

# FIDE Arbiters' Magazine



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**FIDE**

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## Introduction



### Introduction from FIDE Arbiters' Commission Chairman

Dear friends,

The FIDE Arbiters' Commission has the pleasure to publish the 7th issue of the Arbiters' Magazine.

We continue our effort to provide Arbiters all over the world with necessary knowledge and information coming from real incidents that happened during recent tournaments, and thus making Arbiters better in exercising their duties.

Many thanks belong to the Secretary of the FIDE Arbiters' Commission IA Aris Marghetis, who was responsible for this 7th issue of the Arbiters. Magazine, as he was for all the previous issues.

We would like once more to invite the Arbiters the players, the Officials, and all chess people to send us their comments, opinions, ideas, and cases that have come to their knowledge and are worth publishing in the Arbiters' Magazine.

Athens, 31st August 2018

**Takis Nikolopoulos**  
Chairman, FIDE Arbiters' Commission

## Changes Regarding Rapid-Blitz Illegal Moves

Coming into effect as of 1st January 2018, the new Laws of Chess included one of the most significant changes in YEARS! Specifically, in the absence of sufficient "Arbiter supervision" (at most three games for Rapid, and one game for Blitz):

### AN ILLEGAL MOVE NO LONGER MEANS IMMEDIATE LOSS!

This change attempts to bring closer to each other, how illegal moves are treated within classical chess, and within Rapid-Blitz chess. In addition, it eliminates the unusually catastrophic immediate loss for a single mistake.

From Appendix A is the article that has dramatically changed Rapid-Blitz:

**A.4.2 If the arbiter observes an action taken under Article 7.5.1, 7.5.2, 7.5.3 or 7.5.4, he shall act according to Article 7.5.5, provided the opponent has not made his next move. If the arbiter does not intervene, the opponent is entitled to claim, provided the opponent has not made his next move. If the opponent does not claim and the arbiter does not intervene, the illegal move shall stand and the game shall continue. Once the opponent has made his next move, an illegal move cannot be corrected unless this is agreed by the players without intervention of the arbiter.**

Where the Articles 7.5.1, 7.5.2, 7.5.3, and 7.5.4 that are referred to within it; cover illegal moves and/or illegal actions punished as illegal moves. Specifically:

Article 7.5.1 is the general article covering illegal moves

Article 7.5.2 covers when a promoted pawn is not replaced by a piece

Article 7.5.3 covers when a player presses his clock without making a move

Article 7.5.4 covers when a player uses two hands to make his move

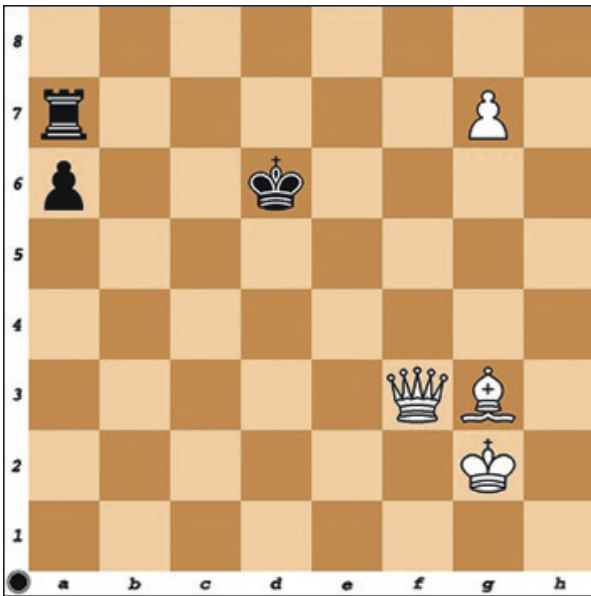
Article 7.5.5 is the general article covering how the "first illegal move" would be punished, and then covering how the "second illegal move" would be punished.

At first consideration, all of the above may seem straightforward. However, by the "letter of the law", it is now possible to continue Rapid-Blitz games after illegal moves, resulting in situations that have never been observed before!

Before proceeding with some examples, please note the following guidelines:

- it is NOT an illegal move to make a legal move after an opponent's illegal move
- a player should not be punished for not noting his opponent's move was illegal

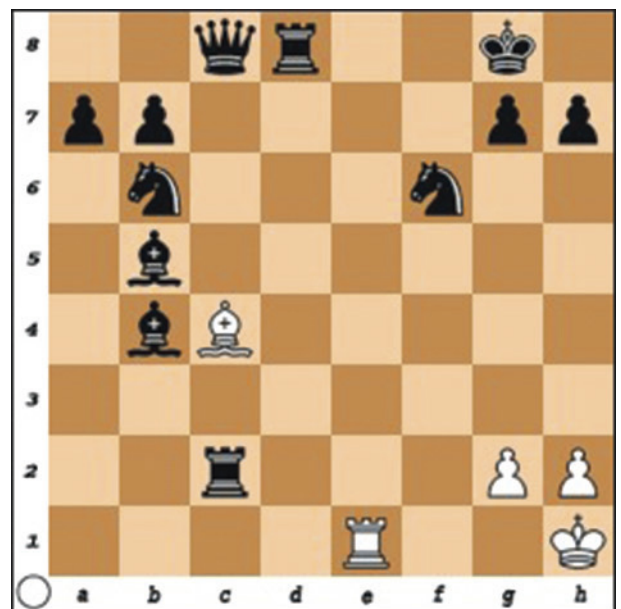
**Example 1**



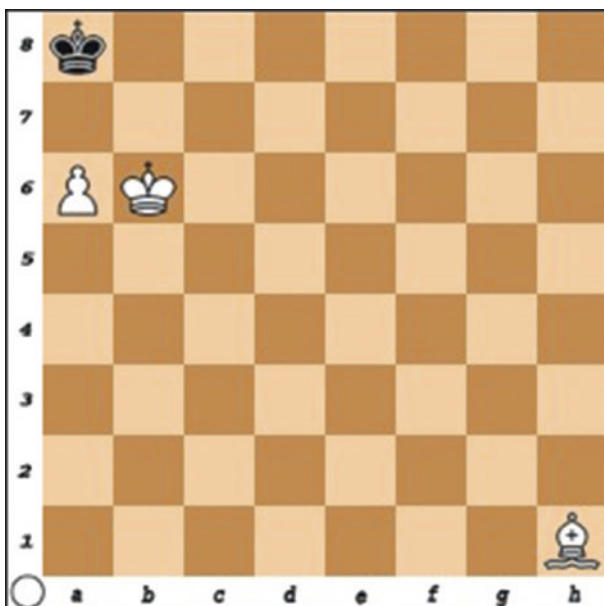
Black plays Kd5, an illegal move, but neither White nor any Arbiter notices. Instead, White plays g8(R), and Black claims White made an illegal move. The claim is denied, and the game continues!

**Example 2a**

Black has just played Bb5, an illegal move. However, no Arbiter notices, nor does White claim an illegal move. Instead, White plays Re8, claiming checkmate. The result of the game is 1-0!



**Example 2b**



Black has just played Ka8, an illegal move. However, no Arbiter notices, nor does White claim an illegal move. Instead, White plays a7, claiming checkmate. The result of the game is 1-0!

## Case A – Illegal Positions in Rapid-Blitz

This case arose from a Rapid-Blitz tournament in March 2018 in India.

Readers please note that this game was played in the absence of sufficient “Arbiter supervision” (at most three games for Rapid, and one game for Blitz).

Therefore, Articles A.4 (Rapid) / B.4 (Blitz) are in effect (instead of Competition Rules).

Both players are in time pressure. Player A pushes one of his pawns to the 8th rank, and in his hurry to grab another Queen from another nearby board, he instead places another KING on the promotion square, and presses his clock.

No Arbiter notices this, nor does player B, who makes his next move and presses the clock. At this point, an Arbiter notices the impossible position.

### WHAT DOES THE ARBITER DO?!

This is an extreme example that is practically impossible to think of before it ever happens, and therefore, there is of course no SPECIFIC Article to cover it.

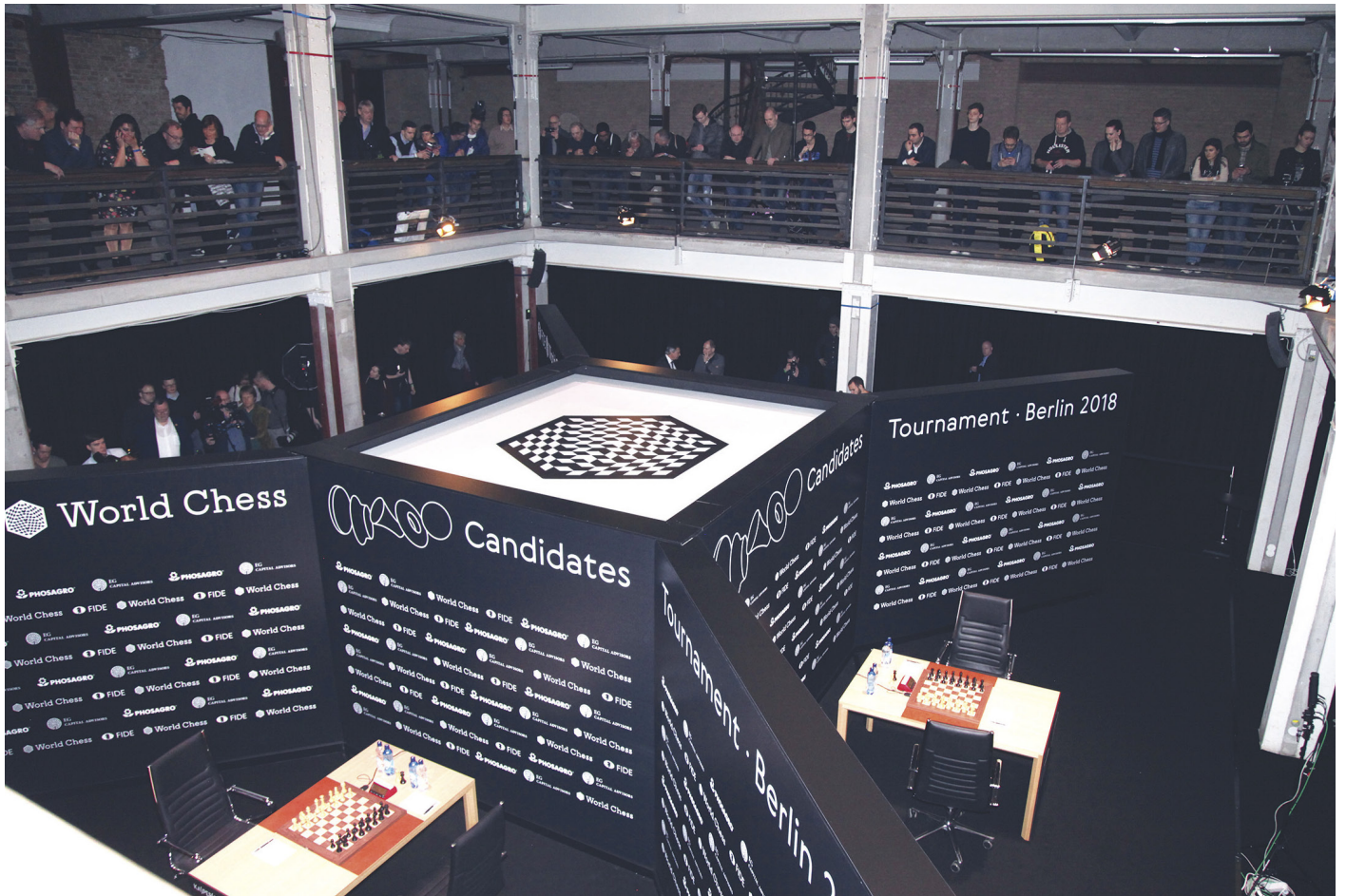
However, the Laws of Chess provide for such extreme cases within their Preface:

**The Laws of Chess cannot cover all possible situations that may arise during a game, nor can they regulate all administrative questions. Where cases are not precisely regulated by an Article of the Laws, it should be possible to reach a correct decision by studying analogous situations which are regulated in the Laws. The Laws assume that arbiters have the necessary competence, sound judgement and absolute objectivity. Too detailed a rule might deprive the arbiter of his freedom of judgement and thus prevent him from finding a solution to a problem dictated by fairness, logic and special factors.**

The next step as an Arbiter would be to determine if/which Article(s) could indeed be applied to this extreme example? We suggest that it is Article A.4.4:

**If the arbiter observes both kings are in check, or a pawn on the rank furthest from its starting position, he shall wait until the next move is completed. Then, if an illegal position is still on the board, he shall declare the game drawn.**

The intent of the above Article A.4.4 is to cover “impossible positions”, and it includes two examples explicitly. However, it is “sound judgement” to consider 2 Kings by one player to be impossible. Or 9 Pawns by one player. The list could be endless, and therefore the Preface is a wonderful guide for such situations.



## Case B – Fivefold Draw After Checkmate

**This case arose from the First Saturday tournament in Hungary in May 2018.**

IM Akshat Khamparia (IND) was playing IM Bo Li (CHN). After one of the moves by IM Li, he stopped the clock, and said to the Chief Arbiter “repetition”. The Chief Arbiter immediately rejected this improperly attempted draw claim.

There are basically two ways to properly attempt draw claims. In general terms, these two ways are either BEFORE your move or AFTER your opponent’s move:

- 9.2.1 The game is drawn, upon a correct claim by a player having the move, if the same position for at least the third time (not necessarily by a repetition of moves):**
- 9.2.1.1 is about to appear, if he first writes his move, which cannot be changed, on his scoresheet and declares to the arbiter his intention to make this move, or**
- 9.2.1.2 has just appeared, and the player claiming the draw has the move.**

The Chief Arbiter attempted to explain the above articles to IM Li, but there seemed to be a language barrier. A few moves later, IM Li did the same thing, and again, the Chief Arbiter rejected this improperly attempted draw claim.

The game continued, and IM Khamparia eventually won by checkmate.

At this point, even if there had indeed been a threefold repetition during the game, as it was never properly claimed, the result would have remained 1-0.

However, after the game, IM Li and the Chief Arbiter were attempting to discuss the situation, but it was challenging due the language barrier. Regardless, IM Li eventually said “FIVE!” to the Chief Arbiter. Of course, that changes everything!

According to the relatively new Article 9.6.1:

- 9.6 If one or both of the following occur(s) then the game is drawn:**
- 9.6.1 the same position has appeared, as in 9.2.2 at least five times.**

It is critical to note that this case is NOT a question of whether checkmate is more IMPORTANT than fivefold repetition. The question is what happened FIRST. If fivefold repetition had occurred, then that ended the game at that moment!

There is no game after this point !

The Chief Arbiter checked, and there had indeed been fivefold repetition, at moves 60, 62, 68, 73 and 75. It can be challenging to catch fivefold repetitions!

The result was changed to a draw.



## Case C – Postgame Clock Complaint

**This case arose from the Chicago Class tournament in July 2018.**

The scene was the Masters Section, Round 2, Board 1. The time control was 100 minutes for the first 40 moves, then plus 30 minutes for the rest of the game, with a 10 second DELAY per move. DELAY is different than INCREMENT, in that the delay time is NOT ADDED to the player's time bank. If a player moves within 10 seconds, he neither gains nor loses time. Otherwise, if a player takes longer than 10 seconds to move, then his clock starts running against his time bank.

The players were FM Vincent Tsay (USA) vs. IM Zhaozhi (George) Li (USA).

Finally, of note, the game clock was provided by FM Tsay (the White pieces).

The situation was that White ran out of time. Black claimed the win on time, and a Tournament Director (Arbiter) confirmed the claim. However, White then immediately appealed that the clock had not been set for the 10 second delay.

This was confirmed, NEITHER PLAYER had the 10 second delay. Neither player had made any claims about it during the game, nor had any Arbiter noticed it.

The following articles were considered in reaching a decision on the appeal:

**6.10.1 Every indication given by the chess clock is considered to be conclusive in the absence of any evident defect. A chess clock with an evident defect shall be replaced by the arbiter, who shall use his best judgement when determining the times to be shown on thereplacement chess clock.**

**6.10.2 If during a game it is found that the setting of either or both clocks is incorrect, either player or the arbiter shall stop the chess clock immediately. The arbiter shall install the correct setting and adjust the times and move-counter, if necessary. He shall use his best judgement when determining the clock settings.**

As a result, the Tournament Directors reached the following conclusions:

- 1) The chess clock not having 10 second delay was NOT an "evident defect".
- 2) No claim was made against the chess clock setting "DURING the game".
- 3) Neither player was disadvantaged against the other due to the setting.
- 4) It is impossible to calculate and add DELAY times that had been used.

**Therefore, final decision was to uphold the original result of 0-1 on time.**

## Case D – Miscellaneous End of Games

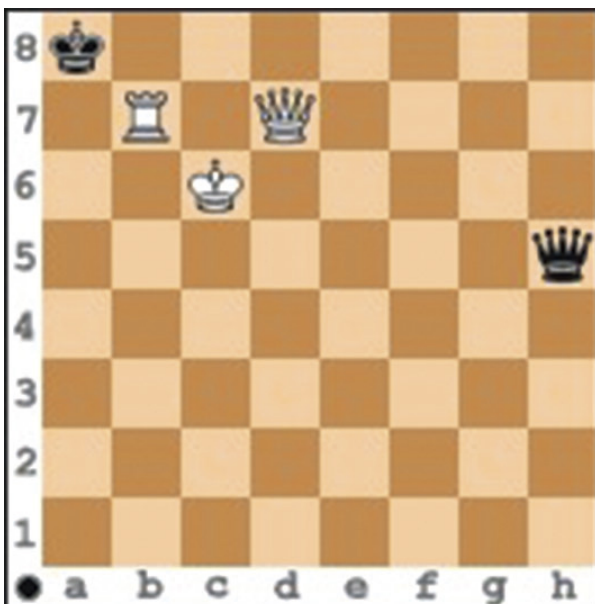
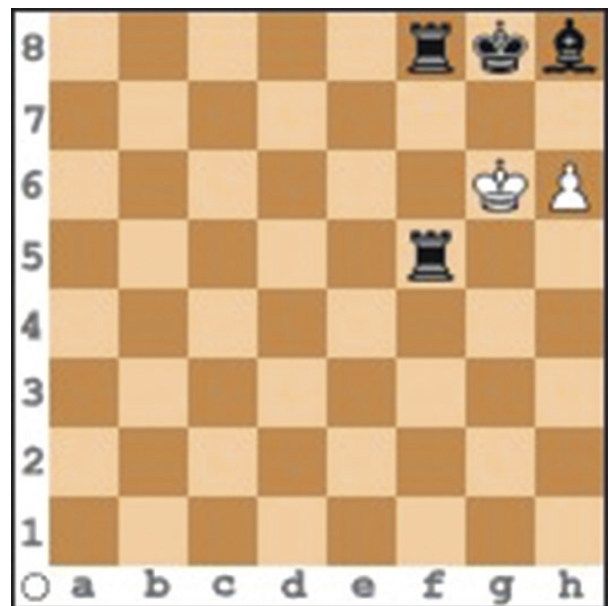


### EXAMPLE 1:

White plays N<sub>x</sub>g5, his second illegal move. The ONLY legal move is N<sub>x</sub>f4 mate, therefore DRAW. White cannot win due to two illegal moves, and Black cannot win by any possible series of legal moves.

### EXAMPLE 2:

It is White to move, but White's flag falls. The ONLY legal move is h7 mate, therefore DRAW. White cannot win due to being out of time, and Black cannot win by any possible series of legal moves.



### EXAMPLE 3:

Black plays ... Qc5, and then White's flag falls. The ONLY legal move is Kxc5 stalemate, therefore DRAW. White cannot win due to being out of time, and Black cannot win by any possible series of legal moves.





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