



Newsletter of the Chess Arbiters Association

November 2018

Issue 33

AMToo Policy: Following some recent correspondence it is perhaps worth stating what the Editor sees as the purpose of AMToo.

The basic purpose of this Newsletter is to keep members informed of the Laws of Chess, their interpretations and application. It is also important to keep members aware of related matters such as cheating issues. Hopefully, as well as keeping members informed it will also, occasionally, entertain.

With a few exceptions, the Laws of Chess apply worldwide. It is therefore to be expected that many of the issues covered will arise outside of Britain. It is also to be expected that foreign arbiters may find some of the articles of interest when issues appear on the website.

Initial distribution of the magazine is limited to members* and a few others where they have a position in chess where a copy of AMToo may be useful to them. When a new issue appears, the previous issue is uploaded to the website so that non-members are able to access it. (*Recently lapsed members also receive copies.)

It is policy that there should be 3 or 4 issues a year. Current chess activity and resultant incidents means that, in fact, 6 issues a year is the norm.

If members feel that any part of this policy is inappropriate to the principles of the CAA would they please let me know so that a review can take place.

ECF Home Director: Adrian Elwin has been appointed as the ECF's Home Director. As such he will be responsible for the arbiting system in England. As this appointment was made in mid-October it is too early to say what changes, if any, will be put into place.

In his election address Adrian recognises that there is a shortage of Course Lecturers and Arbiter Assessors. For several recently qualified arbiters there has been a difficulty in progressing from level 1 to level 2.

Congratulations

Tom Thorpe (ECF Manager of Arbiters) was awarded the IA title in Batumi. Tom's application was initially rejected as one of his norms came before he was an FA. However, the norm did come after he had applied to be an FA and therefore it should have been acceptable. It would have been particularly annoying if this application had been delayed as his wait to become an FA had been considerable as FIDE insists on FAs being 21 years old and a previous proposal to reduce this to 18 had been unsuccessful. The current age restrictions are IA/FA 21 yo, NA 16yo.

FIDE Commission Meetings

With the uncertainty of who was going to win the FIDE Presidential elections few decisions were taken by Commissions. Instead the standard action was to vote on whether the proposal was to be passed on to the new Commission to action it. These decisions can have an affect on the duties of all arbiters.

Arbiters Commission

Quite a few changes for those with or seeking international titles.

For anyone seeking an FA or IA title the proposal to have a blitz or rapidplay was accepted. For IA's it will be necessary to attend and pass a course. (Senior Lecturer titles may be given for those allowed to conduct these courses.)

The concept of an IT4 form was accepted but the example shown did not receive much support. This form will be an assessment by the Chief Arbiter on the other arbiters. It will not be used in all events initially but will eventually trickle down to all rated tournaments.

There will also be an Arbiter Training Project. The objectives of this were

- a) to ensure arbiters keep up to date with the Laws;
- b) to better prepare arbiters to progress from FA to IA and to go up the categories;
- c) implement evaluation of arbiters;
- d) improve the selection of arbiters for significant appointments;
- e) organise a training and assessment programme for FIDE Lecturers.

Arbiters who do not pass the proposed tests within 6 months will have their licence suspended until they do.

Rules Commission

There were amendments made to the Competition Rules. One proposal from the Chair to limit half point byes to only one a tournament was defeated at Commission and again in the General Assembly where Scotland, England and the USA combined to ensure that

no variation was accepted. However, any extension to more than one half point bye will need to be published in the tournament conditions.

For FIDE rated events eating at the board will not be allowed unless the tournament regulations specifically allows it.

Pairings Commission

The Pairings Commission spent a great deal of time talking about Dubov pairings which are seldom used. However there was some discussion on Swiss Pairings where the wording of the rules is to be simplified. In addition there was some discussion on byes. It was stated that statistically the best result to give to the player with a bye is zero but it was accepted that was never going to happen. 1 point was the worst score in terms of the player achieving their expected performance so there was a movement to give ½ points only for byes. Remember we are talking about forced byes where there are an odd number of players. Currently the FIDE system gives byes to the lowest rated. The idea of giving byes to the median was rejected. Instead what was muted was to introduce a new unrated player as bottom seed and then pair. Who would this new 'player' meet – yes the median!!! Sometimes I don't understand at all. I clarified with a member of the Commission, even though paired against this fictitious player it would still be regarded as 'no colour'.

Anti Cheating Commission

This is likely to be renamed as the Fair Play Commission. Other matters were dealt with in the previous issue.

Batumi Olympiad



The picture opposite is of Hall 1 is from the official website as is the later picture of Matt Carr with bow tie.

Players expect that at an Olympiad there will be the top arbiters. This can be far from the truth. The British contingent there were certainly experienced but some appointments are made simply because of the area that an arbiter comes from. Events like

this should provide a valuable training experience for less accomplished arbiters, however these arbiters should be of a reasonable minimum level before being chosen.

Tales of arbiter howlers are legion and this year's event added to the list. In one match an arbiter with the FA title stepped into a game after move 75 by stopping the clock and declaring the game drawn under the 75 move rule – or at least their personal strange variation of it. The arbiter had completely misunderstood the rule regarding a position which had occurred for that number of moves without a piece being taken or a pawn moved. In another match a player made their 40th move at the time control. Before he could get up for a toilet break the opponent replied. It is common at this point for both players to go off and have refreshments, etc. However, in this case the arbiter refused to allow White to leave as he was on the move. The sector arbiter was summoned and pointed out that the arbiter could give permission for the player to leave. The arbiter refused to give that permission. The sector arbiter refused to over-rule.

Another arbiter has been attacked in social media for failing to spot an alleged touch move. Even though this was the only match, and indeed the only remaining game, that arbiter was watching he was unable to say if the player had touched his rook before his bishop. This can happen when the arbiter turns away to ask someone to be quiet for example. However, in a later match I did see this arbiter reading some notes.

In the Netherlands v Scotland match one of the clocks added on the additional extra 30 minutes after move 39. The 'move' counter was in operation and the time should have been added after move 40, (not when the first clock reached zero). The arbiter went to reset the clock but the Dutch player complained that it was unnecessary. As there were several players short of time on the surrounding boards the arbiter decided to minimise disruption and let the game continue. When the Scottish player's clock indicated 30 minutes the Dutch player then claimed a win on time. This was rejected by both the arbiter and the Chief Arbiter. These wins on time have been given in the past. The difference here is that the player who made the claim had been the one to prevent the arbiter from resetting the clock thereby giving the opponent the exact information on how little time remained. By his actions the claimant had invalidated his case.

The claim could have been made at 30.30? This is the time added after move 40, 30 seconds for the move and the next session allocation of 30 minutes. If these had not been added the clock would have been showing 00.00.

In a game in the Women's section a player wrote a move on her scoresheet and claimed correctly that it would produce a draw by repetition. When informed of the claim the arbiter stated that it depended on the move of the opponent. The game was then checked through and the arbiter rejected the claim. The Sector Arbiter was summoned

(that should have been done initially) and the correctness of the claim established immediately and the draw awarded.

The Georgia v Lithuania game turned into a nightmare for the arbiter, Alex McFarlane. At Olympiads players must wear name badges at all times, they have to use the prescribed pens (they should not bring their own) and are not allowed to have watches. The pens and watches are anti-cheating measures. In addition, when a player finishes they are expected to leave the hall.

To attempt to keep this report brief, several players, backed by their captain refused to display their accreditation (name tags), claiming that having it in their pocket was enough. A further player from one of Georgia's other teams arrived to watch the match with no accreditation.

Two players did not leave the hall after their game. One refused to move away on two separate occasions. On their second return both were followed out of the hall. Another one of the team used his own pen, which is forbidden. It was removed and given to the team captain to keep (the announced procedure). Next move the pen was back with the player to be removed again.

Not only was there a very busy arbiter but a deputy chief arbiter was involved once and a sector arbiter three times.

The Georgians were also 'reluctant' to leave the hall the following day too. In another match the Georgian Captain was caught telling her player to get back to the board as it was his move.

England had two arbiters in Batumi who had never officiated at an Olympiad before. Alan Atkinson and Matt Carr.

The following is by Alan who was used as an anti-cheating arbiter and therefore had the freedom to see more of what was happening.

Olympiad Experiences

Having been appointed as an arbiter at the Batumi Olympiad, (one of about 200), I travelled to Georgia, a place I had never before been to, with no good idea of where I would be staying, nor indeed, of what to expect at what was my first Olympiad. I set out, trusting in FIDE and Georgian organisation not to leave me stranded.

I was placed in a very fine hotel; unfortunately not the one initially promised by the Organisers. An hour from the playing venue and whilst there were some teams and other arbiters there too, the distances from central Batumi, and from the other participants, did remove the shine a little as the event progressed. (Well, two hours a day travelling on Georgian roads is a significant threat to life!)

So an important point for Organisers, do have an event's participants stay as close to the venue as possible.

I worked with the anti-cheating group, which involved doing the usual scans of toilets and break areas, supervising smoking and coffee areas and such-like, plus some scans of players during play, and other scans of players after play.

And dealing with the "spectators".

The after-match scans were generally very well accepted by the players; those done during play slightly less well so, but still tolerated. And when the scans were being done, most players seemed quite happy about the measures being taken. The security guards, using airport-style scanners at each entrance, were supposed to check for watches, pens and phones etc., but I still managed to collect a few watches during the sessions!

So for organisers and arbiters, as long as the players know in advance that there will be checks, scans are well tolerated; the concern players have about a cheat with a phone seems to be much greater than the inconvenience caused by the thirty seconds that a scan takes to do.

Dealing with the various classes of spectator was much more challenging.

All participants were required to wear an identifying badge and were checked into the venue by the security staff at each exit and entry point. However, it quickly became clear that there were several unofficial entry points, used by the volunteers and various handymen etc.

So an important point if there is to be any security and anti-cheating measures; safeguard the perimeter of the venue. Scanning at the entrance is essentially negated if a player can arrive unchecked into the playing areas.

Spectators. Well, at a UK event, they are generally well behaved.

At Batumi, there were various classes of spectators: players whose game had finished, captains, reserve players who had somehow obtained passes into the playing venue, V.I.P.s, V.V.I.P.s, persons accompanying disabled players (with no indication as to who the disabled player was, nor if they had finished their game), coaches.

And members of the organising committee, and volunteers, and various workmen and venue staff.

And there was a Congress and a Vote happening too. So there were Heads of Delegation from each Federation, and the Election Candidates, and each of those had several members of their party. And so on and so on. Getting the idea?

And the members of the press, some of whom thought that it was acceptable to photograph the drama of time pressure from a couple of feet away! And others whose

“camera kit-bag” consisted of an iPhone. And almost anyone could obtain a pass: I was granted a press-pass, my request for one as much to demonstrate that no checks were being carried out, as to avoid my camera being confiscated by the security staff!

So if you are running an event, have a thought as to how the spectators impact upon the participants. Clearly some provision needs to be made, but do try to set out clearly what standards of behaviour is expected.



Alan in the centre with Alex Holowczak on the right

Thus, I was expected to ask Kramnik, a polite and considerate player, to leave the playing area once his game was completed, but I was not allowed to ask the same of the Head of Delegation from South Camberwick Green, or wherever. Which did sort of upset me. Kramnik was seeing how the end of his match ended; these other V.V.I.P.s, “press”, Delegates, Organising Committee members even, were just being a nuisance. Certainly one after-

match scan was jeopardised by the press (pun intended) of onlookers. And sorry, Vladimir, I really would have preferred you being allowed to watch rather than those others; at least you had a significant interest in the match. Had the organisers been able to rope off a few matches a little better, as per FIDE’s own advice to Organisers, playing conditions might have been improved.

The people in the seating were similarly poorly behaved. Going up to ask two gentlemen to put away their very obvious phones, I discovered that they were members of a delegation; once reminded, they apologised and put away the phones, but, being dignitaries, they were allowed to do as they wished by the security. Indeed, the security attempted to stop me approaching the people using the phones! It would not happen in the UK.

On the forum, I asked “Which local arbiter will tell their National President to put away his/her phone?” I was taken with Stewart Reuben’s response, “At Hastings, or the British, I used to ask the local dignitary to make the announcement at the start of play to switch off phones”. At least then everyone has been told. And by the top dignitary. So that’s another excellent idea for the organisers! But clearly, some at Batumi were not in the habit of showing the players any respect.

Apart from the chess, Georgian driving was something else, their alphabet was great to see, (Mr Men writing on street signs!) and, best of all, the dancing at the opening and closing ceremonies was fantastic. The wealth and poverty set alongside each other reminded me of my time in Swaziland, and the Georgian's apparent inability to act proactively to solve minor matters, (a hang-over from Soviet times?) meant that things took three days to correct. One day to see the problem, another to get permission to do as I had suggested and the third to actually sort it.

And I have not yet mentioned the arbiting: I would hope that most UK arbiters would be at least as good as most at the Olympiad. There have already been some examples of poor officiating shown on Youtube and elsewhere, which is a shame really, for most were excellent.

I had only responded to the request for expressions of interest sent by my Federation because I had never been to Georgia, and I could not ever see me going there in my normal way. But I am glad I did. So will I ask to go to another Olympiad? Well, almost certainly, yes. And I would recommend it to every other arbiter too.

The following is a report on his experiences by Matt Carr. Matt was a match arbiter so experienced the normal situation for those attending an Olympiad.

Batumi Olympiad – The view of a match arbiter

My Olympiad began many months before it even started. Having wanted to go for many years but never had the funds to make the trip a prospect. FIDE always seem to pay after the event is done so arbiters have to provide funds themselves for flights, and any potential spending money they need over there.

So having got the funds and the confidence together. I asked one of my arbiting colleagues who had been to the 2016 Olympiad what his experience was like.

The response I got back from him was along the lines of "Well its a very boring job. You have to sit and watch four boards for any signs of trouble. Make sure the board is stopped properly (Ed – kings put in the correct central squares for the result to be recorded by the DGT board), investigate three fold repetition claims carefully. Its very tedious and when you go back to the hotels the food is always the same. They give you a selection certainly but dont expect there to be much change."

Having heard this, and given my nature, that night I sent an email off to the manager of arbiters to go.

From what I have seen in the past. The list of arbiters who go to the Olympiad is normally published months in advance. As of the writing of this article the only public list I have seen is on the FIDE rating report submitted on their server.

Open: https://ratings.fide.com/tournament_details.phtml?event=189832

Womens: https://ratings.fide.com/tournament_details.phtml?event=189833



One other thing I noticed about the Olympiad. Things tend to get highly political over there. When I commented to one arbiter that the list of arbiters still hadn't been published he said its probably doing more to damage one campaign than helping it.

Speaking of politics leads me into my first piece of advice. You have to be careful of who you tell to keep quiet. I once heard the story of someone telling the President of FIDE to keep quiet as he was going through the playing area on a victory march (having not long won his election). Next plane home job apparently.

Now from my perspective I have no idea what happened with the hotels.

I had been asked to give my details in to FIDE. My flight times, my arrival days, provide details of who I was and a picture so they could make my identity card. Once I had done all this, at no point was I informed where I would be staying. It was only thanks to an Australian arbiter Alana who told me we had infact been allocated places. It was also another arbiter that showed me where they had actually published it. Not in an email as I thought they would but on the registration system I hadnt even been told to look at having given them everything I thought they needed.

Fortunately, a lot of arbiters I knew were staying in the same hotel. Myself, David Sedgwick, Alan Atkinson, Alex McFarlane and Alana Chibnall (Australia) were all allocated to the Georgian Palace Hotel and Spa.

The place was absolutely lovely I have to say. It had lovely food just as I had been promised. The room was brilliant and the people of Georgia absolutely wonderful. The palace was right by the sea and had a swimming pool. Now I thought I had taken swim shorts for this occasion. Turns out they were just regular shorts. So since I didn't feel like a dip without them and scaring the other guests I gave the pool and beach a miss.

The only downside I could see with this hotel was its location. While other hotels were right by the sea or right by the venue the Georgian palace was 25 kilometres away from Batumi. Which meant a 45 minute journey into Batumi everyday for the tournament and if you wanted to get to one of the committee meetings (which I did on two occasions) then it was a taxi ride in at your own expense. Again fortunately the conversion rate from pounds to Georgian Lari is very good. One pound is the equivalent of three Lari so a taxi into Batumi only cost you £10.

So I arrived in Batumi a day early to make sure I got my sleep pattern into some kind of order. For those of you who know me, YES I KNOW my sleep pattern is legendary but I did make it down to breakfast. A few other arbiters had the same idea of arriving early. While I agree it was good in theory. In practice seems Turkish airways disagreed with the idea for at least one of us.

So readers my second piece of advice: Whenever heading to an Olympiad, make sure your plane ticket has a seat number on it.

I found going a day early helpful as it gave me a chance to get my namecard and instructions for the Olympiad before the mad rush started.

It was also at this point I found out that I wouldn't have as many arbiters I knew in the same hotel as I thought. Seemed FIDE had lost a hotel, so they had to frantically move people around. So Alana and Alex McFarlane were shipped off to the hotel Alik. Now whether FIDE knew how many puns they had just let themselves in for I don't know but I imagine quite a few.

So having heard that people I like had been moved away, I suddenly got a feeling in my stomach that I needed to do something about this. So I immediately... went to lunch.

Sadly there was nothing I felt I could do at this point and reports tell me the Hotel Alec was... alright. Close to the venue but a little lacking in facilities. By the sounds of it the Hapiness hotel and Hotel Alik had some stuff in common?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuZQYmDWExQ>

But then these big chess events are an opportunity to make more so thats what I strove to do. Making friends and getting known was easy for me. I decided the best method was be friendly, be kind. I introduced myself to the players and captains of the matches I controlled, shook hands as you do. As for making friends with arbiter, its surprising how memorable you can make yourself, showing how to make a DGT clock go completely nuts.

The opening ceremony of the Olympiad was regarded as one of the grandest of all time. Now being my first Olympiad I had nothing to compare this one to. But I will say given my love of classical music and rock music, I was not disappointed. The video for it is still online and I would urge you to have a look if you have the time (1hr 45mins).

Opening Ceremony: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jI8uXZp58Q>

Well then the fun begins.

Day of round 1 we're all shipped out early to the venue for a meeting. So they gather all of us into this room with plenty of tables and desks. Then they brought a number of people in to sit at the front. These were the deputy arbiters and sector arbiters. Then the chief organiser and chief arbiter come in and call people out to collect their namecard. Then follows the instructions of what we should be doing, what we shouldn't do and what what's expected of us. Most prominent amongst these things. Don't let the players keep their playercard when they finish their game. Get both team captains to sign the match card, all claims of three fold repetition must be confirmed and checked with a sector arbiter and finally and most important don't fall asleep watching your games.

Now for those of you who have arbitred 4NCL you will know how hard it is to get a team captain to sign anything, let alone find them. For my part many tried to escape my clutches and all failed. I got the captains together to sign the matchcard at the end and I may have come close but there was no falling asleep on my watch. Only by the captains.

One of the rules the players didn't seem to know about was the "No draws offers before move 30" rule. I had to correct one player when he thought he was agreeing a draw and his opponent was claiming a draw. Once he realised that he became much calmer and cooperative.

The second time it happened with a higher board in the same match the players knew exactly what was needed and we sorted it in a matter of minutes.

So whenever a game finished you have a big board with the players names in it. When a game finishes you place the score up on this board for the world to see. Only rule we had was it didn't need to be done immediately but as soon as reasonable after the game finished.

I decided to do it as soon as I had done my relevant checks on the scoresheets and match card.

I've seen boards not get updated for half an hour at one stage. I hasten to add I was in the spectators section at the time watching the England match. Two boards finish and the arbiter hadn't moved to put the score up, so I'm thinking are we winning, are we losing and attempting to mentally project "Put the score up".

They put me in open sector 3. Which means my job was to control one of the matches between board 35 – 50 and we got moved around with varying degrees of frequency.

The sector arbiter I got put with was a very experienced gentleman from Egypt. One of the people he trained had been appointed Deputy Chief for this years Olympiad and he had trained many more. He was a very nice guy and certainly knew his stuff. Certainly had the patience to put up with me and my questions being my first Olympiad.

He certainly seemed to trust me. On the day that it was my turn to be a floor walker (go around boards 35-50) making sure the other arbiters were fine, cover for them if they needed a toilet or smoking break, my sector arbiter came over ill. Somehow it was me he chose to become emergency sector arbiter for the rest of the day. I still don't know what I did to get that but thank you for the experience.

During the Olympiad there was the FIDE congress taking place at the Sheraton hotel and Hilton hotels in Batumi. By congress they held many meetings over the course of the Olympiad in the mornings while games were played in the afternoon.

I had my eye on the Technical commission and Swiss pairings meeting. Technical commission is supposed to deal with things like liveboards, chess clocks. Its a commission that has its hand in a lot of technology so being a "tech wizard" (whatever that means) I figure it would be just up my street.

The meeting itself discussed detection devices for mobile phones and electronic devices. A small device that fit into the palm of your hand. Think of it as a smaller version of those large Garrett scanners. It seemed to go down very well at the time. It also discussed electronic means for electronic scoresheets. Perhaps using a mobile phone as a replacement. This was met with less enthusiasm as that would allow mobiles into the playing area. But from what I can see it was a commission that didn't want to do much without discussing things with the other commissions. While having your hand in a lot of different pies, you also get plenty of toes you can step on. So with the FIDE elections meaning nobody on the commission quite knew their future meant there was a little action but probably a painful mess with so many fingers in pies and so many toes to step on.

Swiss pairings was a little more productive discussing possibilities for changes and potentially having a virtual opponent if there is an odd number. From my view that would effectively start giving a potential bye to the player in the middle of the scoregroup. Very similar to the British pairing system. Now that I would like to see. However again this means stepping on the qualification commissions toes so a bit more eagerness to get

going but with the elections very little action. I think once their futures get a little more certain they would be good things to keep up with.

So having gone through the Olympiad and the commission meetings we finally reached the closing ceremony. Which was in a large theatre which again we were bussed to. The night started a little hectic. Shouting at a bus driver to stop him running over David Sedgwick. Thankfully he didn't succeed.

After food and drink we were shown into the theatre itself and it was interesting. Nobody seemed to know when it was going to end.

The full movie can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liafWv-nA>
(over 2 hours! It really didn't feel like it at the time.)

With a nice little video here named the art of chess:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEIU2jzL6JE>

So to summarise. Yes I would go again to an Olympiad if asked. It was good to get to be around so many arbiters I knew and make new friends I miss now.

It was a shame I couldn't spend more time with people and their payment system could be faster. But it was an experience I wouldn't have missed for the world.

(For information the 2020 Olympiad is in Khanty Mansiysk in Russia and the 2022 event in Minsk, Belarus. Other events are available.)

Flag Fall

There has been considerable discussion on this in various places in recent months..

Perhaps the first thing to note is that the part about both flags being down has been relegated to the Guidelines.

III.3.1 If both flags have fallen and it is impossible to establish which flag fell first then:

III.3.1.1 the game shall continue if this occurs in any period of the game except the last period.

III.3.1.2 the game is drawn if this occurs in the period of a game in which all remaining moves must be completed.

Note also that III.3.1 uses the phrase "and it is impossible to establish which flag fell first" With digital clocks it is almost always possible to determine which flag fell first. It is therefore reasonable to take this as a first indication.

From the main Laws:

6.8 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.

This means, for example, that if a game is otherwise ended e.g. a draw has been agreed and it is then noticed that a flag has fallen the agreed result cannot be changed.

The following should also be observed

6.12.1 Screens, monitors, or demonstration boards showing the current position on the chessboard, the moves and the number of moves made/completed, and clocks which also show the number of moves, are allowed in the playing hall.

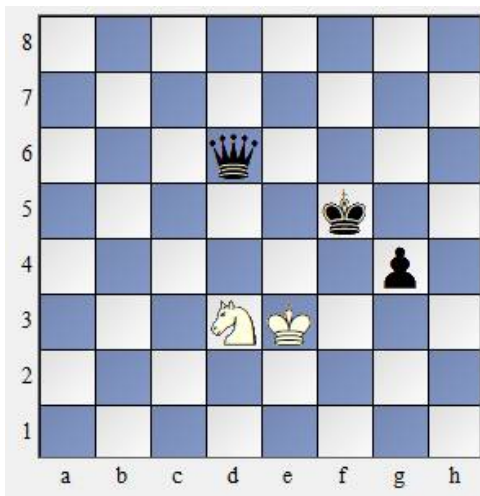
6.12.2 The player may not make a claim relying only on information shown in this manner.

The fact that the clock shows that a player has lost on time is not in itself sufficient. The scoresheets should also be checked to see if the required number of moves have been reached or not. It may even be necessary, occasionally, to play through a game to confirm the number of moves made.

Less experienced arbiters are reminded that they should call flag fall when appropriate. However, this should not be done when everyone is satisfied that the time control requirements have been met. Also the arbiter should only alert the players to the fact that a flag has fallen and should not indicate the result of a game. Except in the last session an arbiter calling “flag” is acceptable but one saying “White win” may not be.

Arbiters should remember also the second part of 6.9

6.9 ... However, the game is drawn if the position is such that the opponent cannot checkmate the player’s king by any possible series of legal moves.



Some of the positions which are drawn may come as a surprise. Many players do not realise that the wording is ‘by any possible series of legal moves’ and instead think it makes some reference to best play or ‘theoretical’ positions..

Consider the following positions. Black’s flag falls. What is the result in each case?

1a) What is the result in the position given opposite?

1b) Is the result different if there was no pawn on the board?

1c) What is the result if Black had touched the knight on d3?

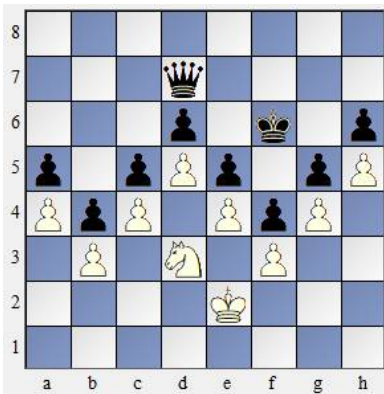
1d) Remove the Black queen. What is the result?

2a) What is the result in the second position (on next page)?

2b) If White had no knight would the result be different?

2c) Neither queen nor knight are present, what is the result?

The answers are on page 19



Canadian Arbiter Suspended

It has been reported that a Canadian Arbiter has been suspended by his local association for two years for using his mobile phone during tournaments. The ban prevents him from playing, organising or being an arbiter at FQE events until September 2020. In addition his rating from 13 October 2016 will be adjusted to reflect the unfair advantage he gained.

In Canada you do have a national association but the French part of the country also has the Quebec Chess Federation (FQE) and it is this organisation which has banned him as a result of using a mobile phone during play. The official announcement says that he had been using his mobile for a prolonged period at the Club d'échecs Moncalm.

Arbiter Errors?

Two Grandmasters were playing in a Blitz tournament in Corinth in Greece when the following situation allegedly arose. Player V promoted a pawn but could not see a needed queen so, correctly, stopped the clock. However, he did not summon the arbiter but instead went to a nearby board and got a queen from it. He then restarted the game after placing the queen on the board. With his clock still running, his opponent (Player G) got up from the board to get an arbiter. It is reported that Player V was clearly winning at this point. Player V assuming that "G" has resigned reset the board. The arbiter was then greeted by a claim of a win by both players. "V" claimed that "G" had a lost position and had resigned by leaving the board. "G" claimed that "V" had forfeited the game by resetting the board.

After some discussion amongst the arbiters, it was decided to replay the game. Both players objected to this but only "V" was unwilling to comply.

The situation went to the Appeals Committee who, after a few sessions, awarded the game to Player V.

Examining the situation as reported:

“V” was correct to stop the clock to summon an arbiter to get an extra queen. It is difficult to say that it wasn’t sensible to simply get the piece himself. However, that is not what the Laws say. His actions were therefore technically wrong. He was certainly wrong to place the queen on the board before restarting the clock as he had not moved the pawn or in some other way actually made a move on his own time. Restarting the clock is also something that only the arbiter should do.

“G” did nothing wrong though one can understand why his walking away from the board with his clock running, especially in a blitz game, would have puzzled the opponent. If he had stopped the clock without explaining why to the opponent that would have been even more confusing.

“V” was wrong to reset the board without either having seen the opponent resign, having waited until the flag fell or having checked with an arbiter.

The ‘obvious’ solution was to reset the position and give “G” extra time to compensate for the disturbance. If the position could not be agreed then there is an understandable problem.

Unable to reconstruct, the arbiter only had two options, to order the game to be replayed or to award it to “G” on the grounds that “V” had destroyed the original game. Although “G” was probably losing he did nothing wrong so it is not possible to penalise him. The players agreeing a draw without resumption could be regarded as an acceptable outcome but not one which an arbiter should suggest formally.

The second option is probably the more correct but it is understandable that an arbiter would want the players to complete a game. Having decided that the game would be replayed the arbiter should have insisted that if either player refused to comply then they would lose.

It is puzzling why the Appeals Committee did not reach its decision more quickly but required multiple meetings.

Money Floor

It is sometimes very easy to attack some of the things which happen in US chess. But one of the things they do have which might be worth considering is the idea of a ‘money floor’.

The logic behind this is quite simple. If a player wins a large prize at a grading restricted tournament that player is no longer allowed to enter any tournament which has a lower grading in future. To give an example to help explain. A player graded 112 wins £150 at an under 125 event. This would mean that that player, regardless of his grade at further

events, would not be allowed to enter another U125 event for, say, the next 3 years. The idea behind this is obviously to prevent players from 'sandbagging', or at least to limit the amount that can be won by doing so.

The obvious downside with the idea is the administration involved. In the US when an event is sent for rating the arbiter/organiser is supposed to inform the USCF of any player who has 'broken' the money floor.

There is an argument that it may discourage some people from playing. The counter may be that if sandbaggers are barred then more players might enter. Although few enter for the prize money, the thought that their entry fee might bankrupt someone who may be manipulating their rating is a huge disincentive.

Arbiting Trials and Tribulations

As arbiters we sometimes have to put up with quite a bit of hassle. You can expect this from players occasionally but should you have to endure it from organisers and other helpers.

Here are some examples which may disprove Darwin's theory of evolution.

The organiser of a junior event who tells you (usually during round 1) that there is a problem with the venue and it will close before the start of the last round. "Can you squeeze everything up a bit?" The first thing you want to squeeze is the organiser's throat.

There was a junior event with no qualified arbiters. At the end of a certain time the result of games was decided by a points count of the captured pieces. This is never a totally satisfactory way of adjudicating games. It is even less satisfactory when it was also used to determine the results of games which should have ended in checkmate or stalemate. One player is reported to have lost three games where he checkmated his opponents but was down on material when he did so!! Apparently the rules of the competition didn't think it necessary to state what happened when the game ended within the time period so the control team used their 'initiative' and applied the points count rule to those games as well. (I've heard of two different events where this has happened.)

A congress was being played in a variety of small rooms. The arbiter said to one of his assistants, "Base yourself in this room as this is where problems are more likely but pop into the room next door from time to time." This worked very well until just after the first



time control. The arbiter came round to see how things were going to discover a few games still going in the 'safe' room and the volunteer sitting in the 'problem' room as instructed. All the games in this room had finished but the volunteer was following his instructions to the letter watching absolutely nothing whilst a number of games continued unsupervised in the other room.

"I just want you to patrol the floor. I've got someone to do computer pairings," said the organiser. The arbiter failed to ask if the computer operator had ever used the program before. The result of the computer operator's inexperience was a very delayed start as he struggled to enter the late entries and later a round 4 bye was given by the machine to the only person on 3/3 as the 'random bye' option had somehow been selected. The software being used for the pairing was free but even at that it was over priced.

I got a phone call at just before 10pm one Friday night. "I've got a tournament tomorrow. Can you talk me through the software I want to use?" I explained the basics and a few trial names were entered. I then tried to explain the most common potential problems and how to solve them if they arose, namely repairing of players without opponents and removing players from future rounds. I was not confident that I had succeeded. Indeed I suggested that since he had left it so late for his initial look at the software he should use something more user friendly than the intended software. "I've got to use this." he replied. As you can guess, all the problems I predicted came to pass and he struggled to cope. The result was fewer rounds than advertised and even then the event over-ran. Indeed his problems were made worse by players simply walking out of the event in disgust without giving notification. The report I got on how things had gone from the organiser varied significantly from that of another who was involved. Clearly anyone using pairing software should work with an experienced user initially or run a few mock events first.

Organisers who decide to add an extra round to junior events can cause arbiters real grief. Firstly parents charge up to the arbiters' desk to complain and then you have children bursting into tears as they see their anticipated prize dissolve as their king comes under attack. You also have a number of defaults as players have left after the anticipated 'last' round. If organisers aren't sure how many rounds they will have then the entry form should state that and give an approximate time for the start of the final round. Another related problem is the organiser who starts a round early without informing all of the players. I've known this lead to two results for the one player. The first, and official, game started early and was finished in minutes. The arbiter sees a player still sitting at the board and assumes that the opponent has still to arrive for the

scheduled start. When the opponent doesn't arrive for the official start time the kindly arbiter then arranges for the player to play the bye!!

Flag Fall Answers

Question 1. Although a knight on its own is not capable of delivering mate it can with the help of opposition pieces. In the example given the following is possible though extremely unlikely.

Therefore the answer to 1a is that Black loses.

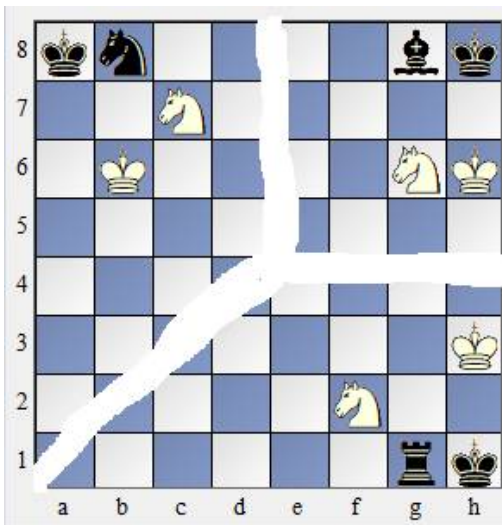
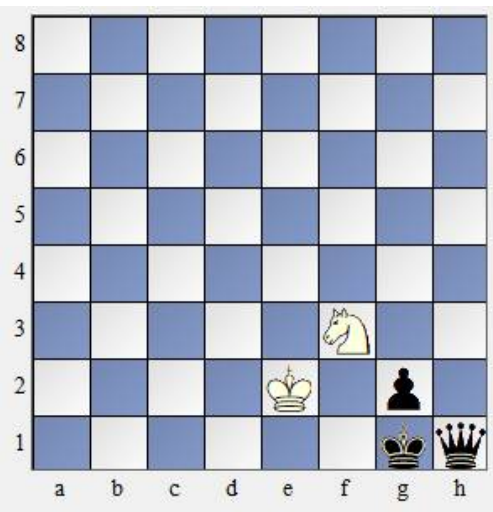
For 1b there is no possible way for the knight to force mate with a queen on the board so that position would be a draw..

In 1c if the knight is touched BEFORE the flagfall then the only legal move is 1 ... Qxd3 and the result is a draw.

For 1d) If the pawn is promoted to a queen

then the worst that Black could do would be to draw but underpromotion is possible.

Three examples are shown of mates due to underpromotion. Therefore it is a loss for Black.



Question 2. The position is not blocked as both the knight and queen can take opposition pawns. 2A and 2b are therefore both loses for Black. In 2b if the queen captures a pawn the pawns still cannot promote as they are blocked but moves such as 1 ... Qb5 2 axb5 (or cxb5) are possible. Therefore in this situation Black also loses.

In 2c the position is blocked so the clock is not relevant as the game was drawn as soon as the last piece was taken.

Too Close for Comfort

A well known arbiter who I won't name for fear it may cause alarms to ring had an elastoplast across his chin in Batumi. It appears he had forgotten to bring his normal razor. Due to language difficulties the disposable ones he bought were for the female of the species, which this arbiter isn't. The result is that his legs and armpits are lovely but that his face is a mass of cuts. For the remainder of the event he used a borrowed electric shaver.

On a totally unrelated matter(!), David Sedgwick denies the rumour that he is on an honorarium from the Fire Brigade Union in recognition of the overtime payments he has generated for its members. For those who don't know, David has a history of visiting events and for them to be evacuated when the fire alarm goes off. The emergency services are invariably summoned.

On the topic of forgetful arbiters there is the story of one who turned up for a fortnight long British having left his packed suitcase in his hallway. A few extra arbiter sweatshirts and a visit to the local shops saw him with enough clothing to get through the event without anyone complaining about his hygiene.

CAA Officials

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Information officer - Alex McFarlane

Committee - David Welch, Kevin Staveley and Mike Forster.

ECF Delegate - Mike Forster

Chess Scotland Delegate - Alex McFarlane

Welsh Chess Union - Kevin Staveley

Independent Examiner - Richard Jones

Safeguarding Officer – Lara Barnes



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