



Newsletter of the Chess Arbiters Association

July 2017 Issue 24

New Laws

The new Laws came into force on 1st July. Arbiters are awaiting clarification on several issues which should be clearer following publication of the FIDE Arbiters' Handbook scheduled for early July. More confusion is that there may be changes to the wording or interpretations made at the FIDE Conference in October.

Both the Scottish and British Championships will have been held by then. It may well be that many evening leagues in Britain will not want to implement these regulations in full because of the Draconian elements in them and the lack of an arbiter to enforce them.

There may have been problems with the previous Laws with people attempting to gain an advantage from breaking the Laws but the changes being made seem like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. They certainly do nothing to promote the game at junior and beginner level where full implementation will result in many games being over whilst still in the opening stages.

Arbiters at junior events will be well advised to carry a large stock of Kleenex tissues to mop up the flood of tears which are certain to follow enforcement of these new regulations.

Many of the changes for 2017 are designed to influence play at the highest level. It is very unfortunate that these same changes could deter play at the grass roots level. How many juniors will take to competitive chess when two small technical errors might cost them the game?



FIDE Arbiters' Conference

On Wednesday 14 June FIDE staged an on-line conference. 32 arbiters were invited to attend, 3 of these from the UK. The conference confirmed that it was the FIDE Presidential board that insisted on the controversial rule changes. It would appear that many of the changes were to protect players in the latter stages of a game from their opponent doing illegal actions to gain extra thinking time. It was pointed out that many games would not reach this stage because of the new rules. Several foreign arbiters indicated that junior events would probably not be rated rather than enforce the new penalties.

Amongst the items clarified was the addition of the new illegal moves. These WILL count in the total of 2. It was explained that these additions had been made because officials were worried about players deliberately carrying out those moves to gain thinking time near the end of a game. For that reason castling with both hands has been excluded as it normally takes place early in the game.

I have explained the stated logic for these changes but I do not say that I agree with it. If those are the reasons then it would make much more sense to introduce a time limit. My suggestion would be that "If a player commits a second illegal move of any nature in his last 5 minutes of a playing session then that player shall lose". This would avoid a massive rewrite of the Laws but prevent players taking advantage.

Clarification from the FIDE Website <http://arbiters.fide.com/>

The agreed points are the following:

1. By the new Laws of Chess four (4) illegal moves are now in effect, according to Articles: 7.5.1, 7.5.2, 7.7.1 and 7.8.1.
2. In Standard chess the player is forfeited if he completes two (2) of ANY of the above illegal moves.
3. However when there are two (2) illegal moves in one move (i.e. illegal castling made by two hands, illegal promotion made by two hands and illegal capturing made by two hands), they count as one (1) illegal move and the player shall not be forfeited at once (in Standard chess).
4. The capturing of the King is illegal move and is penalised accordingly.

5. In Rapid and Blitz games the Arbiter SHALL CALL the flag fall, if he observes it.
6. Where both clocks show 0.00 and electronic clocks are used, the Arbiter has always the possibility to establish which flag fell first, with the help of the "-" (or flag) indication. Therefore there is always a winner. (Comment by AMcF: unless the game is otherwise drawn)
- In the case that mechanical clocks are used then article III.3.1 of the Guidelines about games without increment including Quickplay Finishes shall be applied.
7. If a game with reversed colours will end by normal means (by checkmate, stalemate, resignation or draw agreement, if allowed), before ten (10) moves will be played, then the result stands.
8. In the case where a player presses the clock without making a move, as mentioned in the article 6.2.4, it is considered as an illegal move and it is penalized according to the article 7.5.3. and not according to the article 12.9
9. If a player makes a move with one hand and presses the clock with the other, it is not considered as an illegal move and it is penalized according to Article 12.9.
10. In Rapid and Blitz games, if the player asks from the Arbiter to see the score sheet, the clock should not be stopped.

More on the New Laws

David Welsh makes the following comments.

- I would not trust a live board to be able to prove a five-fold repetition in the absence of further verification.
- For an event in the UK, I would be hesitant to follow a verbal instruction from FIDE which contradicts the correct literal interpretation of the Laws of Chess. We are badly disadvantaged by having the Laws written in English.

His first comment is based on the sensory boards interpreting moves retrospectively. For example a player could move a pawn to e3 but moves it too far (e3½!). Later the player advances the pawn to e5. Instead of recognising this as an illegal move the software may re-interpret the first move as e4. It is therefore possible that using the computer to reconstruct a game could mean that the wrong position is given.

The second comment refers to the current Laws where other countries will go by the translation of the interpretations being given rather than the poor wording that is the English version.

There are two contributory factors for the poor English. The first is that there was only one meeting of the Rules Commission at Baku to consider these Laws. In previous years

there had been two such meetings. Many of those present felt there was a need for an additional meeting though the reduction in 'rest days' did make that more difficult to achieve. The second is that most of the changes causing the problems were introduced by the Presidential Board.

CAA/ECF Relationship

The Pearce Report on the ECF organisation suggested that the relationship between it and the CAA should be formalised. The CAA has always wanted a close relationship with national bodies. With these in mind officials of the two bodies have been conducting meetings to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding.

Amongst the items being discussed is dissemination of information relevant to arbiters and organisers, training materials for arbiters and a Standards Procedure for implementation which would provide a procedure for resolving disputes and possibly providing support for actions taken by arbiters and organisers. Currently in England there is no action, short of courts of law, that an arbiter can take if accused of bias or a player can take if accused of cheating. Also discussed was the ECF arbiter structure.

The matter is ongoing.



European Chess Union

The ECU hopes to bring in a regulation that for all of its events a minimum of 25% of the arbiters appointed will be women. Hopefully a similar figure will be applied to men.

It is to be hoped that the number of female arbiters (and players) in Britain could increase to a similar percentage.

Chess Scotland has 2 female arbiters out of 18 active ones. The ECF has 6 out of 72 arbiters in class 2-4 on its list. The Welsh Chess Union list 8 active arbiters none of whom are female.

Association of Chess Professionals (ACP) Letter

Following the FIDE Ethics Commission decision on the 2015 Womens' European Championship reported in the last edition the ACP Board made the following comment.

"However, ACP is convinced that the burden to secure a player-friendly environment and to properly advise on these delicate matters lies foremost on the organizers and arbiters of the event. That was clearly mishandled in Chakvi. As a result, the complaint came in a form of a signed letter addressed to the officials only. It was not rejected, but instead of

advising to use the special form the officials published the letter openly, thus creating further damages.

In a nutshell, the mistakes of the organizers and arbiters played a very significant role in leading to very unfortunate consequences. Some may even say it was mainly their fault that exploded the whole situation. That is why we strongly disagree with the decision of the Ethics Commission that blamed and sanctioned the players while hardly mentioning the unfortunate role of the officials."

The ACP represents players and arbiters. There can be little doubt that the matter was not well handled by the organiser and arbiters, especially if it was an official who posted the signed letter of complaint which named the accused player on the tournament noticeboard. It should also be agreed that players should not be discouraged from raising genuine concerns about a player's behaviour. However, the letter does not seem to apportion enough blame to those who made false accusations. In this case several of the accused player's wins were not the result of good player by her but by bad moves by her opponents.

The full letter is available at

<http://www.chessprofessionals.org/content/acp-statement-ethics-commission-ruling>

The player who was accused of cheating is not happy either. She has written to FIDE claiming that the punishments are too light for the outcome of the false accusations. Sandu points out that it has had a long term effect on her performances (a 100 point drop in her rating) and that she lost out on prizemoney through losing to the person who led the allegations whilst being psychologically unfit to play such an important match. She also claims that the time she spent defending her name came from time she would normally have spent preparing for the next opponent. She also attacks the organisers for allowing the 'allegations' to be displayed publicly. All of the points she makes seem reasonable. She also expresses concerns about the time it took for the FIDE Ethics Commission to reach its decision.

ARBITER DO'S & DON'TS WHEN AN ACCUSATION OF CHEATING IS RECEIVED

It is not only in major international events that players may cheat. Cheating or, more commonly, suspected cheating can occur in even the most minor of events. Also remember cheating does not have to involve a computer. Getting advice from another player or notes/book existed long before computers were invented and can still be used. Please consider the following do's and don'ts.

DO:

- Treat the accusation seriously
- Assure the complainant that you will investigate
- Try to minimise the concerns of the player
- Ask the player making the complaint to put it in writing (the actual recording can be done after the game)
- Investigate even if the accuser refuses to put it in writing – record the accusation anyway
- Ask the player if he has discussed his concerns with others. If so whom.
- Tell the player not to discuss it further as it could hamper the investigation
- Monitor the accused player
- Ask other players/opponents if they have any concerns about players in general cheating
- If possible compare accused's previous games with chess engines for correlation
- Consider asking the player to undergo a search*
- If possible include that player in a random scan/search of players
- Report players who make malicious accusations
- Ask **both** players not to talk to others during the game
- Always take preventative action
- Use common sense

DON'T

- Ignore the accusation no matter what you think of the accuser (remember the boy who cried wolf)
- Make the accusation public, even in general terms
- Name the accused when carrying out the investigation
- Confront (including searching) the accused during his game unless you have very strong evidence of cheating or delay may allow evidence to be destroyed
- Take action against players who have had genuine concerns even if these are groundless
- Judge the case on the participants, only on the evidence

* The idea of searching players is repugnant to many arbiters. However, if the player refuses then that is reason enough to exclude from the tournament. If the player is

willing then a cursory check can be carried out without it being too invasive (eg check bag, ask player to empty pockets, etc).

HOW TO MONITOR

Discretely watch the player under investigation.

Note the times and move numbers when the player leaves the playing hall and possibly even when he is away from the board.

Note who the player talks to.

Frequent absences from the board can be due to a number of reasons from being a heavy smoker to having a dodgy stomach. In the case of a player making frequent toilet visits, if the same cubicle is always used that might be a cause for increased concern and investigation.

Check games played against chess engines. Remember a high correlation, especially during the opening, is not proof of cheating. It is only a potential indicator. Complaints are often made against players who are scoring above expectations. In these cases it is worth checking if the player is playing well or if the opponents have made fairly serious errors.

Take preventative measures. These do not have to be draconian but should be tailored to the level of the tournament. Ensure that phones are always off (not silent or aeroplane mode). Players and spectators often forget that they can be accused/suspected of passing on moves despite this being the most common concern of a friend's opponent.

To avoid alerting a player that they are under suspicion it may be advisable for arbiters to take turns watching the suspect.

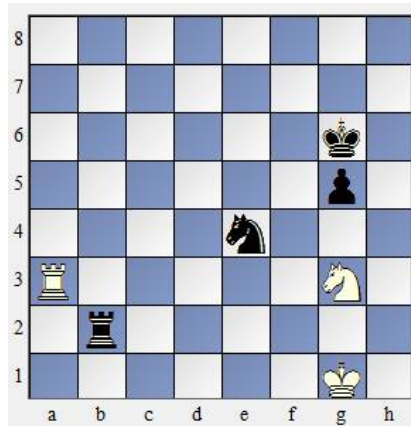
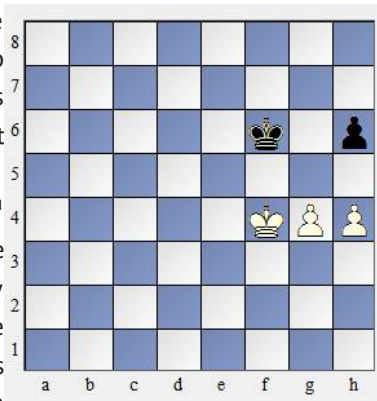
Organisers v Arbiters

The organisers of the Altibox Norway Chess Tournament had the following rule:

5. The "Sofia" rule will apply. No talking between the players, so no offers of draw. Ref article 9.1 of Fide rules

Put simply this meant that players could not offer draws (though why no talking prevents a silent offer is not clear.). The only ways to draw were by the 50 move rule, repetition or stalemate. This created a problem for the arbiters.

In round 1 Carlsen offered So a draw at move 59 having decided that he was not going to win. The arbiter instructed him to play on, as per the rules. The players then quickly went for the repetition rule to resolve the problem (position after Black's 54th, 61st and 63rd moves). However the following day, the situation for the arbiter became really awkward. In the Nakamura v Aronian game the players agreed a draw in what was generally accepted to be a totally drawn position. The arbiter again stepped in but this time the players refused to



continue. Aronian reportedly even used the word “disrespectful” before walking away with another player, Karjakin, who asked what was going on. Rather than defaulting the two players for disobeying the rule the organisers were described as “working on a solution”.

The organisers should not have introduced a regulation that they were not willing to enforce. Arguably they should not have introduced the rule full stop. The players should have raised the matter before signing contracts presumably. Certainly, the arbiter should not have been put in the position of trying to enforce a condition that was not sensible and where the support of the organisers was not subsequently received.

A Different Prize Structure

Denver Chess Club runs an interesting tournament annually called “Send in the Clones”. It is unusual for two reasons. The first is it uses what it calls a ‘Humble Pie’ system for prizes and the second is that it allows multiple entries from the same person. The prize calculation is complicated (and in the event prizes were distributed 3 days after the tournament). In an attempt to explain prize distribution, assume there was a prize fund of £200 (total entry fees- expenses) with 20 players and 5 rounds then the formula used is

$x = \text{prize fund} / (\text{nos of players} \times \text{number of rounds} \times 3) = 200 / (20 \times 5 \times 3)$ giving $x = 67p$.

Each won game would get the player £2 and a draw 67p

This suggests that the maximum prize a player can get is £10. If this was a normal tournament that would be the case but this is a far from normal tournament. As the name is supposed to indicate a player can enter up to three times – meaning they can play up to three games simultaneously. In the situation above a player could therefore win up to £30 by finishing first equal with his other two selves and scoring maximum points for each of his entries!



In the recently held event they had 14 players but 30 entries. 8 entries played with 2 clones and the other 6 played only the one game. Each game lasted 1 hour with 30 second increments. A player could not play himself (ie his own clone) but could play another player and his clones. Although unlikely it was possible to play the same player 9 times in the 4 rounds that the tournament was played over. This would occur if player A was drawn against Player B and both of his 'clones' and player A's clones were also drawn against player B and his alter egos.

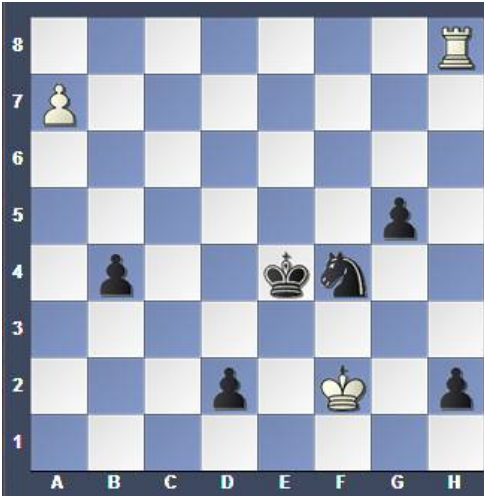
The entry fee was \$40, \$60 with one clone and \$70 with two clones.

I don't see too many tournaments adopting the prize structure though some might want to allow multiple entries.

Turning Things Upside Down!! (Arbiting Mistakes?)

The Canadian Championship was ended in a rather unfortunate manner. Bator Sambuev and Nikolay Noritsyn tied on 8/9. The tie was to be resolved by a series of 4 rapidplay games, which failing 2 blitz games (5 minutes + 3 seconds per move) and finally an Armageddon. The Rapidplay games were tied 2-2. The first blitz game was also drawn. In the second the following position was reached.

Both players were short of time with White about 30 seconds and Black down to 4 seconds. The set being used was plastic and did not have spare queens but the original queens are off the board, though White had the black queen in his hand.



The game had reportedly see-sawed with Black having pushed the wrong pawns and White having missed a simple win a few moves before.

Black played d1 announced queen and promoted to an upturned rook. The arbiter stepped in and declared the piece to be a rook.

It is reported that a heated discussion between the arbiters, spectators and Noritsyn followed. This seems to be a bit of an exaggeration as everyone seemed fairly calm under the circumstances. At the time of the

promotion the black queen was in White's hand where it had been since it was captured some 20 moves earlier.

The game continued and Black lost. The promotion to a rook rather than a queen was significant to the outcome.

Although no official protest was made at the time, Black is unhappy about the situation. (An appeal to a national committee may still be possible.) He insists that the arbiters were unprofessional in not having provided 'spare' queens. Black also claims it is unreasonable to expect a player who cannot find a piece to pause the clock when so short of time. A complaint has subsequently been made to the Canadian Chess Federation.



It does seem strange that in an event of this status extra queens were not provided but whether the arbiters or the player for not following the Laws was unprofessional is open to debate.

Black queen in White's left hand!

Since the game was played under 'adequate supervision' the normal rather

than special blitz rules applied and the arbiter was perfectly correct in stepping in. As it was a rook that touched the promotion square then that is the piece to be used. Saying “Queen” has no significance. Indeed sometimes underpromotion is still referred to as ‘queening’.

A video of the incident indicates that the arbiters were unaware of the position of the ‘missing’ queen. During the kerfuffle that followed the queen was placed with the other captured pieces. It seems clear to me from the actions of Sambuev (White) that he was not deliberately trying to hide the queen from his opponent. Indeed he possibly had several captured pieces in his hand. Others disagree. The arbiters seem to point out that the presence of the queen when play was halted contributed to their decision. They appear to have failed to notice its absence at the critical time.

All of the captured pieces are returned to the table. It is difficult to say this was when Black was looking for the queen sending the other captured pieces spinning or when he wanted to empty his hand to pick up the white queen.



The upturned rook and the return of the pieces

The video is here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBNEcRgHkvE>

Interestingly, if the player had simply played d1 and pressed the clock his opponent would have been given an additional minute and the pawn would have been automatically promoted to a queen.

Without apportioning blame arbiters should try to avoid situations arising. In a play-off it is surprising that extra pieces were not immediately available. Arbiters should always remember the old saying that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Points to note:

No spare queens were available.

No official appeared to notice the absence of the black queen at the critical time.

Black did not seem to know the Laws regarding promotion and the ability to stop the clock.

Black used both hands to promote.

White did not inform the arbiters that the queen had been in his hand.

White could be deemed to have distracted the opponent by 'hiding' the queen.

(On the last point, it is possible that the player was unaware that he had the queen. I have known several cases of a player taking a piece away with them by accident having held it during play.)

The result of the appeal will be given when known.

(American) Delay v Bronstein v Increment

The Grand Chess Tour has raised the question of how each of these work and the merits and demerits of each.

In Britain and most of the world Increment is the most commonly used. Here a fixed time is added before each move. This allows players to move quickly and gain extra thinking time. It has the disadvantage that games can continue for long periods of time. Both Delay and Bronstein can also lengthen a game but in both cases a player cannot increase the amount of time that they have so the increase is by less. From a player's point of view it has the disadvantage that the phrase 'living on increments' is more literal as a player who goes down to their last second can never again have more than 31 seconds for a move. Another possible advantage of either delay

mode over incremental is that players cannot just repeat moves to gain time.

So what is the difference between Bronstein and Delay? Consider the time control 90 minutes + 30 seconds per move. In Bronstein this should mean starting with 90 minutes and 30 seconds (some clocks will only give the 90 minutes so the 30 seconds should be added manually). The clock counts down. If a move is made in under 30 seconds then the clock will go back to the time at the start of the move, if the move takes longer then when it is pressed 30 seconds will be added on to the remaining time. With Delay the clock will start at 90 minutes but it will not start to countdown until 30 seconds have elapsed (some clocks will show the countdown, the DGT North American flashes the word delay and shows a stationary main time). If the move is made in 30 seconds or left then the main time will remain unchanged. If the move is not played in 30 seconds then the main time will start to countdown. When the clock is then pressed the remaining time becomes the main time and the process is repeated.



DGT North American

To complicate matters further clocks can have three other setting types above the old analogue clocks. A brief explanation of these follows.

Hourglass: In this mode as one player's clock decreases the opponent's increases by the same amount. A throwback to the early timing devices.

Upcount: In this mode when a clock reaches zero it then starts to count upwards. This is used in Scrabble tournaments to reduce the score of a player who has exceeded his allotted time.

Byo-yomi: This is used in Go and Shogi. To further complicate things there are two versions, Japanese and Canadian. A full explanation is not given here but in simplistic terms a player is given a number of blocks of time. A block of time is only lost when a player exceeds it, effectively if a player keeps to the time control they also keep all of their byi-yomi time.

History – The Sealed Move

Many chess games have been adjourned over the centuries. But it was not until 1878 that the concept of the sealed move was introduced. Before this there had been concerns about the length of games and the fact that a player could get a significant advantage by analysing an incomplete game overnight, even though the concept of such analysis was considered to be unsporting and not to be done. To minimise the advantage that a player could achieve the concept of the sealed move was first used at the Paris International Tournament held from 17-31 July, 1878. At the end of the session the player on the move had to write down the next move that he planned to play which was then given to the arbiter and only disclosed to the opponent when it was made on the board at the resumption of play. It was forbidden for both players to analyse between times. Obviously enforcement of this was impossible and by the 1930s it was accepted that such analysis and even the use of seconds was acceptable.



Remember these?

Nowadays adjournments are rare. This is partly because of faster time limits but also because computers have taken over the analysis.

An adjournment featured in Bobby Fischer's World Championship win over Boris Spassky when the latter sealed a weak bishop move which meant that

he had no chance of drawing the game. His resignation before resumption gave Fischer the title.

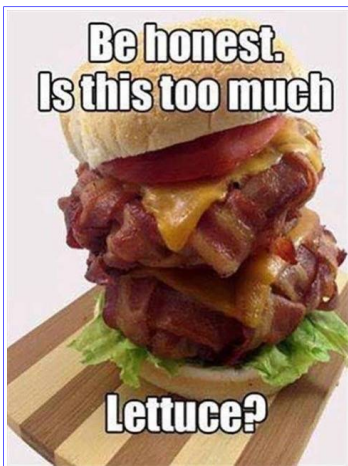
The last World Championship where adjournments were possible was held in 1996. There was a significant adjournment in this match when Anatoly Karpov adjourned two pawns down against Gata Kamsky. Considerable analysis before resumption found drawing lines. Kamsky has since claimed that this 13th game adversely affected his subsequent chess career. He believes that if the game had been played without adjudication he would have won. The PCA had abandoned adjournments in its version of the World Championship (some might say the 'real' Championship) the previous year.

The Olympiad of 96 was also the last of its type to have adjournments.

In the Nottingham International Chess Tournament held from August 10-28, 1936 there was an incident in round 2. Capablanca and Alekhine met for the first time in 9 years. The game was won by the former. Capablanca had three minor pieces to Alekhine's two rooks. It is alleged Alekhine probably realised that he was lost, but did not want to resign at the board and in front of a large crowd. He pretended to forget that it was his sealed move when the first time control was over and made a move instead of sealing his next move in an envelope. Capablanca sealed the move instead. (Nowadays the played move would be regarded as an open sealed move.) Later, Alekhine wrote a note to the tournament director and resigned. Capablanca became very angry that Alekhine "resigned by letter" rather than play it out or inform Capablanca first. The two refused to talk to each other.

Alternative Dictionary (Cont.)

S	
Saxophones	An arbiter's collection of player's mobiles
Skewer	What the Arbiter's late night meal is cooked on
Smothered Mate	What most chessplayer's wives think of doing to their partner during pillow talk
Stalemate	A partner who has been around for a while
Strategy	The skill of avoiding buying a round of drinks



Arbiting Dilemma?

Arbiters often have difficult decisions to make. In this case it probably is too much lettuce for many arbiters.

Reviving old openings

Calsen's victory against Kramnik having used Bird's Opening in the Grand Chess Tour Rapid created quite a bit of attention in the chess press and amongst players. Can anyone be surprised that using the Bird's created a large number of Tweets!



CAA Officials

Chairman - Lara Barnes

Secretary - Geoff Gammon

Treasurer - Kevin Markey

Chief Arbiter - Alex McFarlane

Information officer - Alex McFarlane

Committee - David Welch, Kevin Staveley and Mike Forster.

ECF Delegate - Mike Forster

Chess Scotland Delegate - Alex McFarlane

Welsh Chess Union - Kevin Staveley

Independent Examiner - Richard Jones

Safeguarding Officer – Lara Barnes (Temp)



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