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COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen

Swiss Gambit

It was a little more than three years ago that Hanon Russell and I walked along *les rues et boulevards* of Paris with our wives and Hanon suggested the possibility of becoming a columnist at **The Chess Cafe**. He thought a monthly column about matters of concern to arbiters would be useful. I hesitated at first, but we finally agreed I would write a column until the end of that year (1998 - nine columns). During a walk along the Seine, we had long discussions about the name of the column and finally, I think it was Hanon's wife's idea to call it *An Arbiter's Notebook*. I have never regretted my decision to write these monthly articles, although, being on the road so much, it has sometimes been quite difficult to transmit them to 'HQ'. I have made a lot of new contacts and I had the feeling that it was - and still - is quite useful for arbiters worldwide. However, probably more important, as a result of many of the questions and comments about the proposed draft of the Laws of Chess, I was able to implement a lot of novelties. At tournaments, I have met a lot of people who read my column and had additional comments. As we end our third year here at **The Chess Cafe**, I would like to thank all readers who have sent in comments, questions and otherwise cooperated with me through "An Arbiter's Notebook"…

Question Mr. Geurt Gijssen, First of all, congratulations for your excellent column *An Arbiter's Notebook*. It is my favourite chess column. Could you please explain in which circumstances articles "e" and "f" shall be applied? What do the new items really mean? What was the intention of the Rules Committee in approving them?

New Laws of Chess, Art. 13.4:

The arbiter can apply one or more of the following penalties:
a. Warning,
b. Increasing the remaining time of the opponent,
c. Reducing the remaining time of the offending player,
d. Declaring the game to be lost,
e. Reducing the points scored in a game by the offending party,
f. Increasing the points scored in a game by the opponent to the maximum available for that game,
g. Expulsion from the event.

Gabriel Araujo (Brazil)

Answer First of all I would like to refer to Article 11:

Unless announced otherwise in advance, a player who wins his game, or wins by forfeit, scores one point (1), a player who loses his game. or forfeits scores no point (0) and a player who draws his game scores a half point (½).

Furthermore, I refer to Article 12.7:

Persistent refusal by a player to comply with the Laws of Chess shall be penalised by loss of the game. The arbiter shall decide the score of the opponent.

Article 11 says that it is possible after July 1 to use another scoring system – like, for instance one used in many national soccer competitions: 3 points for a win, 1 point for a draw and 0 for a lost match. Using this system it is also possible, although I offer no opinion about it, that a player who wins a game shall receive only 2 points instead of 3 points (See Article 13.4.e). There can be another situation: a player shows such a bad behaviour that the arbiter decides to penalise the player by loss of the game (Article 12.7) What score should be given to his opponent? It is not always clear that the opponent will receive the same number of points awarded for the wins of a game. Suppose the White player has sufficient material to checkmate the Black player, but Black has only a King. White's behaviour is so horrible, that the arbiter decides to declare the game lost

for him. In the "traditional" system (1-½-0) it is possible to give the Black player only a half point, which is quite reasonable. Using the 3-1-0 system it is also possible to give Black 2 points.

Question Mr. Gijssen, we used the 3-1-0 in a 5-round Swiss and got complaints from the top players. In general I think our situation would be repeated everywhere: players complain that top players take it easy with each other and fight hard against lower rated players. Since our playing is done on weekends with one game Friday night, two on Saturday and two on Sunday, being rested is also a factor. The main problem was our second seed, an IM who won his first two games and drew the last three.

Please give me your opinion on using the 3-1-0 for round robins and 5-round Swisses. Also, what do you foresee its use in general. People are reluctant to change and our experience is limited. Your opinion is highly respected and I will bring it up in a coming meeting to discuss the format. **Frankie Torregrosa International Arbiter (Puerto Rico)**

Answer Dear Mister Torregrosa: Frankly speaking, it is very difficult for me to give an opinion, simply because I have no experience with this scoring system, which will possible only when the new Laws of Chess are enacted (1 July 2001). One thing is sure: it produces fighting chess. Recently I saw an article by Stewart Reuben and in his opinion the system 3-1-0 is too draconic. He suggests a 5-2-0 system. I also have the feeling that this system is a little bit better than 3-1-0. By the way, I do not understand your remark about complaining players. I assume that the scoring system was announced before the tournament and that every player, was aware of it. If this was the case, there is no reason to complain.

Question An opponent castled illegally, touching both the king and rook in the process. The king had no legal moves, but the rook did. Is my opponent required to move the rook on his next move? If both the king and the rook had legal moves, which piece would my opponent have been required to move? **Michael de la Maza (USA)**

Answer Provided the opponent first touched his king, castling, even if it is illegal, will be considered as a king move. If the opponent can make a king move (and castling on the other side is included) he has to make a move with his king. If a legal king move is not possible, the opponent may make any legal move, but he is never forced to play a move with the touched rook.

Question Dear Sir, I would like to receive your input regarding pairing software, both for Swiss and round-robin events (including team events). Over the years I have tried several pairing programs, but have encountered problems with all of them. At first came the ridiculous Bordonada program, a complete failure if you ask me. I never could understand why FIDE ever approved it, apart from the wish of certain officials to channel money to that particular programmer.

Next I switched to PROTOS, a vast improvement compared to Bordonada, but still rather primitive and vastly lacking in resources for the user. I went through several American products next, all of them I assume do not comply entirely with FIDE Swiss Pairing Rules. Finally I settled on Swiss Master, following advice from FIDE Arbiter's Committee chairman and friend of mine P. Nikolopoulos (he noted that you personally had given a copy of the software at Las Vegas). That was indeed the best-functioning pairing program I had used to date, and its varied output resources I found of great assistance. Still, certain bugs were still present (for example, if towards the end of the tournament too many players have quit - as many as 8 is enough for the problem to appear - the results screen gets all messed up and the alignment is incorrigible; moreover, using it in the 1998 Zonal 1.6 tournament, I found it impossible to forbid more than 4 pairings when necessary (I guess memory was just too short) - a "do not pair players from same federation" function would have been a lot of help; finally, while it does apply the rule forbidding floating the same player for two consecutive rounds, it ignores the specification for last round pairings for players with 50% score or more - I had to manually pair the first few score groups in a recent open tournament to avoid conflict). Finally I gave Swiss Perfect a try, even though it is not approved by FIDE, because of its user-friendliness.

Then I started to wonder why FIDE doesn't commission a programmer to create an official FIDE Swiss Pairing Program. Most of the already existing programs suffer from a very serious drawback - they are DOS programs. Well, I have been to a tournament where I was provided with a computer, but DOS wasn't installed on it! Besides, working with .txt files and in a DOS environment is totally excruciating for a busy arbiter, especially when dealing with a huge open tournament or a multitude of tournaments (such as a youth festival with many age categories).

Swiss Manager *is* a Windows program, but since it is not approved by FIDE I assume that the problem lies in its pairing algorithm, so I shouldn't use it in a FIDE tournament. Knowing a bit about programming myself, I simply cannot imagine it being so difficult to integrate a correct pairing algorithm in a Windows interface.

To the questions now: first, I would like to hear about your personal preferences in pairing programs. Which one do you use? Which one did you use in the Olympiad? Which ones do you suggest for round robins and team events? Which ones do you find easiest to use? Which ones do you believe provide best output functions? Second, why doesn't FIDE organize a forum for arbiters and programmers, where ideas about this kind of software can be exposed? FIDE could then take into account all positive suggestions and commission a programmer to create a pairing program of good quality, Windows-based, applicable to all kinds of events, incorporating all useful functions to arbiters worldwide. Is there any hope on this issue? Or should I stick to my Swiss Master**? IA Sotiris Logothetis (Greece)**

Answer Let me tell you something about my history with the Swiss system. It was around1975 when I first made Swiss pairings. At that time we only used a Swiss system based on Buchholz. It was the Dutch junior championship and I remember very well how I made the pairings manually with coaches and parents around me. I have to confess I liked to make the pairings with a lot of people watching what I was doing. In this way I could teach them about the Swiss system (you probably know I was a teacher by profession).

Then, in 1979, I was invited to be the arbiter of the European Youth Championship. I made the pairings the same way, but now with players and seconds around. And again the pairings were made based on Buchholz.

In the meantime FIDE introduced a new Swiss system based on the ratings of the players and I began to study this system. I was not happy with this system and convinced the board of the Royal Dutch Chess Federation to form a committee to prepare a better system. We worked for several years and in 1988 published the results of our work. In 1992, FIDE accepted this system as one of the systems it would recognise and it was called the Dutch system. The same year I convinced Mr. Van Oosterom, sponsor of many tournaments and matches, to develop a computer program for the Dutch system. Everybody in the chess world knows this program now as Swissmaster.

I had many meetings with the programmers of Swissmaster. From the very beginning I explained that the most interesting part of the program should be to produce correct pairings, at least pairings that were as correct as possible. The format was not important. They agreed and did so. But I began to receive more and more questions about improving the layout to make it ready for Windows and so on. I negotiated with the programmer and he is now ready to do it. This means that in a few months there will be Windows-based Swissmaster.

I have related my "Swiss history" extensively to explain why it is difficult for me to give an opinion about other systems. I am very happy that you like Swissmaster and probably in a few months you will like it much more. Finally please note that there is a FIDE committee for Swiss systems. This commission investigates new Swiss systems and computer programs. The chairman of this committee is Christian Krause from Germany. His e-mail address is: krause.forstern@t-online.de. (He has given me permission to give his e-mail address.) Anyone who has ideas about new Swiss systems or has a new computer program should contact Mister Krause.

Question Geurt, Arbiter's Notebook February 21: Sum of Progressive Scores:

I beg to disagree with you (and Mr. Chan) about Sum of Progressive scores. Of course it's crude, but I think it's fair and logical. I believe they talk about a "Swiss Gambit" in some circles. Losing in round 1 in order to get weaker opponents! "Penalising" the slow starters - or rewarding the quick ones - is perfectly sensible.

To take Mr Chan's example: A scores 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0; B scores 0, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1.I think it's misleading to say that B has scored better against the stronger opposition. Yes, he scored more points in the last 5 rounds, but his opponents in those rounds were weaker than A's (in theory, of course). In an ideal tournament, A has been playing throughout against opponents on 100%. B's opponents all had one less than 100% after the first round. So B scored more points in the last 5 rounds, only his opponents were weaker. And A scored more points in round 1, where we know nothing about the

opponents. I really can't see this as a reason for preferring B. A has (theoretically!) met stronger opposition in every single round we have information about. And they've got the same number of points. Giving it to A on tiebreak sounds fair to me.

To take your point: suppose B beat A in the last round. OK, tournaments aren't ideal. Floats happen. (And it could well be that seeding kept them apart in round 1, though it might not have!) Only now we're talking about a different system. Is the "result of game against each other" a fair method of tiebreak? It isn't obvious. If B beat A, then A scored better than B in games against other people. Why ignore A's superior score elsewhere? Especially if it was against stronger opposition, as it was! True, B did all you could expect of him against his weaker opponents in rounds 2 to 5. It wasn't his fault they were weaker than A's. Hmm, was not it? What about that first-round loss? He played the Swiss Gambit in other words, and got weaker opponents, and it isn't obviously unfair to count it against him on tiebreak.

 I said earlier that I thought it "misleading" to say B had scored better than A against the stronger opposition. Actually I'd go further. I think it irrelevant! I've never understood why wins against strong opponents should outweigh losses against weak ones. It seems to be your feeling, and Mr Chan's, and for all I know it's everyone's except mine. Maybe it IS just a question of feeling. If there's logic to it it's something I've missed. There *is* logic to SPS, surely. A higher SPS always means (in theory!!) that you got stronger opposition. I did say "in theory" with two exclamation marks. It is crude, but there's sense to it. I suppose the real answer is, don't split ties. If you have to, SPS isn't silly. **Richard Haddrell (UK)**

Answer This column has had numerous discussions for a long time about Article 10.2. I am afraid that we are now discussing tiebreaks in Swiss tournaments. And it is probably not so bad to have these discussions now. Why? This year FIDE will organise four continental championships. From these championships 90 players will qualify for the World Chess Championships. The distribution of qualifiers is as follows: Europe: 46, Asia/Oceania 19, America 19 and Africa 6.

Let us look at Europe: I was told that about 200 players should participate in the European Continental Championship. I am sure that many players shall share the same place around place 46. It is clear that qualification will be decided by tiebreak. I am very happy that the organisers reserved one day for tiebreak. I am not sure, however, that one day will be sufficient, but we will see.

You make a point when you say that a player who has been leading for a long time deserves to be higher ranked than another one who shares the lead at the end. I think you are right when the pairings are based on ratings. In this case the strongest player starts on table 1 and generally meets stronger opponents. But what about pairings based on Buchholz? It is possible that the #1 and #2 meet each other in Round 1. And to make it even more complicated, what about a tournament in which the first-round pairings are based on ratings and the other rounds on Buchholz? To play tiebreak games is in my opinion the lesser evil, even though we may have to play Rapid or even Blitz games. I once heard some criticism about playing Rapid or Blitz games to break a tie: suppose in athletics two participants tie in the Marathon. Is it fair that then a 100-meter sprint should be held to decide who is the winner of the Marathon?

Question Dear Mr Gijssen, what can I do during Elo calculation in a round-robin if one rating player has 100% or 0% of points and his Dp is infinite - how can I calculate the Dpa in this case. **Nesla Adnanet, National Arbiter (Algeria)**

Answer It is obvious that you cannot calculate the Dpa, but the Rating differences can always be calculated. The problem is of course that the TPR cannot be calculated, but there is a little trick: Add half a point as a draw of the player against himself or half a point as a draw against a player with a rating equal to the average rating of the opponents. In this case it is possible to calculate a TPR, not the exact one, but one that is very close.

Question Dear Mr.Gijssen, This time I have a question on the subject "the recording of the moves". I'm a bit uncertain how to act when I find errors in the players' scoresheets. When I find an error, for example, white moves recorded in the column for black moves or differences between the players' scoresheets, I have done the following. When the player is on move I have pointed out the error and recommended that the player correct it on his own time. If the player has less than 5 minutes on the clock, I have refrained from interfering. Is this correct? **Jonas Magnusson (Sweden)**

Answer I agree fully with the way you handle this problem. It is the duty of the arbiter to observe that the players act according to the Articles of the Laws of Chess. And one of the Articles says that the player has to record the moves correctly. It happens sometimes that a player forgets to write a move or writes a move twice. If I see this I inform the player about this kind of errors.

Question Dear Mr Gijssen, I will be the arbiter of the World Cup of Rapid Chess in Cannes next week while you are the arbiter of the Amber tournament in Monaco. In view of your vast experience in events of this kind, I would like to ask you couple of technical questions. This is concerning the particularity of events with electronic clocks and the moves being transmitted simultaneously on the screens. There will also be a sufficient number of arbiters to survey individually all the games where the players are in serious time pressure.

[G.G.: I am really surprised that there are still questions about the regulations of the World Cup of Rapid Chess, less than one week before the start of this very important event, but nevertheless I will try to answer to your questions as best as I can.]

Question 1 I have heard in certain events (for example the Immopar and the World Championships) in rapid and blitz play that the arbiters have been authorized to signal flag falls (in contradiction with article B6). Is this in fact common practice in this type of events and could be authorised?

Answer The Immopar tournaments were organised from 1990 until 1992. At that time we did not have very clear Laws for Rapid and Blitz games and the games were not rated as happens now. That means that we could make our own regulations. I used to make a draft for the Immopar tournaments and discussed them with organisers and players. One of the results of these discussions was that the players preferred that the chief arbiter signal the flag fall. This was not so illogical because there was only one game at the same time at the stage and two arbiters (one of them only for signalling the flag fall) observed the game.

The tiebreak games in the World Championships are different. As you probably already know, there is an increment of 10 seconds after each move in the tiebreak games. And with such an increment, the games are not considered Rapid or Blitz games. As a result, in these games we followed the "normal" Laws of Chess with only one exception: the players are not obliged to write the moves.

Question 2 My second question concerns article B7. With electronic clocks with an obvious proof that his opponent's flag has fallen first (the flashing bar in the DGT clock), is the player obliged to physically stop the clocks (those buttons can be a bit awkward). Is it then sufficient that the player signals the flag fall while still having time on his own clock with the arbiter as a witness? As you can see if the answer is yes for the first question then the second becomes less important. **Stephen Boyd, FIDE Arbiter (France)**

Answer You refer to Article B7. Article B7 is a part of the Rapid Laws of Chess and the real question is: are the games in this event Rapid games? It depends of course of the time limit. For this I quote the next part of your letter: "The time controls are rather original for this event. 25 minutes/50 moves then 10 seconds by move afterwards. I don't think that this will pose big problems as long as the clocks are manipulated properly. But the tiebreaks are the old-fashioned 5-5 blitz and an 'Immopar' 6-5 as a final resort. So I think here you can see the motivation for my questions."

The definition of a Rapid game is described in Article B1:

A 'Rapidplay game' is one where all the moves must be made in a fixed time between 15 to 60 minutes."

Well, as you can see, games with the time limit mentioned in your letter are not Rapid games. This means that the "normal" Laws of Chess are valid. The arbiter may signal a flag fall.

Finally the tiebreaks The main reason that in Blitz and Rapid games the arbiter may not signal the flag fall is the fact, that these games are normally played in tournaments with many players and only few arbiters. If you have sufficient arbiters (for each tiebreak game an arbiter), I think it is reasonable to allow the arbiters to call a flag fall, but you have to announce this very clearly in advance. I would like to emphasize that this is only my personal opinion. I am sure that the players will appreciate this, for they can fully concentrate on the game without worrying about

their opponent's flag.

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

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