence they are played, **move after move**. Secondly, the scoresheet must be **prescribed for the competition**.

Of course, in your case there is no scoresheet prescribed for the competition. Therefore, it is appropriate that each chess club should have scoresheets that can be used in their competitions.

This brings me to another point. There is no Article in the Laws of Chess and the Tournament Regulations that describes the requirements of a scoresheet, such as the minimum and maximum size of the scoresheet, the minimum number of moves listed, etc.

You wrote that you were annoyed that you could not check your opponent's scoresheet for the number of completed moves. However, there is no rule that a player has to show his scoresheet to the opponent. In my opinion, he may even hide his scoresheet from the opponent, but not from the arbiter.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, I have a question about food and other edible items.

In many tournaments played here in India of any type – district, state, national and international – players eat and drink while the game is in progress with their clock ticking. I have seen in other sports players drink and have food, but then the game is **temporarily paused**. While the game is in progress this is not acceptable. Examples include the outdoor games of cricket and tennis.

It is very annoying when your opponent opens up a chocolate candy and you don't have one! Some of the players even eat noodles while the game is in progress. It is disturbing to the opponent.

One of our arbiters has stated that according to the rules it is acceptable to eat and drink while the game is in progress. If so, I want to make a correction to the rule, "You can eat or drink whatever you wish but not at the board and it must occur outside the playing area."

Let me know your opinion. Thank you. **Abhijeet Joshi (India)**

**Answer** There is no explicit rule that eating and drinking forbids at the board, but there is a general rule. See Article 12.6:

*It is forbidden to distract or annoy the opponent in any manner whatsoever.*

An eating opponent can be very annoying and disturbing. If a player feels disturbed, he always has the possibility to call the arbiter and to point out how he feels. The arbiter can then take appropriate measures.

In professional chess the majority of the players understand that eating at the board is quite unpleasant. It is quite rare that they eat in front of the opponent. In general a beverage at the board is not a problem.

**Question** Dear Geurt, This is in reference to your answer to the question posed by Krzysztof Chojnacki in your [September 2011 column](#) regarding the claim for a draw by threefold repetition.

I too have had a claim refused by an ECF arbiter at a tournament in Blackpool, England. The situation was identical to the one mentioned. I wrote my move down and told my opponent that I intended to play it and the position would then be repeated three times. This was disputed with the comment that he "was the one repeating moves not me." I pointed out that it's the position, not the moves, that are important.

The arbiter was now called. After some time my opponent and the arbiter finally agreed the position was to be repeated three times if I made my intended move. My opponent was still protesting the claim. The arbiter then claimed that I had not made the claim for a draw in the correct way.

I must first call the arbiter and not say anything to my opponent. Article 9.2a does indeed state that the Arbiter must be called. It does not say that you must tell your opponent. The arbiter declared that my claim was procedurally incorrect and that the game must continue.

The game eventually ended in a draw. I would welcome your comments on the arbiter's interpretation of Article 9.2a. Regards, **Jim Hawksley (UK)**

**Answer** The arbiter mentioned Article 9.2:

*The game is drawn upon a correct claim by the player having the move, when the same position, for at least the third time (not necessarily by a repetition of moves) is about to appear, if he first writes his move on his scoresheet and declares to the arbiter his intention to make this move.*

According to the literal text of this Article, the arbiter is correct. But it is not a correct decision according to the spirit of this Article. Essential is the fact that the player had written down his intended move. And, of course, he may inform his opponent, indicating the intended move. If the opponent refuses, he can call the arbiter. The attitude of the arbiter and opponent in this case appears to be childish.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, The following situation occurred in a team match in which I participated:

A member of my team had black against a higher-rated opponent, had an inferior position and only three minutes left for ten moves until the time control (forty moves in two hours and one hour sudden death). He made his move, pressed his clock, and then left the room.

White then pressed his clock without making a move. About thirty seconds later, Black returned to find his clock running despite the fact that White has not moved. He protested to his opponent and pressed his clock so that White's clock started running again. The team captains were summoned (no referee at this level) and the players explained what happened. White said he was

distracted and confused and pressed the clock by accident. He apologized for his mistake.

Neither the captains nor any other players present were sure of the rules for this situation.

In the ensuing discussion, several options are mentioned, including:

1. Award the win to Black.
2. Award Black an extra thirty seconds to make up for the time he lost between White pressing his clock and his return to the board and pressing the clock again.
3. Time penalty of two minutes against White as a punishment for the infringement. I suspected that this would be the correct and most fair course of action – with a forfeit to follow in the event of a repetition. But I didn't forcefully insist on this since I was unsure whether or not I was right.

Eventually, White and his captain say that they would accept awarding the game to Black if he insisted on a forfeit, which he did. So Black won the game.

Previously in the game, White had touched his rook first before castling. Black had pointed out this mistake, but, in the interests of sportsmanship, refrained from enforcing the touch-move rule. However, this incident made him less inclined to be lenient in the clock incident. In addition, the fact that he was losing and running out of time, as well as the fact that his team were trailing in the match score, helped persuade him to insist on the forfeit whereas under different circumstances he may have consented to play on.

On a side note, of course it is slightly bizarre that a relatively highly rated player would make these two mistakes.

I couldn't find anything pertaining to this situation in the rules. I would be very interested in hearing your opinion. Thanks and best regards, **Seán McGinley (Germany)**

**Answer** I understand that the two captains acted as arbiters. It is clear that the player of the white pieces made a mistake by pressing the clock without making a move. In this situation the arbiters have to judge what should happen, that is, what kind of penalty should be imposed. The fact that the opponent insisted that the game should be declared lost for the opponent may, in my opinion, not influence the arbiters' decision.

In my opinion a compensation of two minutes to the player would have been an appropriate penalty. What happened before in the game (castling) is irrelevant to the decision.

**Question One** Dear Geurt, I have to admit that I am too lazy to study the FIDE rules, but I doubt whether the answer is in there.

When I see during the game that my opponent is recording his moves on his scoresheet incorrectly, am I allowed to go to the arbiter and tell him this? This would be to avoid possible disagreements during time trouble.

For example, recently I saw that my opponent had recorded one move less after around twelve moves.

**Question Two** You have received so many questions in your column. Did you ever think of classifying them? Just to prevent someone from asking a question that you answered already in one of your previous columns.

A proper classification is probably very difficult, but I just want to know whether you ever had plans in that direction? Best regards, **Aard Daanen (The Netherlands)**

**Answer One** Yes, you may inform the arbiter that your opponent did not write down all the moves. It is my opinion that the arbiter should check from time to time whether both scoresheets show the same number of moves. I refer to Article 8.1 of the Laws of Chess:

*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 competition*

In case he sees a difference, he shall intervene if he considers it appropriate, and shall inform the player to update his scoresheet.

**Answer Two** Yes, I have thought about it, but, because there is potential to change the Laws of Chess every four years, I did not see any reason to classify the questions and answers.

**Question** Dear Geurt, What would be the best result in the following situation? Player A gets permission from the chief arbiter twenty minutes before the game starts to go the clinic. Now, at the start of the round Player B is not yet in and the time to award a point if an opponent is present is thirty minutes. Both Players A and B have not shown and only Player A shows ten minutes before the end of the round. What score would be appropriate?

Regards, **Chanda Nsakanya (Zambia)**

**Answer** There was a time that the Laws of Chess mentioned that in case a player was not present at the board in time the game was lost by him, unless the arbiter decides otherwise. The arbiter could so decide if he had the opinion that it was a case of *circumstances outside one's control (force majeure)*. But, unfortunately, the addition *unless the arbiter decides otherwise* is not valid since July 1, 2009.

It is my opinion that the arbiter had no authority to permit Player A to arrive later than thirty minutes after the start of the round. The problem is that Player A had relied on the fact that he may be late. Therefore, the game should be declared + – for Player A.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, In a normal tournament there is one hour until forfeit. In this case the game starts at 10:00, and the forfeit would occur at 11:00. The player of the black pieces starts the clock of player of the white pieces. At 10:58 the player of the white pieces arrives and takes his seat. At 11:04 he still has not made his move.

The player of the black pieces calls the arbiter and tells him that his opponent lost by forfeit because he arrived after the forfeit period. The player of the white pieces denies this and he says that he arrived before 11:00 and was therefore in time. If the arbiter has not seen the arrival of the player of the white pieces, what is the decision of the arbiter? **Wilfredo Paulino (Dominican Republic)**

**Answer** In my opinion, the case is very simple. The arbiter has not noticed that the player of the white pieces arrived in time. This is a mistake of the arbiter. A good arbiter keeps an eye on all boards where a player is absent. One hour after the start of the round there are typically very few absent players and therefore this situation is very simple to control. It is also quite interesting to speculate why the opponent claimed at 11:04 and not immediately at 11:00.

The conclusion is clear: The game continues.

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, We have a school league that runs yearly for six different age groups. At the beginning of this year (2011) it was decided by the committee that we will play a best out of three.

We meant by that if a player wins both games a third game is not played. In all other cases a third game is played.

I drew up a results form that allowed the teachers to record the individual game points. By summing these game points they could then determine what

school won the day the fixture was played. When the league was finished in September I summed all the game points to determine the points of the individual schools. I sent out the results to the schools giving them fifteen days to declare disputes if they did not agree with the results.

I received no disputes from the schools. However I received an email from a committee member claiming the results were incorrect. She claims that we should have used match points to determine the results. What is your opinion on this? **Loyd Wellen (South Africa)**

**Answer** The following is my understanding of the situation. There was a team competition, played on a certain number of boards. We will assume for the purpose of my decision that this was four boards. Each team plays or meets all other teams twice. It means in each team match there were four individual matches of two games. If a player won both games, this individual match was finished. If the result after two games was not a perfect two wins, a third game in this individual match was played.

The possible results of the individual matches are thus two and a half points of three ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  of 3), two points out of three (2 of 3), one and a half points out of three ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  of 3), one point of three (1 of 3), one half point out of three ( $\frac{1}{2}$  of 3) and zero of two (0-2).

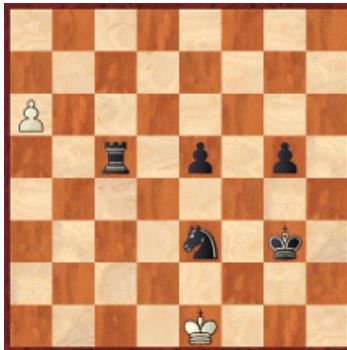
The maximum number of game points scored by a team was therefore ten of a possible twelve. And this would be, under your system, a better result than eight out of eight. This is of course impossible to defend under any method of logic.

Therefore, game points is a bad criterion. I agree with the committee member that match points should be used. An alternative was to calculate the percentages of the scores, that is, scored points divided by the number of games of each team.

---

## Update

In the [October 2011 column](#) I published the final position of a game and asked you to guess who the players were.



[FEN "8/8/P7/2r1p1p1/8/4n1k1/8/4K3 w - - 0 60"]

This game was **Kasparov – Karpov**, SWIFT-Chess World Championship, Brussels 1987

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.Nc3 Bb7 5.a3 d5 6.cxd5 Nxd5 7.Qc2 Nxc3 8.  
bxc3 Be7 9.e3 0-0 10.Bd3 h6 11.e4 c5 12.0-0 Ba6 13.Bf4 cxd4 14.Bxa6  
Nxa6 15.cxd4 Qc8 16.Qe2 Qb7 17.Rfd1 Rfe8 18.Ne5 Rad8 19.Rd3 Bf6 20.  
Rad1 Nb8 21.Ng4 Bg5 22.Bxg5 hxg5 23.e5 Qe7 24.Qe4 Nd7 25.f4 Nf8 26.  
fxg5 Qxg5 27.Rg3 Nh7 28.Rf1 g6 29.Qf3 Kh8 30.h4 Qf5 31.Qe3 Qh5 32.  
Rxf7 Rf8 33.Rxf8+ Rxf8 34.Nf2 Qxh4 35.Rh3 Qf4 36.Ne4 Qxe3+ 37.Rxe3  
Rd8 38.Ng5 Nxc3 39.Rc3 Rxd4 40.Rc8+ Kg7 41.Rc7+ Nf7 42.Rxa7 Rd5  
43.Rb7 b5 44.Kf2 Rxe5 45.Kf3 Kf6 46.Kf4 g5+ 47.Kf3 Nd6 48.Rb6 Nc4 49.  
Rb8 Re3+ 50.Kf2 Kf5 51.Rxb5+ e5 52.Rc5 Rc3 53.a4 Kf4 54.g3+ Ke4 55.  
a5 Rc2+ 56.Kg1 Kf3 57.a6 Kxg3 58.Kf1 Ne3+ 59.Ke1 Rxc5 1-0

The time control of this event was five minutes per player. Before the tournament I received an offer from Tom Fürstenberg ,who was ready to provide electronic clocks for this event. I liked the idea very much, but when I spoke with Kasparov about it, his reaction was, "No way, no electronic clocks." Yes, the times have and are changing.

---

© 2011 Geurt Gijssen. All Rights Reserved.

---

A PDF file of [this month's column](#), along with all previous columns, is available in the [ChessCafe.com Archives](#).

---

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

*[Yes, I have a question for Geurt!](#)*

---

Comment on this month's column via our [Contact Page](#)! Pertinent responses will be posted below daily.

---

 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

 [HOME](#)

 [COLUMNS](#)

 [LINKS](#)

 [ARCHIVES](#)

 [ABOUT THE  
CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)  
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[ChessCafe Archives\]](#)  
[\[ChessCafe Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#)  
[\[Contact ChessCafe.com\]](#)

© 2011 BrainGamz, Inc. All Rights Reserved.  
"ChessCafe.com®" is a registered trademark of BrainGamz, Inc.