

Changes to the Laws of Chess, Effective 1 July 2005

There have been some minor changes of wording, which had no effect on the meaning of the Laws. I have not drawn attention to these. Geoff Jones has drawn up a set of Laws, making the changes clear. This will be distributed via the Arbiters Association. [You can go to the home page of FIDE](#) and find the correct set of Laws. Don't use the drop down menus at the top of the page; they all lead to old versions of the new Laws. My views of the effects of the changes are given below. The bold notes deserve serious consideration.

1.2 The objectives have been expanded to include what you cannot do to the kings. Taking your opponent's king is now contrary to the objectives of the game.

3.1 A sentence has been added (moved from 3.8(b)). I think this was designed to tighten up the definition of checkmate, which is still flawed.

3.9 This is both expansion and duplication of what is already written.

4.4 (d) In promotion, a piece is considered chosen as soon as it has touched the promotion square. This is a helpful clarification.

4.6 This has been expanded, without change of meaning.

6.12 has been clarified, but does not give guidance to the situation where both players have run out of time, but the mechanism of the clock indicates which clock ran out of time first. I would give a loss, guided by the clock indication.

7.4 (a) A strange clause has been added to the first sentence. At least it tells us what to do if a king is captured.

8.1 Players may not write down their moves in advance. This is a most important change and needs to be communicated to players and coaches NOW.

8.1 If a player is unable to keep score, he may provide an assistant. It is now accepted practice not to adjust the clocks in case of handicap, but to reduce the time of a player who may not score for ethical reasons.

8.4 (a) Once a player has been relieved of the need to score, he remains relieved of this duty until after a flag has fallen.

10.2 (b) The right of the arbiter to step in, after saying 'play on' and before a flag falls, has been re-instated.

10.2 (b) has been expanded to confirm the final grounds on which a draw may be given.

I would stress that, to award a draw, you must be convinced that the result of the game would have been a draw.

12.2 (b) Mobile phones and other electronic means of communication are now banned, unless authorised by the arbiter. This will cause trouble, except in small high-level events. Unless we have a security box system, I think we must authorize players to continue to carry switched-off mobile phones.

12.3 An awkward phrase has been added at the end. The only relevant data I would accept would relate to the number of moves to be made. **Coaches should be instructed not to teach pupils to disobey 12.3 or 8.1.**

13.7 (b) gives us grounds to eject a spectator who uses a mobile phone (including letting it ring).

B 1 Now defines rapidplay with increments.

B 6 This is a re-wording of the old B 5 (b), but then it wanders off, giving the arbiter some more duties (as if he hasn't got enough to do). I have recently realized that the omission of the old B5(b) restores 7.2, 7.3 and 7.5. This leaves the loophole that a player may request, for instance, the re-location of a displaced piece many moves after the irregularity occurred. This is not in the spirit of Rapidplay and if, for instance, a bishop changed the colour of its squares, this could have been caused by an illegal move (no right to claim this several moves later) or by a displacement of the bishop (definite right to claim). I would suggest that in such cases, we never go back several moves. I haven't got a clue what advice to give you if you find both kings in check.

B8 This hasn't changed, but, if both players have zero time, a win on time cannot be claimed, even when the clock indicates who ran out first.

C 1 Now defines blitz with increments.

C2 10.2 and B6 do not apply to Blitz

D 1 now allows a player to claim a draw on two grounds. Twice as much work for the Arbiter. We now expect both players to co-operate in giving as much accurate information as possible to the arbiter.

E 1 It is sad that 'piece' now has two meanings. It is unfortunate that this ancient distinction has been revived.

E13 The sample game finishes (=) Surely you can't leave it there. Was the draw accepted?

F2 1 has one sentence which doesn't really make sense.

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N.B. If you read an earlier version of these notes, I have now been able to remove comments about Article 4.7 and Appendices E13 and F2.1. Last minute changes have been made to these Laws to bring them back in to line with previous versions
I cannot guarantee that there have not been any other last minute changes which I have missed.