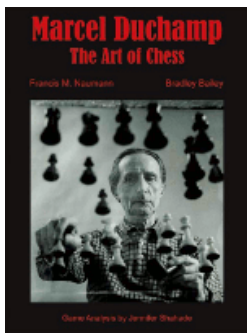




COLUMNISTS

Dutch Treat

Hans Ree



CHESS THEATRE
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The Art of Drawing

Article C.06.10.e of the FIDE Handbook states, "Where it is clear that games have been prearranged, the CA (chief arbiter) will impose penalties."

Though this article is a dead letter in practice, it makes it obvious that one cannot do what Sergei Tiviakov did at the start of this year's Dutch championship: after the drawing of lots, he told the arbiter that he wouldn't be able to attend the last round and therefore had already agreed a draw with his opponent of that round Sipke Ernst.

No, he couldn't expect the arbiter to condone this behavior. Even when robbery is only very rarely brought to court, as is the case in the Netherlands, one cannot enter a police station and demand a license for stealing.

After lengthy deliberations, the arbiters and the tournament directors refused to accept Tiviakov's request. Tiviakov became very angry and dropped out of the tournament.

A penalty for breach of contract was duly imposed by the Dutch Chess Federation: Tiviakov was not included in the Dutch team for the European Team Championship. As this championship coincided with a much more profitable small tournament in Hooageveen, where Tiviakov would be playing against Ivanchuk, Judit Polgar, and Anish Giri, the penalty had no practical effect at all, but decorum had been upheld.

The comparison between a prearranged draw and a crime such as robbery which I just made will seem too harsh to most chess players. I didn't really mean it. There are surely some chess pros who in their whole career have never prearranged a draw – I think Bobby Fischer was one of them – but they are a tiny minority, to which I have not the honor to belong.

Look – or rather please don't look – at my games against Vila (nine moves) and Kaplan (eleven moves) at the Olympiad in Skopje in 1972. All the Dutch games in the matches against Albania and Puerto Rico were drawn after about five minutes of play, as our captain had shrewdly calculated that with 2-2 in our final two matches in our qualification group, we would reach the A Group finals.

I was duly punished, though not by an arbiter. At the end of the Olympiad, it turned out that winning against the weak Vila, or not playing at all against him, would have secured a grandmaster norm for me. The five-minute draw had killed it.

I am not saying that prearranged draws occurred only in my praxis on captain's orders. More often it was when I played in a foreign tournament together with a Dutch colleague. You analyze adjourned games together, you eat and drink together, you draw together.

The usual practice is to play a few dull moves of a well-known opening variation, exchange some pieces, and then shake hands. This is the practical way, but a proud person who considers it a basic human right to determine his

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tournament strategy himself, will find it undignified to go through the motions of a transparent illusion of a real game.

At the student Olympiad in Graz in 1972, the game Hübner-Rogoff was drawn after 1.c4. This was not accepted by the arbiters and the players were ordered to play a new game. They obliged with a ridiculous game in which both players gave away all their pieces as quickly as possible.

This was not accepted either and Hübner and Rogoff were ordered to appear at the board for the third time. For Hübner, who had already compromised his principles by playing the second time, this was more than he could accept. He didn't appear for the third time, so Rogoff was declared winner. Ken Rogoff had been the more practical one, so it stands to reason that not much later he gave up his chess career to become an economist of world-wide fame.

This year in a tournament in Berlin the following game was played.

Elisabeth Pähtz (2474) - Raj Tischbierek (2447)

Berlin, 09.07.2009

Tartakower System [A41]

**1.d4 d6 2.Qd2 e5 3.a4 e4 4.h3 f5 5.Qf4 Be7 6.Qh2 Be6 7.Ra3 c5 8.Rg3 Qa5
+ 9.Nd2 Bb3 10.d5 Bh4 11.c4 e3 12.f3 f4 stalemate 1/2-1/2**



In fact this is a well-known construction of the American puzzle king Sam Loyd, not the fastest stalemate possible, but the fastest with all pieces and pawns still on the board.

Tischbierek had played exactly the same "game" at the 1990 East German championship against Thomas Pähtz, Elisabeth's father.

This time there was a fury from the Internet crowd, which was not able to appreciate the little joke. "Die Volksseele kochte" (the popular fury was at boiling point) wrote Tischbierek in his magazine *Schach*. He humbly admitted that it had been a very bad example for the young and promised never to do it again.

Hübner and Tischbierek were rather quixotic in their insistence of making it crystal clear that their games were not real. A more practical attitude has been displayed by Viktor Kortchnoi, who in his autobiography *Chess is my Life* wrote: "... it would appear that the English have never in fact learned to arrange draws beforehand. In a way that you can't find fault, because it's done so well. As a textbook example for the English and for others who are equally uneducated in this respect, I will give without commentary one partly forgotten game."

It was this one:

Viktor Kortchnoi - Mark Taimanov

Hastings 1955/56

Sicilian Defense [B67]

**1.e2-e4 c7-c5 2.Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6 3.d2-d4 c5xd4 4.Nf3xd4 Ng8-f6 5.Nb1-c3
d7-d6 6.Bc1-g5 e7-e6 7.Qd1-d2 a7-a6 8.0-0-0 Bc8-d7 9.f2-f4 Ra8-c8 10.
Nd4-f3 Qd8-a5 11.Kc1-b1 b7-b5 12.Bf1-d3 Nc6-b4 13.Rh1-e1 Nb4xd3 14.**



**15.Nc3-d5 e6xd5 16.e4xd5+ Ke8-d8 17.Bg5xf6+ g7xf6 18.Qd3-d4 Kd8-c7
19.Qd4-a7+ Kc7-d8 20.Qa7-d4 Kd8-c7 21.Qd4-a7+ Kc7-d8 ½-½**

Indeed, this is the way to do it. Some experts may have been slightly suspicious, but most of the spectators will have enjoyed it for the supposedly short time it lasted.

Kortchnoi also relates that later Taimanov, in a book about his games, boasted about the high quality of that game in Hastings. That is going to far, I think.

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