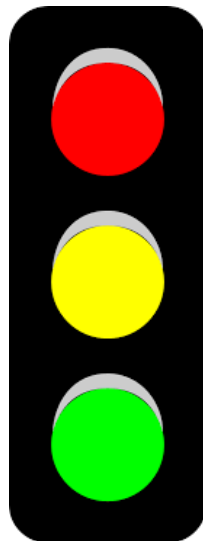


Arbiters
Commission



The Saving 75-move rule



75-move Rule

50-move Rule

To be Continued...!

**Ending the game in a draw based on
the number of moves**

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The Saving 75-move rule

The idea of writing this paper came from an offer made by IA Ivan Syrový, Chairman of the Arbiters Commission to me when I was asked to write an article about the 75-move rule.

If we consider the 75-move rule as a 9-year-old kid, the way to be more familiar with is to study its mother the 50-move rule!

Therefore, a flight ticket to the history-land should be bought.

The history of the 50-move rule.

The purpose of the rule is to prevent someone from playing on indefinitely in a position that cannot be won. A precursor to chess had a seventy-move rule. The fifty-move rule was introduced into chess by Ruy López in his 1561 book. Pietro Carrera (1573–1647) thought that twenty-four moves was the right number but La Bourdonnais (1795–1840) argued for sixty moves¹.

By 1800, a claim under the rule could be made only in certain specified types of endgames, which varied from one set of rules to another. The move-count started when the request to implement the rule were made (instead of going back to the last capture or pawn move) and a capture or a pawn move did not reset the count. The rules used at the 1883 London tournament reset the count if there was a capture or pawn move, but still started the count when the claim to apply the rule was made instead of going back to the last capture or pawn move¹.

At one time, it was believed that all winnable endgames could be won within fifty moves. However, in the early 20th century, some exceptions were found, including A. A. Troitsky's (1866-1942) analysis of the two knight's endgame as well as the endgames of a rook and bishop versus a rook. The rules of chess were revised several times to admit exceptions to the fifty-move rule for certain specific situations. Early on, the fifty-move rule applied to tournament games but not to match games².

During the time periods when the fifty-move rule admitted exceptions, there were a number of revisions. In 1928 FIDE enacted rules that if an endgame theoretically requires more than 50 moves to force checkmate, twice that number of moves were allowed. For instance, in the rook and bishop versus rook endgame, 132 moves were allowed, since it was twice the 66 moves that were thought to be required at that time³. (The actual maximum number of moves needed is 59).⁴

In 1952 FIDE revised the law, allowing for 100 moves in such positions but requiring that players agree to an extension for these positions before the first move is made. This was still in effect in 1960. The positions were not specified in the rules, to allow for the possibility of more positions requiring more than 50 moves to be discovered (which is what happened). The following positions were understood to require more than 50 moves:

1. rook and bishop versus a rook
2. two knights versus a pawn safely blocked by a knight behind the Troitsky line

1 Hooper, David; Whyld, Kenneth (1992), "fifty move law", *The Oxford Companion to Chess* (2nd ed.), Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-866164-9

2 Troitzky, Alexey (2006) [1937], *Collection of Chess Studies*, Ishi Press, ISBN 0-923891-10-2

3 FIDE (1944), *The Laws of Chess - Official Code*, Sutton Coldfield

4 Speelman, Jon; Tisdall, Jon; Wade, Bob (1993), *Batsford Chess Endings*, B. T. Batsford, ISBN 0-7134-4420-7

3. rook and pawn on a2 versus a bishop on black squares and a pawn on a3, plus the equivalent positions in the other corners.⁵ (In 1979 it was shown that this endgame can actually be won in just under 50 moves⁶). In an analysis published before 1979, some wins required more than 50 moves. Work by Jan Timman and Ulf Andersson showed that the stronger side can convert to a won position in just under 50 moves.

Article 12.4 of the 1965 FIDE rules state:

The number of moves can be increased for certain positions, provided that this increase in number and these positions have been clearly established before the commencement of the game.

Harkness notes that "Some of these unusual positions have been established and accepted by FIDE", including two knights versus a pawn. The 1975 and 1977 versions of the rules included the same wording (not specifying the positions or the number of moves).⁸

In 1984, the rule was modified and it became Article 10.9. Now 100 moves were explicitly specified and the positions above were listed in the rule⁹. (The wording about the positions and number of moves having to be specified in advance of the game was dropped.) Ken Thompson's investigations in the 1980s using the Belle chess computer discovered numerous endgames winnable in more than 50 moves. However, these often involved seemingly random moves that defied human comprehension or analysis, in situations that would hardly ever occur in real gameplay¹.⁰

In 1989 the rule (still Article 10.9) was changed to 75 moves, and the listed positions were:

1. Rook and bishop versus rook
2. Two knights versus a pawn (no mention of the Troitsky line)
3. A queen and a pawn on the seventh rank versus a queen (see queen and pawn versus queen endgame)
4. Queen versus two knights (see pawn-less chess endgame § Queen versus two minor pieces)
5. Queen versus two bishops
6. Two bishops versus a knight (see pawn-less chess endgame § Minor pieces only).¹

The rule was then changed to allow just 50 moves in all positions. Some sources say that the 1989 rule was in effect for only a "year or so" or a "few years".¹ But one source of the 1992 rules gives the pre-1984 wording: "...increased for certain positions if it was announced in advance". By 2001 the rule was Article 9.3 and allowed 50 moves for all positions.¹³

Research into how many moves are required to win certain endgames continued. Exhaustive retrograde analysis using faster computers to build endgame table-bases has uncovered many more such endgames,

⁵ Whitaker, Norman; *Hartleb, Glenn (1960), 365 Selected Endings*

⁶ Giddins, Steve (2012), *The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames*, Everyman Chess, ISBN 978-1-85744-694-4

⁷ Harkness, Kenneth (1970), *Official Chess Rulebook*, McKay, ISBN 0-679-13028-4

⁸ Morrison, Martin (1975), *Official Rules of Chess*, McKay, ISBN 0-679-14039-5

⁹ Kazic, Bozidar; Keene, Raymond; Lim, Kok Ann (1985), *The Official Laws of Chess*, Batsford, ISBN 0-7134-4802-4

¹ Gleick, James (1986-08-26). "NY Times". New York Times. Retrieved 2010-03-04.

¹ FIDE (1989), *The Official Laws of Chess*, Macmillan, ISBN 0-02-028540-X

¹ Speelman, Jon; Tisdall, Jon; Wade, Bob (1993), *Batsford Chess Endings*, B. T. Batsford, ISBN 0-7134-4420-7

¹ Schiller, Eric (2003), *Official Rules of Chess (2nd ed.)*, Cardoza, ISBN 978-1-58042-092-1

often of previously unsuspected length. In 2008, the record was 517 moves (assuming optimal play by both sides) to make a piece capture or exchange that achieves a simpler and more obviously winnable sub-endgame, for a particular position involving a queen and knight versus a rook, bishop, and knight.¹ In 2013, this record was improved to 545 moves.⁵

Many of the longest games on record involve the rook and bishop versus rook endgame, when the rule for more moves was in effect.¹ (See pawn-less chess endgame and rook and bishop versus rook endgame.)

The rule has its own side-effects such as distracting players from paving the sole path of the game and shall be brought into consideration normally when they are in time trouble. As an example of my own experiences, there was a game between two grandmasters in **FIDE Women's World Championship 2017!** In the middle rounds the player who had Knight and Bishop faced some difficulties to checkmate the opponent's king and the situation was not only about chess but also counting the move numbers, the opponent to claim, and the player to pull the trigger. I was witnessing the raising level of stress in both players and finally, the game did not end in a draw.

In conclusion, it must be mentioned that the 50-move rule came into account to put some limits based on the players' claims during the lasting long games which mostly are not going to end in any other result, but the draw.

The game needs a result in a definite expected time! The game needs a result in a definite expected time!

Sure the key is: The game needs a result in a definite expected time!

Before launching the 75-move rule, a simple problem in standard chess events caused serious consequences. What if no claim is made based on the 50-move rule by the players?!

Stubbornness, ignorance, lack of familiarity with the laws of chess, and ..., could be the reason anyhow the arbiter cannot intervene and the game must continue to have a winner or due to the tiredness an agreement shares the points.

That was Laws of Chess For competitions starting from 1 July 2014 till 30 June 2017 in which we saw the first try made by the Rules Commission as in below:

9.6 If one or both of the following occur(s) then the game is drawn:

....

b. any consecutive series of 75 moves have been completed by each player without the movement of any pawn and without any capture. If the last move resulted in checkmate, that shall take precedence.

¹ Krabbé, Tim. "Open chess diary 4301-320". timkr.home.xs4all.nl. Retrieved 4 April 2018.

¹ Lomonosov Endgame Tablebases - ChessOK.com". chessok.com. Retrieved 4 April 2018.

¹ Tim Krabbé. "Chess records © Tim Krabbé". Xs4all.nl. Retrieved 2010-03-04.

Obviously, the regulations are being updated to solve such problems and it was a brilliant attempt to run an event upon the schedule.

In FIDE Laws of Chess taking effect from 1 January 2023, we have

9.6 If one or both of the following occur(s) then the game is drawn:

9.6.2 *any series of at least 75 moves have been made by each player without the movement of any pawn and without any capture. If the last move resulted in checkmate, that shall take precedence.*

It is just an extension of the 50-move rule designed specifically for tournaments games really can't go on forever.¹



Crossing the 75th move

It would be interesting when as CA of I faced a similar case between Ghaem Maghami vs. Khusankhojaev which can be found in detail in ChessBase India's Report.

The case happened in the world Rapid and Blitz 2022 in Almaty, when In round 6 of the Open section in rapid championships was a case on board 52 between players GM Ghaem Maghami Ehsan and Khusenkhojaev Mustafokhuja there was a problem loading live PGNs but we were sure about the 50-move rule to be applied if any player could claim correctly but Khusenkhojaev Mustafokhuja claimed on threefold repetition and the claim rejected after checking. Continuing the game, the black's flag fell and the board arbiter gave the result to the TAP team. When we had whole PGNs downloaded and reconstructed some moves as the rest of the game which was not broadcasted, we realized that the game had been finished by the 75-move rule and it happened one move before the flag fall. So the result changed for the pairings of the 8th round because the pairings for round 7 had been already published

Video is available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDHMA5e37k0>

¹ <https://www.chessable.com/blog/must-know-chess-rules/>

Conclusion

All in all, the rules are to help the players and the arbiters to join smooth-running chess tournaments and it seems the laws of chess are going to be more and more simplified to be understandable indeed while the new technologies are coming or being upgraded.

The rules changes might be vital in the way that their effects be compatible with the ever-rebuilding world and chess is not an exception, but as members of the chess community, we are to learn how to deal with new issues by setting and defining promoted parameters. Also, the decision on similar situations in arbitration should have uniformity of procedure.

It is, therefore, the duty of the Arbiter Commission of the World Chess Federation to make recommendations to Arbiters around the world on the different ambiguities and interpretations of the rules.

In this specific case the Arbiters Commission decided to discuss the case and the final decision on that is as below:

“ When crossing the 75th move without movement of any pawn and without any capture in a game, the result will be a draw under any circumstances. “

This means that practically everything that happens after the 75th move (including all instances of Articles 5, 6, and 12 of the Laws of Chess) will be invalid. In respect of the penalties related to Article 11 of the Laws of Chess as well as the rules relating to fair play, this recommendation does not apply.