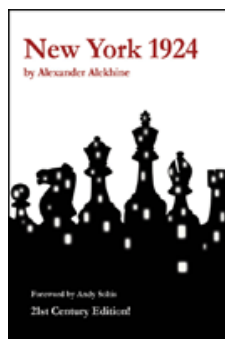




COLUMNISTS

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From the Archives...

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Watch for an item to be posted online periodically throughout each month. We will update the ChessCafe.com home page whenever there has been a “new” item posted here. We hope you enjoy *From the Archives*...

Arbiter's Notebook by Geurt Gijssen

New York 1924: The Arbiter's View

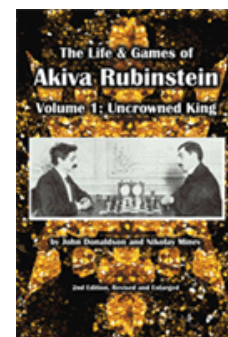
This month marks the 75th Anniversary of the New York 1924 Tournament. I would like to discuss some issues from this tournament from an arbiter's point of view.

I. The drawing of lots

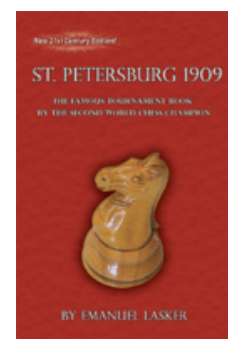
From the beginning of my career as an arbiter, I remember very well complaints from players in Swiss tournaments, players who had to play black for a second time in a row. I told them always that at the end of the tournament the colour balance would be +1 or -1, but they insisted that they deserved to have colours alternate. Even when I explained how the pairings were made, it did not help. Of course, today everyone understands that the pairings are made by the arbiter with the help of a computer.

In a round robin tournament it is much easier. We have the Berger tables and they show clearly the pairings for each round. And they are made in such a way that almost every player alternates colours.

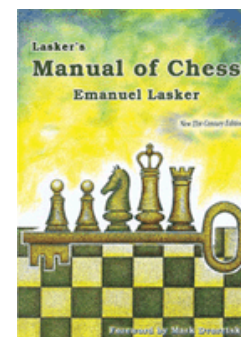
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I was very surprised when I read what happened in the New York 1924 tournament. At the start of the tournament there was a normal drawing of lots. This resulted in the following draw:

1. Marshall, 2. Yates, 3. Janowsky, 4. Tartakower, 5. Bogoljubow, 6. Capablanca, 7. Alekhine, 8. Réti, 9. Maróczy, 10. Dr. Lasker, 11. Edward Lasker.

But according to the *American Chess Bulletin*, these numbers, aside from their usefulness for the purpose of pairing, meant nothing in particular, except that they determined the colours of the pieces for the first half of the tournament. In the second half of course, the colours were reversed. Prior to the meeting, however, it had been decided not to follow the sequence of rounds as worked out, but to select each day by lot, fifteen minutes before the time to start play, the number of the rounds thus drawn for the round of that day. In this way, the players, as well as the public, were kept in the dark about the identity of the opponent until almost the last minute before sitting down at the board. This procedure was maintained for all of twenty-two rounds of the tournament.

When we compare the Berger tables with the actual draw, we see that the round order was:

- First half: 8, 4, 5, 1, 2, 9, 7, 3, 10, 6, and 11.
 Second half: 12, 14, 15, 19, 17, 22, 16, 20, 18, 13, and 21.

The consequences for the players are shown in the following table:

Player	First Half
1. Marshall	w w b f w b b b w w b
2. Yates	w w b w b b b f w w b
3. Janowsky	w b f w b b b w w w b
4. Tartakower	w b w w b b f w w b b
5. Bogoljubow	b b w w b f w w w b b
6. Capablanca	b b w w b w w w b b f
7. Alekhine	b b w b f w w w b b w
8. Réti	b f w b w w w b b b w
9. Maróczy	b w b b w w w b b f w
10. Dr. Lasker	f w b b w w b b b w w
11. Edw. Lasker	w w b b w b b b f w w

Player	Second Half
1. Marshall	f w b b b w w w w b b
2. Yates	b f b b b w w w w w b
3. Janowsky	b b w b b w f w w w b

4. Tartakower	b b w b w w b w f w b
5. Bogoljubow	b b w w w w b f b w b
6. Capablanca	b b w w w f b b b w w
7. Alekhine	w b w w w b b b f w
8. Réti	w w f w w b b b b w
9. Maróczy	w w b w f b w b b w
10. Dr. Lasker	w w b f b b w b w b w
11. Edw. Lasker	w b b b w w w w b f

Each player had white five times and black five times each half.

However, look what happened to Réti. He played in the second half all his games with black in five consecutive games. I cannot believe he was very happy with this. It is, of course, possible to generate a lot of statistics.

Without getting too bogged down in them, let us take a quick look:

- five whites in a row: Yates.
- five blacks in a row: Yates (with a free day after the second Black game)
- five blacks in a row: Réti.
- four whites in a row: Marshall, Bogoljubow, Dr. Lasker, Ed. Lasker.
- four blacks in a row: Tartakower, Ed. Lasker.

Except for the 11th and 22nd rounds, none of the players could prepare anything for the free day, because they only knew they would be free fifteen minutes before the start of the round. In my opinion, this is a very inconvenient situation.

II. The draw rule

I have obtained a copy of the supplementary code of rules in effect for the tournament. Article 18 of this code states:

No player shall offer a draw to his opponent and all such offers shall be made through one of the Tournament Directors. No draw may be agreed upon between players before the 45th move, unless with the consent of one of the Tournament Directors.

When I read this provision, Article 10 of the current Laws of Chess came immediately to mind. And the reader knows how many columns have already been devoted to this Article. I checked in the tournament book how many games were drawn before move 45. I counted twenty such games. Three games were drawn after 46 moves. I also counted how many times each player was involved in a draw with less than 45 moves.

Here is the list:

	# of "quick draws"	with white	with black
Tartakower	7	2	5
Capablanca	6	2	4
Maróczy	6	1	5
Alekhine	6	3	3
Marshall	4	4	0
Ed Lasker	3	1	2
Dr. Lasker	3	3	0
Janowsky	2	2	0
Yates	2	1	1
Réti	1	1	0
Bogoljubow	0	0	0

Capablanca was involved in the two shortest draws of the tournament:

Alekhine-Capablanca, Round 12

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e3 Bf5 5. cxd5 cxd5 6. Qb3 Bc8 7. Nf3 e6 8. Bd3 Nc6 9. 0-0 Bd7 10. Bd2 Qb6 11. Qd1 Bd6 12. Rc1 0-0 13. Na4 Qd8 14. Nc5 Bxc5 15. Rxc5 Ne4 16. Bxe4 dxe4 17. Ne5 Nxe5 18 dxe5 ½-½

I can understand how neither of the Tournament Directors dared to force the players to continue the game.

Janowsky-Capablanca, Round 1

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 d5 3. c4 e6 4. Nc3 Be7 5. Bg5 0-0 6. e3 Nbd7 7. Rc1 c6 8. Bd3 dxc4 9. Bxc4 Nd5 10. h4 f6 11. Bf4 Nxf4 12. exf4 Nb6 13. Bb3 Nd5 14. g3 Qe8 15. Qd3 Qh5 16. Bd1 Bb4 17. 0-0 Bxc3 18. bxc3 Nxf4 19. gxf4 Qg4 20 Kh1 Qh3 21 Kg1 Qg4 ½-½

III. The Emanuel Lasker affair regarding the game Capablanca-Em. Lasker (Round 14)

a. In the winter/spring of 1927 a tournament committee was organizing the New York 1927 Tournament. And suddenly there was an incident. Apart from other subjects, like financial matters, Lasker wrote in the *American Chess Journal*:

Reacting on an article in the *New York Times* of January 16, 1927, in which Mr.

Lederer told why Lasker will not play in the New York 1927 tournament, Lasker wrote:

“Concerning the clock incident, Mr. Lederer explained, “What happened is that Lasker forgot to stop his clock after one of his moves. The time was running against it and he did not notice it. I reached over and stopped his clock.”

Under the current rules it is the responsibility of the players to stop the clocks. I myself had the situation arise in the second game of the 1987 Kasparov-Karpov match in Seville. Kasparov did not stop his clock and did not start his opponent’s clock. I noticed this, but pursuant to the Laws of Chess, I was forbidden to notify Kasparov. After about 3 minutes Kasparov discovered that his clock was still running and pressed his clock.

b. Later Lederer wrote, according to Lasker:

“The clock in question was in perfect order and what actually occurred was that Mr. Lasker did not properly push the lever of his clock with the result that for about eight minutes both, his and his opponent’s, clock were running simultaneously. Although it is a well established rule in Tournament play that every player has to watch his own clock Mr. Lasker not only failed to push his lever but did not even notice that his clock had not stopped running. Contrary to his statement the incident was noticed not by Lasker but by an onlooker who drew the writer’s attention to the clock. The writer then pushed the lever for Mr. Lasker thereby protecting his interests.”

If Lasker is quoting Lederer correctly, I (G.G.) do not understand Lederer’s actions. First he states that the player himself had to watch his clock, meaning that it is the player’s responsibility and then he says that he, Lederer, after a remark by one of the spectators, pushed the lever. Very strange behaviour.

c. Lasker, again quoting Lederer:

“At adjournment time Mr. Lasker and the writer by adding the time registered on both clocks found that Mr. Lasker had lost about eight

minutes of his time.”

It is clear that two clocks were running simultaneously, a clear defect of the clock and that it happened during eight minutes. It is common practice today for the arbiter to make a correction; today these eight minutes would be given back to the player, when it is clear that his clock was still running after he had pressed the lever.

d. Finally Dr. Lasker wrote:

“Since my opponent’s clock ran, I did push the lever properly; a chess clock, the two sides of which can run simultaneously, is defective. A chess clock must be so constructed that only one of its sides runs, else it is no good. What happened was that I noticed after my 30th move, when according to our time piece the total time consumed was nearly four hours (the time limit was 30 moves in 2 hours G.G.) that the expected signal for adjournment was not given; I looked round, saw all the masters in deep thought and discovered that we had played only about three hours and three quarters (probably according to the wall clock or his watch G.G.). Hence I concluded that one of the two sides (or both sides G.G.) of the timing piece was too quick and after having made my 31st move, at adjournment time, asked Mr. Lederer to test the two sides. We tested and found that each side of the clock ran right; and he informed me that he thought that the two sides had run simultaneously.”

e. Lasker concluded with the following remarks:

“With all of this, apart from losing approximately a quarter of an hour of the time allotted for reflection, I lost about twenty minutes of the time allotted me for dinner, repose, etc. This was a heavy handicap, which showed on the 37th move. I had then about twenty minutes for nine moves, moved hastily and excitedly and blundered.

“But even if I had not blundered, it was careless to a fault to hand out a defective clock, for the most important encounter of the Tournament [Standings after round 13: Dr. Lasker 9.5, Réti 8, Capablanca 7.5 G.G.]

“Onlookers thought so too, who informed me that they have noticed the defect of the clock, but had been unable to interfere because they looked for Mr. Lederer in vain.”

Some final observations

1. In the introduction of the tournament book Lederer wrote: “I will content myself by saying that the competition proceeded very smoothly, without any unpleasant incident whatever, and that the conduct of all connected with it was most sportsmanlike. It is a great satisfaction to me to be able to say that the members of the board of referees were not called upon to officiate throughout the tournament, and that the trifling incidents, which arose, were easily settled by the tournament directors.”
2. In the tournament book published by Hermann Helms I could not find any word about the incident.
3. The third brilliancy prize was awarded to Capablanca for his game against Dr. Lasker.
4. My main source was #581 of the Russell Collection.

I was happy to write this article, but I am also aware there has not been enough time to investigate the Capablanca Dr. Lasker affair sufficiently. When I have time I will consider more sources for another article...

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