



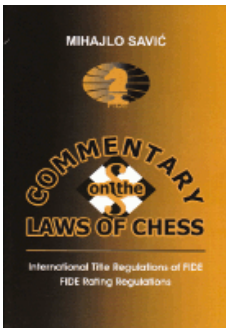
COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



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Browsing the Bookstall During Play

**Question** Dear Mr. Gijssen, I read in Article A4a of Rapid play:

*Once each player has completed three moves, no claim can be made regarding incorrect piece placement, orientation of the chessboard or clock setting. In case of reverse king and queen placement castling with this king is not allowed.*

But what about a king placed, for example, on a bishop's square? Some arbiters, using their "sound judgements" (as suggested in the Preface) say that it can't castle anyway. I remember I.A. Bombelli teaching *Si lex voluit dixit, nisi voluit tacuit*, meaning "Don't find non-existent rules!" If the purpose of A4a is to avoid irregular castling, isn't it better to write "In case of wrong king placement" without mentioning any other piece? Sincerely yours, **Valerio Boggio (Italy)**

**Answer** Yes, you are right: *Ubi lex voluit, dixit. Ubi lex noluit, tacuit*. The most common error is, of course, the reverse king and queen placement. Perhaps it is better to change this Article as you suggest.

**Question** Dear Gijssen, My opponent's mobile rang after the fifteenth move during our game, so he lost. I was playing with white, so what is the result? 1-0 or +- . Will this be counted for ratings? **Raja (India)**

**Answer** The result of a game will be counted for rating calculation, only if both players have made at least one move. Taking into account that it happened after fifteen moves, it is clear that the result of this game is 1-0, provided it was Black's mobile that was ringing.

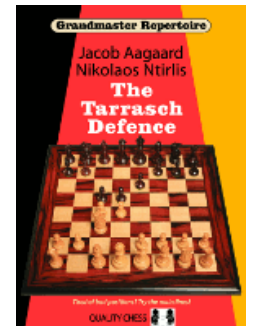
Nevertheless, there is something strange. Suppose, both players are present at the start of the round. White plays 1.b4 and this move was completely unexpected by his opponent. He starts thinking and oversteps the time. According to the rating regulations, this game will not be counted for rating, but in my opinion the arbiter has to count this game as a normal game with a normal finish. Therefore, 1-0 should be the result. The Qualification Commission and Rules Commission will have to solve this problem.

**Question One** Are e-book readers treated as forbidden equipment (meaning the Kindle, Sony PRS, or Kobo)? If so, what are the exact rules regarding a) having them at the playing hall, and b) reading them during the game? In my case, I arrived at a tournament in which my opponent was expected to be late and made my first move. I wanted to read a non-chess book from my reader, but the arbiter advised me not to because it is an "electronic device"

**Question Two** What are the exact rules concerning reading paper books or magazines during the game (mostly in situations like the one above)? I was told that reading a chess book or magazine may be treated as using inappropriate help, but what about reading a fiction book or newspaper? **Marcin Kasperski (Poland)**

**Answer One** Chess ruling is getting more and more complicated. At times, I would like to return to the days without computers; with adjourned games and mostly round robin tournaments and matches; a fixed structure of zonal, interzonal, and candidates tournaments; no mobiles; demonstration boards handled by youngsters, and so on. Today we have to live with computers that we cannot live without. After each new development, we have to ask ourselves: "Must we add something to the Laws of Chess" or do we have to reinterpret the Laws of Chess in such a way that new elements are covered?

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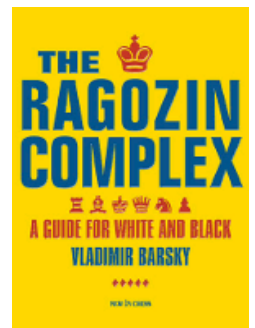


Grandmaster Repertoire 10

*The Tarrasch Defence*  
by Aagaard & Ntirlis



*No Fear of 1.d4, Vol. 1*  
by Sergei Tiviakov



*The Ragozin Complex*  
by Vladimir Barsky

Thus, to answer to your question: In my opinion, the arbiter who told you not to use your e-book-reader is right. It is an electronic device on which chess-related may be found.

**Answer Two** It is very clear that chess books, magazines, etc. are disallowed. But what about a non-chess book? It is not explicitly forbidden in the Laws of Chess, but, in my opinion, it is not very polite to read a newspaper or a book, while sitting in front of your opponent. It can also be distracting or annoying. Therefore, if a player in an event complained about his opponent reading a book or newspaper, I would agree with him.

**Question** I wish to understand what are the positions in which a draw can be claimed? I have heard that all book draw positions are acceptable, but any other position, despite there being a huge material advantage (to the person who has claimed a draw), is not acceptable. Please explain. Thank You.

**Aniruddha Deshpande (India)**

**Answer** There are many positions that are theoretical draws if both players find the best possible moves. These are positions cannot be claimed, but either player has the right to offer a draw.

There are also positions that cannot be won by either player. For example, both players have only the king or king + bishop of the same color. In these cases, a player does not claim a draw, but the arbiter simply declares that the game has been finished and the result is draw.

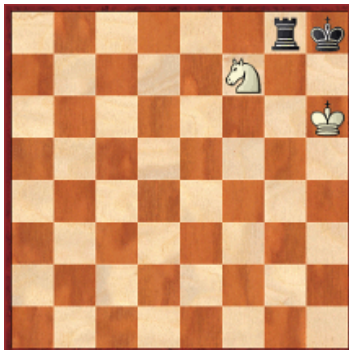
There are also games in which a player will play a move that reproduces the position for a third time. In an analogous way, a player can claim a draw if fifty moves are played without a capture or a pawn move. For more details, I advise you to read Article 9 of the Laws of Chess.

A player who has less than two minutes remaining time may claim a draw if he believes that his opponent cannot win by normal means or does not make an attempt to win the game. For details see Article 10 of the Laws of Chess.

**Question** Dear Geurt, I was an arbiter in a local tournament. In an endgame king + rook vs. king + knight, the side with the rook lost on time. There was no arbiter present, and the player with the rook told his opponent that he could not win with just a knight. The player with the knight replied, "It seems it should be a draw" and agreed to a draw.

A spectator intervened telling the player with the knight he should demand a win because of Article 6.9. The player with the knight demanded a win claiming he should have been declared a winner immediately following the fall of his opponent's flag and him agreeing to a draw is irrelevant. The players eventually agreed to a draw, but the issue is interesting. Can players agree to a draw after a flag fall? What is the legal basis to this? **IA Alon Shulman (Israel)**

**Answer** This is the position in which the player with K+N checkmates the opponent's king.



[FEN "6rk/5N2/7K/8/8/8/8"]

Based on a position, as shown above, the arbiter has to declare, in this case, the game won for the white player if Black overstepped the time control

Regarding your question whether players can agree to a draw after a flag fall, I have to answer, "No." But I have to be careful. It does not mean that a player who oversteps the time control will always lose the game. If the opponent cannot win the game by any series of legal moves, the game is still a draw. In the [October 2011 column](#) you will find a list of these positions.

**Question** Greetings Geurt, Recently, on the board next to mine in a tournament, a dispute arose between the players about scoring. Player A had complained that Player B was not scoring. The arbiter came and insisted that Player B should update his scoresheet, which he duly did. The scenario was repeated on at least three other occasions with Player A also complaining about Player B's illegible scoring. Eventually, Player A found himself in a losing position and he made loud outburst that Player B had infringed on the Laws of Chess and should have been punished in some form or fashion by the arbiter, even interrupting my game, which I went on to duly lose. Player A then left the playing venue with his clock ticking and eventually the time ran out, on which Player B claimed the game. Before the next round Player A made a formal complaint to the appeals committee for a reversal of the score or at least the taking away of the point from Player B. (Would save some rating points being lost). The Appeals Committee met and decided to penalise Player B on the notion that he had indeed broken the Laws of Chess and the arbiter should have dealt some punishment at some stage. Thus, my questions:

**Question One** As the arbiter had not officially warned Player B, can he be retroactively punished for any infringement.

**Question Two.** While Article 7 clearly points out punishments as regards to the making of illegal moves, etc., Article 8 does not indicate any penalties as regards to tardiness in scoring.

**Question Three** I have read your November article as regards to infringements to the Laws of Chess and I quote "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 the case mentioned above, how can one justify the appeals committee deducting a point or even half-point from Player B. Don't want to be a spoilt arbiter or player. **Kelvin C. Daniel (West Indies)**

**Answer** With regard to the incident you mentioned, Player A was not the most correct person in the playing hall. He noticed that Player B did not record the moves, but, instead of calling the arbiter, he spoke to his opponent, and in such a way that other players were disturbed.

In my opinion, Player A was completely right to protest, but he did so in the wrong way. I recognise this type of player very well: they know the Laws of Chess and protest very loudly. In my country we have also such a player. A few years ago I was the arbiter in a tournament in which he played. Knowing his reputation I told him that I would not accept loud protests, pointing out that in case of an infringement by his opponent, he should stop the clocks, raise his hand and then explain in a normal way what happened. It worked!

**Answer One** The case you described is in my opinion described in Article 12.8 of the Laws of Chess:

*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.*

If everything is as you described, then, of course, the arbiter had to warn Player B. Nevertheless, he stopped recording the moves several times and, in my opinion, this is covered in the quoted Article.

Player A had a good reason to involve the Appeals Committee, taking into account that the arbiter did not penalize Player B. But, also taking into account that Player A left the playing venue, apparently without signing the

scoresheets, protesting the next day and not immediately after the incidents had taken place, I have some doubts regarding the decision of the Appeals Committee.

I do not know whether there was a rule that the protest must be submitted within some amount of time after the finish of the game, but to submit it the next day before the start of the round is quite late.

**Answer Two** I agree with you that no specific penalty is mentioned for not recording the moves, but Article 13.4 gives the arbiter plenty of possibilities and, as I showed you, Article 12.8 covers this case.

**Answer Three** As I explained above, there are situations – and they are very easy to judge – that the opponent of the offending player cannot win the game. The reason is that he does not have sufficient material to checkmate the opponent's king. He has, for instance, only a bare king.

In these cases it is not fair to award a full point to the player with a bare king. And, even in these situations, there are two different options mentioned in the Laws of Chess:

Option One: The game is declared a draw. This happened in case of overstepping the time limit and the third illegal move.

Option Two: In case of a ringing phone, the owner of the ringing phone receives 0, but his opponent receives only 1 point if he is able to checkmate the opponent's king. If he has only the king, the result of the game is ½-0 or 0-½.

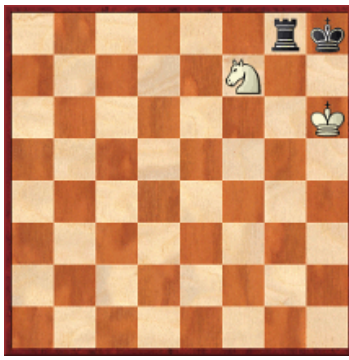
**Question** Dear Sir, Player A and B are playing in the tournament. Player A has five minutes, Player B has less than two minutes. In this time Player B makes an illegal move. How many minutes should be reduced to Player B or increased to Player A? Please clarify the punishment for long games and blitz.  
**Abbas Ali (India)**

**Answer** For illegal moves and wrong claims by a player in a normal game, only the remaining time of the opponent will be increased. For the first and second illegal move, two minutes will be added to the opponent's time; in case of a wrong draw claim, three minutes will be added to the opponent's time. These penalties are explicitly described in the Laws of Chess. However, it does not mean that reducing a player's time is impossible. The arbiter has the possibility to reduce the remaining time of a player.

Regarding the penalty in a Blitz tournament, I have to mention that in case of adequate supervision; i.e., the game is permanently controlled by an arbiter, the same procedure will be applied as for normal games. In case of inadequate supervision; i.e., one arbiter has to control more games at the same time, Article B.3.c of the Laws of Chess applies:

*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.*

**Question** In the following position it is Black's move. White's clock shows just five seconds left, while Black's clock shows two minutes.



[FEN "8/8/2B5/6b1/5pk1/8/4K3/8"]

**Question One** Can White approach the arbiter and claim a draw? Question Two: In what cases will White lose this position? Thanks! **Charles Lucas (Malaysia)**

**Answer One** Yes, White can approach the arbiter and claim a draw. The question is, of course, whether the arbiter agrees and will grant the draw. Suppose the arbiter has noticed that White played for many moves his bishop on the diagonal a8-h1, I am sure he will agree. Even when he mentions that this is his intention, there is, in my opinion, no reason to refuse the claim.

**Answer Two** As I wrote in Answer One, I do not see any reason to refuse the claim, provided the player of the white pieces mentions his intention.

**Question** In a normal game, there is one hour before a forfeit for non-attendance. The player with the white pieces makes his move and starts the clock. After fifty-seven minutes have passed, the phone of the player of the white pieces rings.

What would be the result in the score for both players if the player of the black pieces arrives before the forfeit? Thank You. **Wilfredo Paulino (Dominican Republic)**

**Answer** The question is very interesting and perhaps a little bit tricky. One thing is very clear. The game is lost for the player of the white pieces. The question is whether his result is "-" or 0.

The player of the black pieces arrives in time and has the "right" to be late. I am inclined to grant him one point, although, according to the rating regulations, the game should not be rated. It is my personal opinion that in this exceptional case, the game will be rated. Therefore, 0-1 should be the result.

**Question** Dear sir, I have a two questions for you.

**Question One** In a FIDE rated tournament one of the players browsed at the bookstall (but he was not making or taking any notes). His opponent's parent complained to the Chief Arbiter, who then declared the game lost to him after an enquiry.

In a previous round, another player did the same, but a different arbiter only gave him a warning, and did not declare the game lost. Is declaring the game lost too serious a punishment?

**Question Two** In that tournament one of the players incorrectly promoted a pawn. Before moving the pawn to the eighth rank, he placed his queen on the promotion square. The arbiter declared that it was an illegal move. In your previous article you said that both types are OK, but the arbiter said that he was only following the rules. What is your opinion, sir? Thank you. **Pranesh Yadav (India)**

**Answer One** For this infringement, the Laws of Chess do not describe a specific penalty. Therefore, it is possible that different arbiters will impose different penalties.

**Answer Two** I have answered this question many times. At the next FIDE Congress, I would like to propose to permit the two possibilities. If an arbiter sticks to the procedure as currently stated in the Laws of Chess, he is not to blame.

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