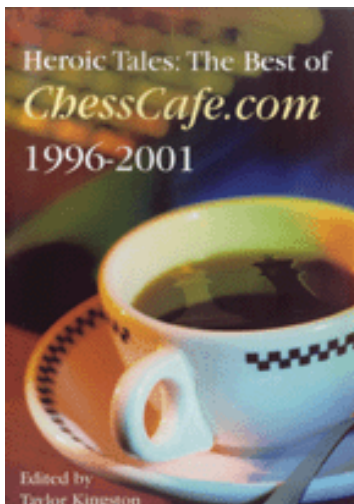




C O L U M N I S T S

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen



MonRoi

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, there was a problem during the 2006 Quebec Open involving the MonRoi PCM. The organizers supplied the PCM to both players on the top boards and before round one a technician explained how to operate it, but unfortunately those explanations were only made in English, not a wise choice for a FIDE rated tournament with foreign players. Because of the language barrier, one player did not even understand that using the PCM was not mandatory and that a paper scoresheet would have been acceptable. He also did not understand how to display the full game score on the PCM.

The real problem occurred in a game where this player, as Black, unexpectedly stopped playing at move 39 and let his flag fall in a trivially won position. This happened because the PCM was displaying line 40 of the scoresheet and the player thought that he had made move 40. The arbiter did not accept White's time forfeit claim and gave Black one extra minute and ordered the game to continue. White appealed the decision and the game continued under protest.

In appeal, it was immediately obvious that White won the game in accordance with Article 6.10, but this was not the primary issue discussed there. As it is written in the Chess Organizer's Handbook, an Appeals Committee is not bound by the Laws of Chess in search of a fair solution. Although, usually what happens on the chessboard is more important than what happens off of it. Anyway, the Appeals Committee upheld the arbiter's decision, since the player was not at fault because of the language barrier, and White soon resigned the game. **Pierre Denommée (Canada)**

Answer As a matter of fact, you did not ask me a question or for any comment; nevertheless, I will give you my opinion. It is clear that something was wrong with the explanation being given in only one language, but why did the players accepted this? They could have asked for a translation. So it was not only the technician who was at fault. With this in mind, the decision of the Appeals Committee is very reasonable.

Question Dear Sir, I have a few questions concerning the MonRoi PCM device:

- There is a mode wherein it will alert a player to an illegal move. Could you comment on this?
- In the 2006 Quebec Open, a player of the black pieces lost on time, but appealed that he was confused by the PCM display and his appeal was upheld. Do you agree with this decision?
- The device can display the position from the opponent's point of view. Should this be allowed? Please bear in mind that sometimes only one player is using the device, while the other has a paper scoresheet.
- What would happen if a player had technical problems with the device? Would he be obliged to address this problem in time trouble if he was playing with increments?
- Do you have any other comments to share on this new technology?

Sincerely, **Neil Sullivan (Canada)**

Answer 1. I do not see any problem with this mode in normal games, see Article 7.4 of the Laws of Chess:

If during a game it is found that an illegal move has been completed, the position immediately before the irregularity shall be reinstated.

As you can see, the article makes no mention of how the illegal move was found. Note that the illegal move had already appeared on the board. However it is possible that a move is legal, but the notation or input is illegal. The situation is different in Rapid and Blitz games, and use of the MonRoi device should be forbidden, because nobody is permitted to indicate that an illegal move was made, not even the arbiter.

2. See my answer to the above letter.

3. It is difficult to answer this question, but I came to the conclusion that it is not completely correct to offer such an opportunity, although the opponent, who uses a "normal" scoresheet, can do the same by walking to the other side of the table. The most important element to me was the fact that the MonRoi PCM should only be used as a scoresheet in this situation. The opportunity to flip the board should only be allowed once at the start of the game, and only to the player with the black pieces. I will contact MonRoi about this matter.

4. If it is really a technical problem that cannot be solved on the spot, the player can switch to a paper scoresheet.

5. These issues should be discussed by a special Committee and the Laws of Chess will have to be adapted or some changes made to the device.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen! We are about to stage a very important tournament, but need clarity on the issue of tie-break systems as stated in the

Laws of Chess:

Application of Tiebreak System to different Tournament systems

Individual Swiss Systems (most players are mostly rated, ratings are not consistent):

Direct encounter

Sum of progressive scores

Buchholz

Sonneborn-Berger

Won games

Is this the preferred order or are the systems listed in no particular order?

Thank you in advance. Yours, **Otto Z. Nakapunda (Namibia)**

Answer Each organizing committee is free to choose the tiebreak system it prefers, but it must be announced in advance and some criteria should be placed above others. For instance, Buchholz should be before Sonneborn-Berger, because Sonneborn-Berger is a refinement of Buchholz. To start with direct encounter is logical, but I do not see any reason why the sum of progressive scores is above Buchholz. Perhaps the readers can explain why. If anyone needs me to elaborate on these criteria, please let me know and I will explain all the criteria with examples in a future column.

Question Dear Geurt, suppose White offers Black a draw, and then presses his own clock:

- What is the outcome if Black's flag falls and he then says, "I accepted the draw"! Black even shows White and the TD that he had already written "Draw Accepted" on his scoresheet. Has the game ended in a draw, or has Black lost?
- What if Black verbally rejects the draw, but changes his mind before he moves, and says, "I now accept the draw"? Could White then say, "You already rejected the draw offer, and I no longer want to draw, so the game must continue"?

Thank you, **Gene Milener (USA)**

Answer First, let me quote the relevant Articles:

9.1.a A player wishing to offer a draw shall do so after having made a move on the chessboard and before stopping his clock and starting the opponent's clock. An offer at any other time during play is still valid, but Article 12.6 must be considered. No conditions can be attached to the offer. In both cases the offer cannot be withdrawn and remains valid until the opponent accepts it, rejects it orally, rejects it by touching a piece with the intention of moving or capturing it, or the

game is concluded in some other way.

9.1.b The offer of a draw shall be noted by each player on his scoresheet with a symbol (See Appendix E13).

E13 The offer of a draw shall be marked as (=).

1. The game is simply lost. Please note the following sentence:

*The offer cannot be withdrawn and remains valid until the opponent accepts it, rejects it orally, rejects it by touching a piece with the intention of moving or capturing it, **or the game is concluded in some other way.***

Well, as a consequence of the flag fall the game is concluded in some other way than a draw, assuming that Black did not complete the required number of moves. A player has to mark the offer of a draw on the scoresheet, not the acceptance of a draw, (=) only means that a draw was offered.

2. In the same way an offer of a draw cannot be withdrawn, the rejection cannot be withdrawn and the game must be continued.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, in your [report](#) on the Turin Olympiad, you wrote “it was not clear as to which time control we should play in Turin.” And yet in the regulations for the Olympiad posted on the FIDE website, it states:

8.5 Time control

The time limit is 40 moves in 100 minutes, then 20 moves in 50 minutes and finally 10 minutes for all remaining moves. From move 1 30 seconds will be added after each move. The games shall be played using the DGT clocks.

This seems admirably clear. Why was this regulation not followed? And why was this particular time control not offered as an option in the time control questionnaire? Regards, **John Saunders (UK)**

Answer You and I know quite well that the FIDE Handbook published on Internet is not completely up-to-date. The last time that the Olympiad was played with this time control was in 1998 in Elista. In Istanbul 2000, Bled 2002 and Calvia 2004, the time limit was 90 minutes for the whole game with an increment of 30 seconds per move from move 1.

I was not responsible for the questionnaire. I received the questionnaires on the evening before the last round. I checked them quickly, found a mistake, and ordered the FIDE secretary to correct and reprint them. Just before the start of the round they were returned to me.

Question Mr. Gijssen, I recently accompanied my father-in-law to the

National League in Poland. When we arrived at the playing hall, the appointed arbiter was absent, and my father-in-law suggested that I should arbitrate the match, as I am an Arbiter-B in Holland. We contacted the appointed arbiter and he requested that I substitute.

After the start of the match, one of my father-in-law's teammates informed me that his opponent wrote a number of more or less forced moves in advance. I warned this player in English and in German. He rather angrily erased some moves and continued the game, saying some bad words in Polish. Unfortunately for him, I understood what he was saying and I warned him again. The other players were quite disturbed, especially when the players of my father-in-law's team supported me.

One hour later I discovered that, as a kind of provocation, he again wrote some moves in advance, so I stopped the clocks and declared the game lost. He loudly objected and said that I was not an International Arbiter, I did not speak Polish and that the punishment was exaggerated.

I replied that English and German are official FIDE languages, and that I was appointed with the approval of the original match arbiter. I also explained that his two offences and his insulting attitude were the reasons for the penalty I gave. **Jos van Doorn (The Netherlands)**

Answer An interesting situation. If I had been the arbiter, I would have done the same thing. So your decision was correct. There is only one point I have a problem with. You said that the appointed arbiter agreed that you should be his substitute, but he forfeited his right to any input when he failed to attend the match. It would have been better if the two captains had agreed to make you the match arbiter. This may have avoided some of the problems you encountered.

Question Capturing the king in Blitz has been a part of the game for as long as I can remember, but now the rules are written that a player loses the game if he does so. What was the reason for the change? Regards, **André Nilsson (Sweden)**

Answer The process is this: the members of the Rules and Tournament Regulations Committee (of which I was a member) make a proposal to the FIDE Executive Board, who then sends the proposed change to the General Assembly. The members of the General Assembly are the representatives of the Federations, who then may discuss the item with players, arbiters, organizers etc.

Here is what I wrote previously:

Article 1.2:

The objective of each player is to place the opponent's king 'under attack' in such a way that the opponent has no legal move. The player who achieves this goal is said to have 'checkmated' the opponent's king and to have won the game. Leaving one's own king under attack, exposing one's own king to attack and also 'capturing' the opponent's king are not allowed. The opponent whose king has been checkmated has lost the game.

New in this Article is the sentence: "Leaving one's own king under attack, exposing one's own king to attack and also 'capturing' the opponent's king are not allowed."

This change means that capturing of the king is considered an illegal move and there are not any exceptions in the Rapid and Blitz regulations.

The Rules Committee had no difficulty accepting this change, but there was strong opposition in the Executive Board. A majority accepted the proposal and, in private discussions after this meeting, I tried to convince those opposed to it that the proposal had merit.

Afterwards, I had a discussion with a colleague about a situation in which a player leaves his king in check during a Blitz game. We thought it strange that a player could lose a game when he captures the opponent's king. So we agreed to the following: if a player leaves his king in check, he makes an illegal move. If the opponent does not claim the illegal move, he then sanctions it and considers the move legal. But this does not mean that the opponent is allowed to make an illegal move by capturing the king. Therefore, two consecutive illegal moves cannot exist.

There were several reasons to introduce this new rule:

- The same rule now applies to all types of chess (rapid, blitz and normal).
- It is possible that the king was taken with an illegal move, but how could one prove it?
- Generally the illegality of a move can be proven, but in the case of capturing the king, the game is suddenly over.

Question Dear Mister Gijssen, some chess friends of mine were making the argument that when executing a mate-in-one move a flag-fall is of no importance. I tried to convince them that the flag always has priority, so there is no mate-in-one. Could you please help us? Thank you very much. **Lex Karstens (The Netherlands)**

Answer There is always the same misunderstanding regarding a mating move and a flag fall. When a player has *made* his move, and this move has produced a checkmate position, the game is over. A flag fall is not relevant. A move is *made* when a player has moved a piece from one square to another and his hand has released the piece.

Question It is nice to see that you are the chief arbiter of the Topalov – Kramnik match. Susan Polgar posted on her website that the schedule calls for “reversals of colors” on day 11, could you explain what this means? Thank you, **Ken Trainer (USA)**

Answer The schedule is as follows:

Day 1	21-09-2006	Opening Ceremony	
Day 2	22-09-2006	Rest day	
Day 3	23-09-2006	Game 1	A - B
Day 4	24-09-2006	Game 2	B - A
Day 5	25-09-2006	Rest day	
Day 6	26-09-2006	Game 3	A - B
Day 7	27-09-2006	Game 4	B - A
Day 8	28-09-2006	Rest day	
Day 9	29-09-2006	Game 5	A - B
Day 10	30-09-2006	Game 6	B - A
Day 11	01-10-2006	Rest day	Reversal of Colors
Day 12	02-10-2006	Game 7	B - A
Day 13	03-10-2006	Game 8	A - B
Day 14	04-10-2006	Rest day	
Day 15	05-10-2006	Game 9	B - A
Day 16	06-10-2006	Game 10	A - B
Day 17	07-10-2006	Rest day	
Day 18	08-10-2006	Game 11	B - A
Day 19	09-10-2006	Rest day	
Day 20	10-10-2006	Game 12	A - B
Day 21	11-10-2006	Rest day	
Day 22	12-10-2006	Tie breaks	
Day 23	13-10-2006	Closing Ceremony	

During the Opening Ceremony on September 21, there will be a drawing of lots to decide who is A and who is B. As you can see, the colors alternate until round 7. In this way, Player A has four White's after a rest day and Player B has three White's after a rest day.

Have a question for Geurt Gijssen? Perhaps he will respond to it in a future column. Send it to geurtgijssen@chesscafe.com. Please include your name and country of residence.

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