



Newsletter of the Chess Arbiters Association

February 2020

Issue 40

AGM

The AGM was held in Hastings at the beginning of the year. The Committee is shown on the back page.

A number of decisions were made including lobbying national federations to try to ensure that for games to be graded at congresses a qualified arbiter would need to be on the control team. An interesting, but frustrating, comment was made during the discussion. Congresses were seen as a first step. When the possibility of extending the process to leagues it was suggested that having a qualified arbiter on the League's Appeals Committee would be sufficient. One member informed the meeting that although he was on such a committee he had been outvoted on more than one occasion by the unqualified members.

The CAA will also push for the reintroduction of the Senior Arbiter title. In the past the award of such titles was 'by acclaim'. It is likely that a more formal process will be needed if the title is to be re-instated. In Scotland Senior Arbiters are appointed after an informal interview in which various chess related matters are discussed. A typical discussion point would be on how best to support and encourage a trainee arbiter.

FIDE & ECU

The ECU has announced a list of arbiters who are approved to officiate at its events. There are 5 British arbiters on the list, Alan Atkinson, Matt Carr, Alex Holowczak, Alex McFarlane and Jack Rudd. Neither appropriate national federation has taken up its option to have any of the candidates removed.

Whilst it is understandable that many arbiters in the UK cannot get time off work to officiate abroad, this is still a disappointingly small number. All of the above have previous experience of working with international teams.

AGM

The AGM of the Association finally took place in Hastings in early January. The draft minutes are as follows:-

Reconvened AGM of the CAA

Hastings, 3rd January 2020.

Hastings Congress Venue, Horntye Sports Centre

1) Attendance and Apologies for absence

Present: Lara Barnes (Chair); Alex McFarlane, Adrian Elwin, Matt Carr, David Sedgwick, Tom Thorpe, Jack Rudd, Ravi Sandhu, Alan Atkinson (minutes)

Apologies: D Vleeshhower, M Forster, J Shaw, T Corfe

2) Minutes of previous meeting

These were accepted by the meeting.

3) Matters arising

There was a minute's silence held at the start of the meeting in respect of David Welch.

Donations to Charity in respect of DW should be made to Peter Purland.

The ECF Director for Home Chess was thanked for the amendments made to the County Championships, the British Championships qualifying rules, and to the regulations regarding the British Blitz Championships.

4) Reports

The Chair reported that the Association had continued to produce AMToo, and had been required to deal with the changeover in Treasurer.

There was no financial report as such. The meeting was informed that there had been scant records from the previous treasurer, although the Chair was sure that there had been no inappropriate payments from the account. We are still due to pay the ECF affiliation fee.

5) Election of Officers

See back page.

6) Memberships Fees

Fees to remain as at present:

Honorary Members free

Full Members £10

Associate Members £5

Subs are now due for the year Aug2019-Aug2020

7) Arbiter Fees for Events

There was considerable discussion regarding the fees paid to Arbiters at events. It was agreed that the Committee would publish a recommended scale of fees, and that National Chess Federations would be lobbied with a view to having them accepted. It was also discussed that there would have to be a qualified arbiter in charge of events if the event was to be accepted for rating/grading/etc.

8) Fair Play Regulations

The agenda item was discussed within the meeting.

It was noted that the ECF had recently published Fair Play regulations..

There were two facets to consider: players who appear to be cheating, and Organisations which appear to be doing nothing about it.

This matter would be discussed further at a later meeting.

9) ECU Arbiter Decisions

The ECU has recently adopted a policy that will allow for a minimum proportion of non-local arbiters to officiate at official ECU events. Arbiters interested in such opportunities should apply to the ECU.

10) Under AOB several items were discussed.

a) There was a question put regarding the restoration of the Senior Arbiter title within the ECF.

The Director for Home Chess was able to inform the meeting that he had asked the newly appointed ECF's Manager of Arbiters to suggest a way in which the title might be reinstated.

The meeting thanked the Director and agreed unanimously that the title of Senior Arbiter should be reinstated within the ECF.

b) A question was put about the frequency of FIDE arbiter seminars in England. The Director was able to confirm that the intention was to run at least one FIDE Arbiter course per year. The need for such courses was raised. The forthcoming courses in ENG were noted. (See ECF website for details.)

c) There was a request that the BICC agreement be made public. This agreement is currently awaiting signatures from the participating federations.

d) A request was made that the British Championships Qualifying Regs allow a BQ place for events that have 7 rounds; this would perhaps encourage more of such events which are useful for those seeking FA norms.

e) Lara invited members to offer assistance in compiling ECF Arbiter exam papers. Contact Lara in the first instance.

11) Date and Location of Next Meeting: To be advised.

ECF Manager of Arbiters

Alan Atkinson has been appointed as the ECF Manager of Arbiters. The duties attached to this position are:

- Administering the domestic arbiter system
- organising and publicising ECF Arbiter Seminars
- appointing lecturers for those seminars
- administering/applying to FIDE for international arbiter titles
- co-ordinating the organisation of FIDE Arbiter Seminars
- appointing FIDE recognised Lecturers to deliver FIDE seminars
- liaising with organisers and candidates to advance as arbiters

Fair Play

The 4NCL has announced stricter 'anti-cheating' rules. These will apply to all 4NCL events including congresses.

As well as the now familiar hand scanners there will be heat sensors and stricter rules on talking during a game.

An interesting accusation was made at Hastings. A mother came up to complain that the boy her son was playing was using a false name. Her son had played the boy in Turkey and that definitely was not the same boy, she claimed. Since he was a Sussex Junior it did not take much effort to establish that he was the person he claimed to be. It turns out that the boy her son had played previously had an almost identical name, differing only by one vowel. I hate to think how the mother would have coped if her son had been drawn against the two Adam Taylors.

Tax evasion is illegal, tax avoidance can either be seen as a clever way of reducing your contribution to the government or an immoral way of avoiding supporting the national health service. In recent months there have been a number of cases of the chess equivalent of avoidance, manipulating the rating system. Two Ukrainian players have had their FIDE ratings suspended subject to investigation. Ihor Kobylanskyi (FIDE ID 14106329) and Iuri Shkuro (FIDE ID 14108836) have made the world top ten at Rapidplay and Blitz respectively. They have completed this achievement by willing lots of games

against low rated players and taking advantage of the 400 point rule. The 400 point rule is used in calculating a player's rating. It means that if a 2600 player meets a 1200 player the 2600 is considered, for rating purposes only, to have played a 2200 rated player and the 1200 player to have played a 1600. The GM strength player's rating for a win would go up by 0.8 points instead of almost zero. Playing sufficient numbers of these suitably weak opponents has been shown by the aforementioned pair to greatly improve your rating if you play enough of them. (Though a loss would reduce their rating by 9.2 points.) The FIDE website indicates that the players are being looked at "to confirm or disprove compliance with sportsmanship and other FIDE principles by the players."

It is thought that the players have engineered these high ratings to increase demand for their services as a coach. If it is assumed that the players have done nothing more than use the system to their own ends, how serious an offence is it? Such actions should not be condoned.

Illegal Moves

The Laws of chess now specifies several 'actions' that are to be considered as illegal moves. A combination of any two of these normally results in the loss of the game to the player committing them. I say normally because there are situations where a second illegal move means that the game will end in a draw. These are discussed later. The first illegal move has a two minute penalty (one minute in blitz). The two minutes is awarded to the opponent.

It is important to note that for a move to count the player must press the clock. An opponent who claims before the clock is pressed has actually, very kindly, stopped the offence from having been committed and the player can correct his error without penalty.

What offences are classified as illegal moves?

The first is the normal definition where a piece is moved to a square which is not allowed by the definition of its move. Common examples of this would be:

- a) a knight moving two squares diagonally;
- b) a bishop moving to a square of a different colour;
- c) a rook or queen jumping over another piece on its way to its destination square;
- d) moving a piece which exposes its king to check;
- e) making a move which leaves its king in check;
- f) castling out of check;
- g) castling through check;
- h) castling with a king or rook that has already moved;
- i) capturing the opponent's king (usually in blitz).

A second type of illegal move is to use two hands to make a move. Examples of this would be:

- a) capturing using two hands;
- b) castling using two hands;
- c) promoting using two hands.

Note that moving with one hand and pressing the clock with the other is an illegal action but does not count as an illegal move.

A third type also concerns promotion. In this case the promotion is not completed. The pawn is moved to the far side of the board and the clock is pressed before the pawn is replaced. This counts not only as an illegal move but also the pawn must be replaced by a queen. The player is not allowed to promote to another piece.

The fourth action which counts as an illegal move is to press the clock without having made a move.

Provided he has not pressed his clock, a player can negate the using two hands offence by restoring the position to what it was before making the move and then repeating the repositioning using only one hand.

Even if the clock is pressed only one hand is considered to have been used in the following situations:

- a) in capturing, the player removes the captured piece with the same hand as he moved his own piece but puts it in his other hand to place it at the side of the board;
- b) in promotion, the player lifts a queen (or whatever) with one hand but transfers it to the hand moving the pawn without the queen having touched the promotion square before the transfer of hands took place.

Pressing the clock without moving can cause some problems in a few cases.

Possibly the most common of these is where the opponent makes an illegal move and the player restarts his clock. This is not a problem in Standard or Rapid games but in Blitz it can be argued that by doing this the player has accepted the opponent's illegal move by making an illegal move of his own. The opponent can then either reply to the non-move or claim that an illegal move has been made.

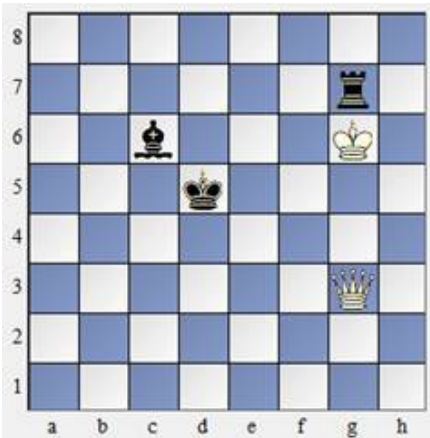
In Standard games a player may return to the board and see his clock running and, missing the opponent's reply, assume that he forgot to press his clock. In situations like this where the clock has been pressed 'accidentally' the player will be deemed to have made an illegal move unless he can convince the arbiter otherwise.

When does a second illegal move not lose?

A second illegal move does not always lose. The game will be declared drawn in the following circumstances:

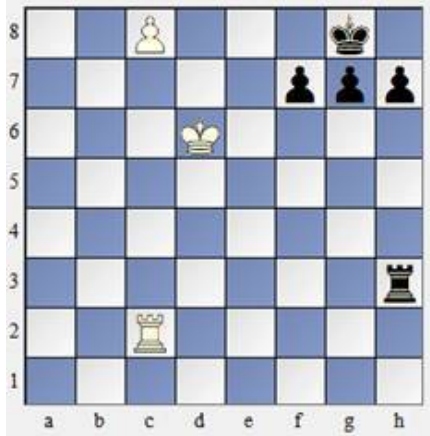
- a) if checkmate is impossible for the opponent to achieve e.g he only has a lone king;

- b) in the case of using two hands, when the move leads directly (or by a series of forced moves) to checkmate or stalemate;
- c) In the case of failing to exchange the pawn for another piece on promotion the same conditions as in (b) apply.

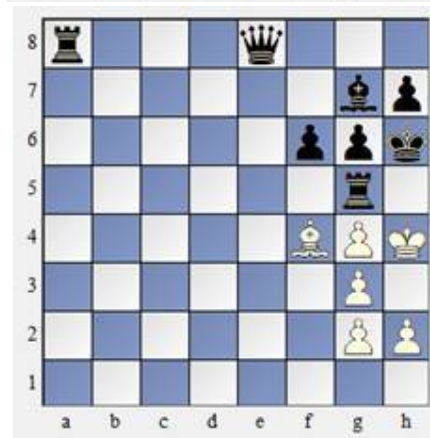


The following are examples of drawn games following a second illegal move:

1a. Here White plays $Kxg7$ but uses both hands. It is impossible to get mate with king and bishop. If the queen is replaced by a rook, or even simply removed the game is drawn too. But if instead of a queen White had a bishop, knight or pawn on g3 the game would be a win for Black. Indeed, the knight or pawn anywhere and a black squared bishop would give Black the win but a white squared bishop would be a draw.



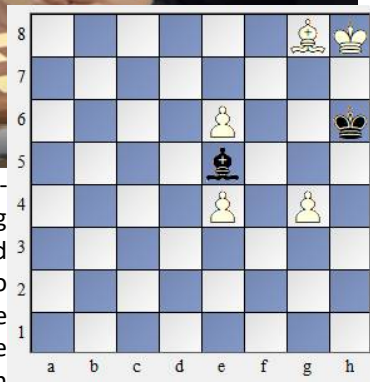
2bc. In this position White uses two hands to promote to a queen or simply presses his clock without completing the promotion. In both cases the White move is illegal but in both cases the pawn must be promoted to a queen which would give checkmate so the outcome is a draw. But notice if the Black rook was on e3 instead then it could block the checkmate so the result would be a win for Black as $Qxe8$ checkmate is not a forced move even if it is the only logical move.



3b. In this position White plays 1 $Bxg5$ using both hands. This too is a draw as the only legal moves are 1 ... $fxg5$ (forced) 2 $Kh3$ and no matter what Black plays White has no legal third move.

Notice that in all cases the result would be the same if White's flag had fallen after making the move.

Win on Time



The above picture from Chessbase India shows the moment that Carlsen with king and bishop won against king bishop and three pawns when Alireza Firouzja exceeded his time. The result surprised a number of players who expected a draw to be given as Carlsen did not have mating material. Indeed, Firouzja seemed to query the arbiter's positioning of the two kings in the centre on black squares, the method used by DGT boards to indicate a black win. Carlsen too seemed surprised by the result. This often used phrase (mating material) is not used in the Law 6.9 which is the relevant section "... 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 sources talk of underpromotion to a knight being required as the following position shows. White was clearly trying to win and therefore ran the risk of losing. This is very similar to the situations which arose before increments became popular. A player would have to claim a draw before his flag fell or lose. Such claims are not possible with increments. If a flag falls and it is possible for that player to be mated, no matter how unlikely that is, the player loses.

Tournament Structure

There has been quite a bit of discussion over the last few weeks about the structure of various tournaments. Scarborough may well have some sections FIDE rated in 2020 a change from ECF only. Players were initially opposed to this but the organisers are now getting different feedback. In addition, the ECF selection policy for juniors means that there is parental pressure to have events FIDE rated. The recent British Rapidplay was not FIDE rated but in this case it was because the organisers erroneously believed it would cost £840 to do so.

Hastings has long had events limited to 16 or so entrants of similar strengths. A complication here has always been the number of players who wanted to play up a section but only under certain circumstances. The organisers here are considering having multiple sections with a small grading difference between them. There may even be a double round event as the bottom section.

The UK Blitz has sections throughout the country producing qualifiers for a final in the Birmingham area. There could be a UK Rapidplay next year with a similar format.

At another tournament, that won't be named, the organiser was pleased that his entry had increased from 12 to 19 though expressed disappointment that a number who had played in the previous tournament had not turned up for the following one.

A common format in the US is to have what is called a 'busy person' schedule. It is difficult to see how this would work with a normal weekend congress. The idea is to cut down on the number of days a player has to attend an event. For example if you have a nine round event with one round per day a player could arrive on day 5 and play 5 rapid-play games that day and then enter the 9 day event carrying forward his score from the rapidplay. In the US it would also be possible for a player who was doing badly to withdraw from the main event but re-enter through the Rapidplay. For example, a player on 1/4 withdraws and re-enters round 6 with the 4/5 score he got in the Rapidplay! Such an event, if norms are a possibility, would need to be sanctioned by FIDE in advance.

A tournament in Peru has an interesting way of ensuring that the lunchbreak is not compromised by a long game. The initial time control is 40 moves in 90 minutes with 30 second increments. After the 40th move however a blitz time of 3 minutes with 2 second increments is added. Effectively, every move after the 40th has a 2 second increment.

In Britain there are few outdoor chess events and these usually have a fall back indoor venue if the weather is too wet. A recent regular outdoor Australian event was also forced indoors because of the weather. In this case the outdoor temperature was so great that an air-conditioned venue was required.

Pairing Software

I am aware that some organisers and clubs have recently been approached about buying Tornelo software to do both pairings and local grading. My advice continues to be to avoid paying for any software that has not been FIDE approved. A recent update of this

particular program has seen some inconsistent pairings being achieved despite it allegedly using a recognised add-on to do this. In one case the same player was downfloated in 3 consecutive rounds. There was no apparent reason for his selection. In Australia, where the software originates and where it is mainly used (but not used mainly!), some players regularly have their ratings altered to bring them in line with national figures and to keep the order of the Australian and Tornado lists similar. Such artificial changes casts doubt on the reliability of the system.

Alex McFarlane was giving an arbiter seminar in Dublin. In the section of the course on pairings he had just given a warning that the software was not particularly user friendly and often gave error messages in German. Almost on cue, up came an error message in German.

Hastings Hiccups (or Hiccoughs since it's Hastings) ...

Arbiters often make announcements asking players to ensure that the result handed in is the same for both players. In the Xmas tournament the players did hand in the same result but unfortunately they both got it wrong!! Fortunately, this error was spotted very quickly by another player who came up to the control table suggesting that the players might have handed in different results (as opposed to the normal assumption that the arbiters got it wrong).

A leading English Grandmaster came up to query why the pairings had been changed from those published the previous night. They hadn't been. It would appear that the said GM had confused the entry lists giving the players in both alphabetical and rating order with a revised pairing.

In the Masters one player had three opponents in round 1! His original opponent withdrew overnight. He was phoned to ask if he was willing to be paired against the player currently down to play 'to be arranged'. He readily agreed. Unfortunately that player didn't turn up either. He ended up being paired against a third player whose opponent had also defaulted, 30 minutes after the 14.15 start. In that case the defaulter did turn up at about 3.30pm and in plenty of time for what he believed to be a 4.15pm start!! As Prince Philip might say "One makes quite a difference."

An elderly player fell asleep. The opponent was consulted about awakening the player. He readily gave his agreement. (This would have been done anyway due to concerns about the player's health.) On being awakened and regaining his composure the

recently aroused player's first words were "Are you allowed to do that?" Typical of the gentleman in question he was concerned that the Laws had been broken for his benefit. There was one arbiting howler that others should be aware of. The arbiter lifted the clock to add two minutes on following an illegal move. He lifted it by putting his thumb on the top and two fingers underneath. Unfortunately the clock slipped and a finger ended up hitting the on/off button. Fortunately the times on the clock were known and could be reset.

... And Harrogate Howlers

When told to keep his mobile phone in a bag one player ignored the bags used for sets and instead put his phone in a sack designed to carry 16 sets! One other player asked if he could leave the playing area. As it was his move he was asked why he wanted to do so. His answer was that he wanted to eat his lunch (a Gregg's sausage roll by the look of the paper bag he was carrying). On being told to make his move and then go to eat he replied that was not possible as he was going to have a long think about his next move. Having received that explanation the arbiter rejected his request suggesting that a long think was better conducted at the board.

The Joy of Computers

Bye, Filler : grading profile		Games
Field	Value	Description
Ref	329247C	Grading Code
Name	Bye, Filler	Name of player, surname first
Sex		
Member		ECF membership number, class and expiry.
Class		
Club(s)	Suffolk Juniors	Club(s) player is listed for
Nation		Nationality code
FIDE		FIDE code
Standard		
Category		
Grade		Current Standard grade (amended version, if appropriate) Standard grade (original unamended)
Games	0	Standard games played, latest 12 months Standard games counted (total)
Rank		Rank, excluding FIDE registered foreign players

The above is an extract from the grading page of the ECF website. The player concerned, Filler Bye by name, does not seem to have managed enough games, or perhaps it is the fact that he always seems to lose, which has prevented him from getting a full grade.



Would you buy a chess set from this source?

This 'advert' in Private Eye Issue 1512 dated 21 December – 9 January is for a unique Multifaith chess set. The ad appears beside details of The Paper Audiobook which promotes converting audiobooks into printed text by the original author. Although none are specifically named I believe that a number of chess books are available in this groundbreaking format. There is no indication that the printed books are Penguin Publications. Some more cynical readers might suggest that such books would have difficulty being typed by the author.

CAA Officials

Chairman - Lara Barnes

Secretary – Alan Atkinson

Treasurer – John Shaw

Chief Arbiter - Alex McFarlane

Information officer - Alex McFarlane

Committee - 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



**Items for inclusion in future issues should be sent to Alex McFarlane
ahmcfarlane@yahoo.co.uk**