



Once upon a time in Belgium... (by IA Geert Bailleul, secretary of the ECU Arbiters' Council)

The ECU Arbiters' Council is always interested in the opinion of all their colleagues. By studying several cases, we are convinced that we can learn from each other and improve our skills as an arbiter. This month I would like to actively involve you all in this article. It is my intention to start some kind of discussion about two cases which occurred during two different tournaments in Belgium.

The first case occurred during an Open International Tournament.

The playing venue (playing area, small bar, toilets, smoking area...) was clearly separated from the bar (+ analysing possibilities and projection of the live games).

They were both in another building, about 50 meter from each other.

The time control was 90 minutes + 30 sec per move starting from move 1.

Schedule: 9 rounds.

2 rounds per day (during 4 days, the last day only 1 round), one round starting at 10:00 am and the second round the same day starting at 15:00 pm.

The default time was 30 minutes.

During the 4th day of the tournament, the round that had started at 10:00 am (the 7th round) ended at 14:15 pm.

The pairings of the round that starts at 15:00 pm that day (the 8th round) were available at 14:30 pm.

On the first board two IGM's were playing against each other (on a live internet board). It was an important game for the first place (and the title) of the tournament.

After the start of that round at 15:00 pm (the 8th), and before entering the playing venue, the IGM on the first board with the black pieces was looking on his laptop (in the bar!) to see what was the first move of his IGM-colleague with the white pieces.

After seeing that the White player had played 1. e4..., the Black player started to search on the internet to find games of the player with the white pieces in which he played 1. e4...

He then studied about 30 games of his opponent on his laptop before entering the playing venue.

He did that during approximately 20 minutes, still being in the bar. After that, he entered the playing hall (without his laptop) to make his first move.

Some spectators who, at that time, were in the bar and saw what this player did, informed the chief arbiter (CA) about it. They were rather upset of what the player did.

They were convinced that it must be interpreted as cheating. They asked the CA if this was acceptable and what he (the CA) was going to do about it.

ARBITERS CORNER

For this edition of the Arbiters' Corner, Secretary of the ECU Arbiters' Council IA Geert Bailleul presents two cases that occurred during 2 events. The ECU Arbiters Council would be very pleased if we would be flooded with responses concerning both cases. We will be glad to publish the most interesting comments and remarks of the arbiters in the Arbiters' Corner of next Magazines.

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The CA didn't react because he did not see the player do it. At the time, when the player was analysing the games of his opponent (in the bar), the CA was in the playing area.

What is your opinion about this situation?

Is this cheating?

How to react as an arbiter or CA?

How to react as an arbiter if you see a player acting like that before he enters the playing venue?

What can we do to prevent this kind of situations?

The second case occurred during another international tournament in Belgium.

The player with the white pieces (player A) was an older man from about 70 years old.

The player with the black pieces (player B) was a 9 years old youth player.

After more than 2 and a half hours of play, the situation of player B on the board was disastrous.

He was one bishop and 4 pawns down. At a certain moment in the game, after player B played his move, he reached out his hand to his opponent and asked: "draw??".

Player A shook hands with the youth player, thinking that he resigned because he (player A) didn't hear player B ask: "draw??".

Player A was convinced that player B resigned, because of his disastrous position on the board.

Player B thought that his opponent accepted the draw offer.

The clock was stopped and turned off by player B.

The pieces were set again on their original position.

After done all that both players filled in their score sheets.

Only at that time they discovered their mistake and the confusion between them.

Player A had "1 – 0" on his score sheet, while player B had "½ - ½".

Player A refused to sign the score sheet of player B.

The arbiter was called to solve the problem.

They didn't play on a live board.

How would you, as an arbiter, react in this case? What has to be done?

What is your opinion when players offer a draw when their position on the board is completely lost?

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IA Geert Bailleul
Secretary of the ECU Arbiters' Council.