ARBITERS CORNER

Text by:
IA Tania Karali

WHAT EXACTLY IS CHECK-MATE?

For most players, checkmate is a position on the board where one player’s king is ‘under attack’ and has no legal move to undo this attack.

If during the game White has already completed an illegal move, the act of pressing the clock grants him a second one (article 7.5.2). The pawn that has been left on the eighth rank after pressing the clock is by force replaced by a queen. Once again, White doesn’t win the game, but neither does Black, because he has no legal moves to do so. The result is draw.

Another delicacy can be found in article 7.5.4. In the following position (W: Ke6, h7 B: Ke8, Rg8), White intends to play 1.hxg8Q (or 1.hxg8R) and win. What happens if he uses both hands to make the capture? Is it considered and penalized as an illegal move?

The arbiters’ manual is clear: “Article 7.5.4 is not applicable if the move ends the game according to articles 5.1.1, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 9.6.1 or 9.6.2”, meaning if the move leads to a checkmate/stalemate/dead position, five-fold repetition or completion of 75 without captures or pawn moves. So, in that case, White wins the game.

This is truth for the first illegal move. For the second one, it seems that the illegal move prevails. We will ask FIDE RC and ARB for clarification for this particular interpretation from Arbiters’ Manual. To be continued (comment by ECU AC)

Final note:
As a final note, players of all ages and levels are highly encouraged to attend FA seminars, in order to always be informed about the new rules and changes in the laws of chess and avoid any unpleasant surprises in their games.