

# Arbiting Matters Too



**Newsletter of the Chess Arbiters Association**

**January 2014**

## **EDITORIAL**

Seasonal Greetings to those who enjoy this period of over-indulgence and to those who share my feelings that we are in the middle of commercialmas an especial “Bah Humbug” to you.

It is disappointing that the Laws of Chess have still not been finalised and ‘signed off’. If it is annoying for us, it must be even worse for those countries where the Laws will need to be translated and distributed before the 1st July, 2014 when they come into effect. Certainly the recent changes are just a tidying up of what appeared at Tallinn. Even that was effectively a rushed process caused by FIDE Presidential Board interference in the normal process.

The new Laws should apply for three years instead of the normal four. This will reinstate the cycle that allows a wider range of discussion at Olympiads.

## **FIRE ALARMS**

I heard recently of a match being abandoned when the fire alarm went off for the third time. This reminded me of some of my own experiences.

The first time I experienced an alarm going off was at the Edinburgh Congress. There was a great reluctance by several players to stop playing, even following the announcement to leave the building. Although it was established that a child had accidentally broken the glass covering an alarm button, no-one was allowed back in until the fire service had done a sweep of the building to ensure that everything was safe. At the British Championships in Liverpool when the alarm sounded I made the

mistake of announcing that the clocks should be stopped. Three players actually switched off the digital devices completely! Since then I know to announce to pause the clocks rather than stop them. On this occasion it was a visitor having a prohibitively smoky during a tour of the old cells in St George's Hall that triggered the alarm.

The British at Torquay was also a victim of someone setting off the fire alarm. In this case it was in the break between the morning and afternoon sessions. Unfortunately, it was a very wet day and vents were set to automatically open to release the



non-existent smoke. We returned to the playing hall to find many boards waterlogged. The rain had flooded through these vents. A massive mop-up by Centre Staff, the Control Team and players ensured that boards were dried and tablecloths replaced with play starting a mere

twenty minutes late.

### **Many Hands Make Lights Work**

Two tournaments in a row I've encountered venues with lighting problems. The Lothians Congress at Wester Hailes, Edinburgh had only 5 of the 12 strip lights working and many of the 'spots' were also not functioning. Requests for a rectification of the problem fell on deaf ears. For round 1 players on one or two boards were reallocated to different boards and between rounds 1 and 2 many tables were moved to provide adequate conditions. This was followed by Scarborough, Britain's biggest weekend congress. Last year there had been problems when a section of lights flickered continuously and had to be switched off. A phone call on the Wednesday before the event to confirm that all the red bulbs, which is the norm for the hall, had been replaced by clear ones and that the faulty lights were now working brought the reassurance that an engineer had been checking everything was ready only the day before. Imagine the annoyance therefore to turn up on the Friday

afternoon to discover only about half of the lights working. After a heated discussion with several members of staff (well it started quite politely but escalated when we were told by one employee that the lighting was more than adequate), emergency lighting was hired in. It was certainly impressive just how quickly this was obtained and installed. Unfortunately it also meant that the entire layout of the tables had to be changed. Everything was rearranged and the lighting installed with just a few minutes to spare. The welcoming speech from the Deputy Mayor was quite short so play started more or less on time. The picture shows the emergency lighting in operation—not pretty but effective.

### **Stewart Reuben (cont)**

*We continue Stewart's account of his life in chess from the previous issue (now available on the website).*

The FIDE Rating System was started in 1970. It took a long time to take off in England. Leonard was our Rating Officer and he had the vision to see how important this might become. The ratings went down only to 2200 and virtually only round robins were held. I didn't get a rating until 1977 when I organised, arbitrated and played in one where I got a rating of 2270. At Easter time Leonard was the inspiration for the first Swiss rated tournament we held. The numbers of rated players was slowly increasing.



Stewart with the Boxall Trophy presented for service to the 2013 British Championships.

Leonard had succeeded in persuading Lloyds Bank to support chess, particularly for juniors. The London Chess Association, of which I was President, had money in hand due to the success of the Evening Standard event. Indeed we ran smallish international tournaments in 1973 and 1975. We decided to hold an international Swiss in August 1977. This became the Lloyds Bank Masters. Leonard said to me, 'Why not try to get people title norms?' I said this was impractical. It was a 60 player event with less than half FIDE Rated and only 2 GMs and 4 IMs. 'Well, try anyway'. he said. So I did, fiddling the pairings to give 5 selected players the opportunity. All 5 secured IM norms and the idea of an international open Swiss for norms spread very quickly everywhere. This started to get me interested in the whole matter of the international chess regulations. The Lloyds Bank Masters, which ran until 1994 re-

mains the chess event only ever known by the name of the sponsor. The late Richard Furness started the Benedictine International in Manchester. We now had three events in a row: the British Championship, the Lloyds Bank Masters and the Benedictine International. Indian players got much of their experience at that time at these events. That they have now become a power-house in chess is due in part to this activity.

You will have noticed how Leonard Barden was like a river running through British chess at this time. He was also responsible for The Cutty Sark Grand Prix which was later sponsored by Leigh Industries and then Terry Chapman. Alas, calling it a 'Grand Prix' now is misrepresentation.

In 1978 the British Chess Federation, with which I had little to do, had secured an agreement from Phillips & Drew and the Greater London Council to sponsor a major event in London. Nothing happened. So I got myself onto the Board as London League representative and finally things started to move forward in September 1979, David Anderton having become President. Thus the Phillips & Drew/GLC Kings was run in 1980, 1982 and 1984. It was a 14 player round robin and on each occasion was one of the major worldwide events of the year. Now I was the organiser; the arbiter was the late Harry Golombek, although I did assist him in the time scrambles.

By 1979 I had come to my senses and quit school teaching. Before then I was earning about half my income from that and poker. In 1981 Gerry Walsh had to stand down as director of the British Championships and I took on the organisation of that event until 1997. Of course it was well-established long before I ever first played in the event in 1956. Harry Baines was then the chief arbiter and I have never had a role as an arbiter at the event. But, as director, I was Chairman of the Appeal Committee. It is a source of considerable pride that, over all the years, there were only about 10 appeals and 5 of these were quickplay finishes. As Harry Baines said, 'They don't count anyway.' It started out sponsored by Grieveson, Grant. The company was taken over by Kleinwort Benson and, with John Brew in charge, they were tremendous open-ended sponsors. After he left the company it was unsponsored for a few years. Then Smith & Williamson took over for ten years from 1997. That was all decided over one lunch. I became Chairman of the BCF in 1996 and didn't think it right that I should also be the Director of Congress Chess. Neil Graham took over from me and later David Welch. In 2008 David's health broke down in April and I took over from him. 2009 I had found a successor in Manuel Weeks, but his health broke down and again I started organising the event in 2009. But now it was my turn for my health to break down and fortunately David, now in much better physical health, took over in June. In 2004 and 2013 I was responsible for the Centenary Celebrations of the BCF and the 100<sup>th</sup> British Chess Championships respectively.

I became an International Arbiter in 1976. To tell the truth I am not entirely sure I

was qualified. But the regulations were much less stringent then. I first acted as an arbiter in the 1980 Olympiads in Malta. Harry Golombek and Gerry Walsh had a great deal to do with running that event. I had the opportunity to go down in the history books at that event. Baturinsky, the USSR captain approached me that the Hungarians and Bulgarians were talking during the game. Harry's French was much better than mine so he acted as interpreter. I said, 'Tell him I don't see what I can do about that, Karpov and Kasparov walk up and down talking all the time.' Harry smiled wryly and translated. He then told me Baturinsky had said, 'Oh no, that's OK. Kasparov was just asking whether he should offer a draw.' I asked Harry what we should do about that. He said, 'Nothing'. My opportunity to be at the centre of a major scandal had passed.

I haven't always been an arbiter at the Olympiad ever since. Sometimes I have been head of the English Delegation when also the International Director. More recently I have been there as a member of commissions. I don't find being an assistant arbiter interesting and tend to fall asleep. But it is true, I do this less frequently now, with my improved health.

In 1983 we ran the Acorn Computer World Chess Championship Candidates Semifinals and in 1984 the London Dockland Development Corporation USSR v Rest of the World match. Both of these were at very short notice, the latter only one week. After it I said, 'Next they'll ask us to do the Olympiad at one day's notice. Jill Triggs said, 'Oh, no Stewart. We'll need at least three days to do it properly.' 1986 we ran the first half of the World Championship in London. I worked with Ray Keene on all these events, but was not an arbiter at any of them. I also did commentary at the World Championships in Reykjavik 1972, London 1986, a little bit in London 1993 and the texting commentary in London 2000.

In 1986 Annette Keene found the Foreign & Colonial sponsor for Hastings at a cocktail party. I help Ray with drafting the bid and have remained a member of the committee ever since. Nowadays I procure the players for the Masters Swiss, sometimes act as a filler and do a few reports.

I was first asked to attend a meeting of the FIDE Rules Committee in 1984 in Greece. They wanted me there to help tidy up the English of some of the Laws as David Levy couldn't be there. I have helped FIDE in that capacity ever since. In 1984 I was chatting with Professor Lim Kok Ann, then General Secretary. I asked him what language did FIDE conduct their



business. Was it English English or American English? He replied the former. As far as I know, this was the only time the matter was ever discussed and it has remained that way since.

When Geurt Gijssen was appointed Chairman of the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee (now Commission) in 1994 he asked me to become secretary. He is standing down in 2014 so that our partnership will have lasted 20 years by then. He was the first Honorary Member of the CAA. I have been told it is possible to pick out of the Laws of Chess those sections of which I have been the sole author. But is that good or bad?

In 1996 I briefly became a member of the World Championship Cycle Committee. For the first World Knockout Championship in 1997 I couldn't stand the idea that the World Championship might be decided by the arbiter. We had introduced increments to the Laws in 1993, but they hadn't taken off yet. So the games were played with a 30 second increment. Now no major international event is played without increments at least in the last phase of the game. I am proud of the fact I introduced quickplay finishes and then increments to do away with them. I am of the opinion that most players utilise their time more efficiently with a 30 second increment. But that is an assertion without statistical proof.

Considering the history of the Lloyds Bank Masters it is unsurprising that I was also interested in the work of the Qualification Commission. I proposed many changes to their regulations long before I actually became secretary of the QC, which I did when the late Mikko Markulla became chairman. I don't understand how I managed to be secretary of two commissions for some years. This year in Tallinn I hardly had any time other than for the new Laws of Chess.

I used also to be Chairman of a small Organiser's Committee which has been phased out more recently. I introduced two new titles to FIDE, both of which I hold: International Organiser and International Candidate Master. When I introduced the latter there was no Candidates Tournament in the World Championship cycle. Nobody seems to notice that using that name for two very different purposes could confuse some.

In November 2001 I was phoned by Franco Ostuni the General Manager of The Calta Hotel in Gibraltar. He said they were interested in having a chess event at the hotel. My first question was, 'Why?' It is very important for any event for the organiser to decide on its objectives. Franco said they wanted to utilise their facilities at the quietest time of year. That proved to be January – February before the English half term holidays. I said what was needed was a master Swiss. Had they ever seen a chess event, did they have any idea what a Swiss was, or a master? I recommended that they come to Hastings to get an idea. This they did and we had dinner together. I invited David Sedgwick along and he remains a mainstay of the event to this day. In

April 2002 David and I went to see the hotel. One of the first things I asked was what will happen when it outgrows the playing area? They probably thought me mad. But thus the first GibTelecom Congress came into being in January 2003. I selected the dates carefully not to coincide with other major events, but particularly Capelle le Grande which attracts 600 players in the French half term holiday.

Now it is the strongest annual open tournament in the world, the main sponsor being Tradewise. They solved the space problem for a bit by closing down their second restaurant for the period and utilising the space for the congress. That was something that would never have occurred to me. I am no longer the organiser (just a commentator); that role has been taken on since 2011 by GM Stuart Conquest, another idea that would never have occurred to me. But, although I provided the template for the event, it is the enthusiasm and sponsorship generating ideas of the proprietor of the hotel, Brian Callaghan, which has made the event what it is today. David Sedgwick, David Welch and Peter Purland remain involved with the event even now and the latter two have been deeply involved with developing Gibraltar junior chess. Quite recently, Stuart went to live in Gibraltar to develop children's chess there.

In the past year I have been active in two very different events. As assistant arbiter at the FIDE Grand Prix in London and in February I was arbiter/lecturer in The Gambia which had recently rejoined FIDE after over 20 years.

I am also author of four chess books. 'The Chess Scene' with David Levy, which is now very out of date; 'London 1980' with Bill Hartston which is a chronicle of the Phillips & Drew/GLC Kings; 'Chess Openings – Your Choice!', a beginner's book which is still in print; 'The Chess Organiser's Handbook' of which there have been three editions.

I was commissioned by Cadogan to write the first edition which appeared in 1997. The second, supported by FIDE and self-published, came out in 2001 and the third and last by publishers Hardinge Simpole in 2005. Of course it is biased towards chess organisation, but there should be much in it of interest to an arbiter. FIDE didn't seem very interested and Sevan Muradian from Chicago bought the rights from me to publish the material on his website. This, he has so far failed to do, but promises to do so shortly. Meanwhile you can access much of the material on the ECF website on

<http://englishchessorganisers.blogspot.co.uk/p/stewart-reubens-chess-organisers.html>.

I am rated about 200 points below my peak as a player. This means that the me of the 1970s should have been able to beat the me of today about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  -  $2\frac{1}{2}$ . One selling point of the rating system should be the help it can provide in quantifying such matters. It is not the playing strength of an arbiter that makes him a good one; it is

his level of understanding. As we get older, our play deteriorates, but the ability to understand positions deteriorates much more slowly.

‘I pity any person who has no knowledge of chess. Chess, like love, like music has the power to make people happy.’ (Tarrasch)

I have sometimes speculated how my life might have turned out differently, had I not got involved with chess, or similarly poker. But I have always enjoyed alternative universes speculative science fiction. ‘I pity the person who has never found even one topic which was of abiding interest.’ That last quote is directly from my poker autobiography.

Stewart Reuben

### **What Would You Do?**

Here is a situation from a Glasgow League match. The time control is 30 moves in an hour and then 15 minutes to complete the game. A digital clock is being used.

White is on move 31 and has had a minute or two thinking when he realises that his opponent’s clock is showing 14:58. He seeks advice from his captain (acting as arbiter) who confirms that Black has exceeded the time limit. As this is being explained to Black it is noted that the flag actually indicates that White had lost on time beforehand.

Rule 6.8 states- “A flag is considered to have fallen when the arbiter observes the fact or when either player has made a valid claim to that effect.” Does this mean that the White claim should be upheld?

Rule 6.11a “If both flags have fallen and it is impossible to establish which clock fell first then the game shall continue ... “ would apply with an analogue clock but should it apply here where the clock indicates which fell first?

Rule 6.10a “Every indication given by the clocks is considered to be conclusive in the absence of any evident defect ...” has been taken to refer to the actual clock times but is this extended?

There seems to be three options—White win, Black win or Play On. Let me hear your vote and if possible the reason for your decision.

E-mail to [ahmcfarlane@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ahmcfarlane@yahoo.co.uk) with the heading AMToo3. I look forward to hearing from you.



## BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP ARBITERS

The organisers of the above event invite qualified arbiters **who are FIDE registered** to express an interest in arbiting at the 2014 Championships. We are looking for Arbiters to work as part of the following teams -

**Team 1:** Arrive Friday 18th July

Playing Sessions: Saturday 19th July – Friday 2nd August: AFTERNOON SESSIONS

**Team 2:** Junior Championships Team / Morning Team, arrive Saturday 19th July or Sunday 20th August

Playing Sessions: Monday 21st July – Friday 2nd August: MORNING SESSIONS WITH ALSO AFTERNOON SESSIONS WHERE JUNIORS HAVE A DOUBLE ROUND

**Team 3:** Arrive Thursday 24th July or Friday morning 25th July  
WEEKEND EVENT

Playing Sessions: Friday evening; Saturday / Sunday – AM and PM

Arbiters must have a working knowledge of Swiss Master. The ability to input games would also be an advantage. Arbiters may also be asked to control other sections outside the above, but will be guaranteed time off each day. Also, at least one member of each team will be asked to help with inputting game scores to aid with quick publication.

Self catering accommodation will be provided in student flats on the University premises. There are both non-en-suite and en-suite rooms available. A daily allowance will be provided. The amount will depend upon the type of accommodation provided, and also the length of the playing sessions each day.

Please indicate if you would prefer to work mornings or afternoons (although there is no guarantee you will get your choice) and also the dates you will be available. Arbiters are also welcome to apply should they not be available for the full fortnight but only for one week. If this is the case, please indicate exact dates on which you will be available.

If an arbiter is looking for FIDE norms towards an arbiters title, please also state this within the email.

Applicants will be advised no later than 10th February 2014 whether their application has been successful. Applications may be accepted/rejected without assigning a reason and the Federation will not enter into any correspondence relating to reasons for acceptance or rejection.

*Kevin Staveley, British Championship Manager*

Email: [manager.british@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:manager.british@englishchess.org.uk)



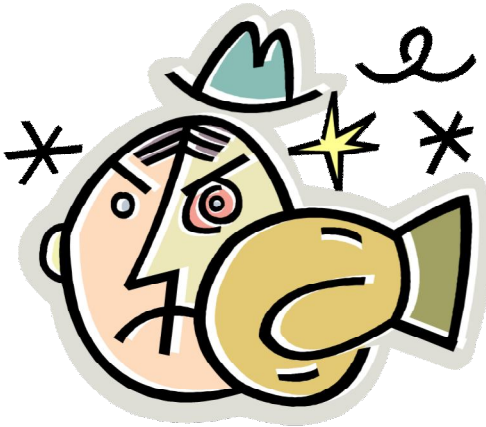
Kevin Staveley (holding the certificate) is the Manager of the 2014 British Championships. He is pictured here organising a Murder Mystery evening.

### The CAA Website

The website has been up and running for a few months now and is getting a reasonable number of hits. The old counter recorded just over 1500 visits and the new counter at the time of writing is well into three hundred hits.

There is a lot of material on the site but a lot more could usefully be added. If you

have material for the website (or for this publication) please drop me a line. It is also useful to know what members would like the site to contain, so if you think something is missing please let me know.



### CHESS BOXING

Apparently this has nothing to do with tidying up after a congress and putting the sets into storage containers. Instead it is a 'sport' in which two people alternate rounds of punching each other with playing a game of chess. Presumably Checkmate or a knockout immediately end the game. If it comes to a points decision then a queen up must count equivalent to 9 body punches!

The BBC recently carried an item on this activity. I refuse to give a link but will give a quote from the article

*"Tim Wulfgar, the president of the World Chess Boxing Association, told the Today programme's Justin Rowlett that the two component sports have "a great deal in*

common".

*He continued: "They attract a similar type of mentality - people who enjoy the thrill of the combat," noting that chess can be "absolutely brutal".*

I have no idea who Tim Wulfgar is, but Tim Woolgar was a Director of the ECF and had a keen interest in this activity.

From the CAA's point of view I would be interested in knowing how one qualifies to officiate at one of these events. Are there arbiter + boxing referee courses? Do you qualify for an Arbitee or a Refiter title on successfully completing the course?

On a more serious note, how do such minority groups attract publicity when chess is struggling to get a mention.

## **ACCELERATED PAIRINGS**

FIDE is expressing some concerns about the use of accelerated pairings. This has nothing to do with their appropriate use or otherwise but more to do with concerns about their fair application. It is deemed to be impossible to check if a title norm has been achieved fairly or if the draw has been manipulated to give someone an unfair advantage. FIDE obviously does not approve of manufactured title norms.

In Britain, where acceleration is used, it is normal to divide the players into 4 'quarters' and pair the top quarter against the second quarter and the third quarter against the bottom quarter in the first round. In the second round the top half winners are paired together and the bottom half winners are paired against the remaining top half players. Another method is to give all the top half players an imaginary point and then pair accordingly, removing this point after an appropriate number of rounds. This second method is certainly easier to program.



It is hoped that a set of pairing rules for accelerated pairings will shortly appear on the CAA website. There are currently two variations in use. The first is the basic form in which only bottom half players on 100% are 'chopped' by top half players.

This is used mainly in weekend events where the prime need is to prevent having joint winners on 100% scores and therefore never having had the opportunity to meet.

The advanced method also considers bottom half players who are within a ½ point of the lead as being candidates to meet top half opponents. This is clearly a more complicated system and is designed to improve the norm chances of title chasing players. It also has the benefit for spectators of increasing the number of early GM v GM clashes. In my opinion in a GM norm event it certainly increases GM norm chances but may adversely affect some IM norm chasers if they are not in the top half. In an IM norm event it is likely to help norm seekers. (Women's norms can be very difficult to achieve in any form of Swiss event - whilst a required rating performance may be achieved meeting the required number of titled opponent's can be difficult.)

It should also be noted that many of the GMs on the British circuit do not like acceleration. That is not in itself a reason to ignore acceleration but it may put some arbiters off doing so.

Events which have used acceleration are the British Championship, Hastings and the Scottish Championship (where the basic version was used).

Acceleration should not be used where all the players are closely graded/rated. It is only effective when there is a wide spread of grades.

## THE PAIRINGS GAME

The latest addition to humorous pairings

Hastings Rd 2 Bd 1 MA—KIPPER (Is this a Scottish dispute over breakfast?)

Lets have some of your examples.

**Items for inclusion in future issues should be sent to Alex McFarlane**

**ahmcfarlane@yahoo.co.uk**