# Arbiting Matters Too



# Newsletter of the Chess Arbiters Association March 2020 Issue 41

These are unusual times. In the midst of the Corona Virus, all over the world chess has been cancelled. It is uncertain when activity will be resumed. Many in the chess playing community are in the categories most at risk. This issue will, hopefully, give you something to do in the time ahead. Future editions are uncertain but with all the additional free time many people will have perhaps I will be sent lots of material.

When chess does resume it seems likely that additional precautions will need to remain in place.

The CAA would like to welcome Shohreh Bayat to these shores. Shohreh was the Chief Arbiter at the Women's World Championship. She is currently seeking political asylum in the UK. This does not seem the appropriate place to go into details on the reasons for this. Those who do not know can 'Google' her. Shohreh has already been active in Britain. Her first event was the British Universities (BUCA) Team Championships followed by the University match between Oxford and Cambridge.

Congratulations to Andy Howie who was appointed as the Deputy Chief Arbiter in charge of Anti-Cheating at the Candidates Tournament in Yekaterinburg which started on 16 March.

The Chess Scotland Arbiters' Committee met at the end of February and endorsed the CAA decision to suggest minimum payments for arbiters and to pursue the policy in Scotland where tournaments will only be graded if there is a qualified arbiter present. It is anticipated that the next revision of the CS grading system will require the names of arbiters to be included with the grading results.

John Wickham supplies the basis of the next two articles. Thanks to him for doing so.

# Norfolk Rapidplay 2020

There were a couple of arbiting issues that arose which I want to share with you. The first is the upturned Rook that is supposed to be a Queen. I was alerted to this by a spectator who asked if upturned Rooks are illegal. The answer is that they are not while the piece moves as a Rook but if it should move diagonally then it is making an illegal move and will be penalised as such. When I went to the board White had just checkmated his opponent with the upturned Rook giving the checkmate diagonally, in other words it was not checkmate as the piece was a Rook. I explained to the players that the piece was a Rook no matter what they had called it and pointed out the spare Queen sitting by the board! The white player could not explain why he upturned the Rook but there was really no excuse in view of the availability of the spare Queen.

After my explanation I was told, "we have shaken on the result so it must stand". Having checked the position and ensured there was no stalemate position and noting that White's position was such that mate was inevitable anyway, I took no action. However, even though they had shaken on the result I could have acted as the result was as result of an illegal move. Had the position been such that it was stalemate then the result could have been changed to a draw, or if the there was a continuation for Black I could have asked the players to continue the game and penalised White for the illegal move.

The other incident was a bit more involved. I was making a drink when someone came up to me and said that there had been an illegal move but that they had made a few moves since. This was in the opening moves and White had moved his white squared Bishop on f1 to the black square on c3 giving him two black squared Bishops. Ken thought we should take the position back to when the illegal move had occurred which in standard play games is possible (as there is a score sheet to refer to) but things are different in Rapidplay, as Appendix A.4.2 modifies the Laws as follows:

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.

Articles 7.5.1 - .5 refer to illegal moves and the penalty in standard play games. The first thing to note is that the arbiter can only act where the opponent has **not** made his next move. Also note that the opponent must claim for the illegal move before making his next move. If the arbiter does not act or no claim is made, then the illegal move must stand, and the arbiter is unable to correct the position. However, the players can, by agreement, correct the illegal move, but the arbiter cannot become involved. As you can see this is a variance from standard play and did take a little explaining. The players did agree to move the Bishop onto a White square and continued.

There is a set of illegal positions where an arbiter can intervene in Rapidplay and this is covered in Appendix A.4.4:

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.

As this states it is only for when both Kings are in check or there is a pawn on the furthest rank and here the arbiter must wait till the next move is completed and if there is still an illegal position it is declared drawn.



(Ed- This draws attention to an anomaly in the Laws. Consider the position opposite which the arbiter sees. He then waits the required one move by each player. Both get out of check so you may expect that the game should continue. However, look carefully at the board. White has two black squared bishops. This is not necessarily an illegal position as a pawn could have been promoted—

But in this case all 6 eight pawns are still on the board so by A.4.4 the 5 position is still illegal so the arbiter should step in and declare the game drawn! He can only do this because one of the special circumstances given had existed. Had the arbiter simply observed the second position there is nothing that the arbiter can do but allow the 'game' to continue.)

#### League Match

In one of the games in Alysham's match against Kings Lynn there was another example of a player not understanding the Laws of Chess. In the game White had King and Rook and Black had King, Rook and doubled pawns on the f file. When Black's time dropped below 5 minutes, he stopped recording his moves and White did the same. As I was behind the clock, I did not see how much time White had left but after several moves I realised that on the time elapsed White must have more time and having checked saw that he had 30 minutes and should have been recording his moves as per Article 8.4 of the Laws of Chess:

8.4 If a player has less than five minutes left on his clock at some stage in a period and does not have additional time of 30 seconds or more added with each move, then for the remainder of the period he is not obliged to meet the requirements of Article 8.1.1.

8.1.1. states that a player must record his moves and that of his opponent. As we use a 10 second increment a player can only stop recording after the player's time drops below 5 minutes. I spoke to White's captain and he agreed but said he thought White was not aware of the rule, so I suggested we allow them to continue and speak to White at the end. If it was a Congress, I would have made an indication to White that he must keep recording but I was a player in the match and not there as a neutral arbiter so could not intervene.

The main risk was that White would blitz Black by playing quickly despite having plenty of time to consider his moves. That proved to be what happened but in what could have been a drawn position White, in rushing his moves, appeared to be giving Black the advantage and Black prevailed. Had I intervened then I could have interfered with the flow of the match so taking no action seemed best policy. (Ed – and the only legal option for the reason already stated.)

After the match when explaining to White that he should have been recording the moves he expressed surprise and was clearly unaware of the rules. What surprised me was his captain telling him, incorrectly, that he was lost as that was the penalty for not recording the moves. The Kings Lynn players asked me to explain and their board one told me that in a game in the League he inadvertently forgot to record his moves and his opponent claimed the game due to this! This was a strong player, who clearly should have known better.

Now, what is the penalty? Nothing is specified in Article 6, so an Arbiter must refer to Articles 11.7 and 12.9:

- 11.7 Persistent refusal by a player to comply with the Laws of Chess shall be penalised by loss of the game. The arbiter shall decide the score of the opponent.
- 12.9 Options available to the arbiter concerning penalties:
- 12.9.1 warning,
- 12.9.2 increasing the remaining time of the opponent,
- 12.9.3 reducing the remaining time of the offending player,
- 12.9.4 increasing the points scored in the game by the opponent to the maximum available for that game,
- 12.9.5 reducing the points scored in the game by the offendin1.7g person,
- 12.9.6 declaring the game to be lost by the offending player (the arbiter shall also decide the opponent's score),
- 12.9.7 a fine announced in advance,
- 12.9.8 exclusion from one or more rounds,
- 12.9.9 expulsion from the competition.

To apply 11.7 there must be **persistent** refusal to obey the Laws of Chess and this means not complying after several warnings or several repeat offences. It is a severe penalty and should be applied with care. It should not be used in this case for what was an inadvertent omission.

12.9 has a sliding scale starting with a warning which would be appropriate in our case and in the one that the Kings Lynn Board one mentioned. Had there been any suggestion that the White player was doing this deliberately and was blitzing his opponent to gain an advantage on time then the next stage of giving time to Black would be appropriate. Also, White could be asked to make up his score sheet, in his own time- i.e. While his clock is running- but that may be difficult if several moves have been made. It may be helped if one of the other players was keeping a record of the moves (as was the case at the match) so that White could update his score sheet.

(Ed – Although this is seen as a sliding scale, there is no need for the arbiter to work through these penalties in order. Some offences will warrant initial action more severe than a warning. Even if a warning is deemed sufficient the player's reaction to the warning may cause a greater penalty to be levied.)

The other handicap to White is that he would have been unable to make a claim for a draw due to a threefold occurrence of the position or under the 50 move rule (50 moves by each player without the movement of any pawn and without a capture) as there would have been no proof. (John Wickham)

# **Claiming a Draw**

Most players have a reasonable grasp on the Laws of Chess but one area which is a common source of problems is making a draw claim.

The problems come from either the player not understanding what is required or the opponent believing the claim was made incorrectly.

Draws are claimed in three different situations

- a) Draw by Repetition;
- b) Draw by the 50 Move Rule; and
- c) Making a claim in your last two minutes.

#### **Draw by Repetition**

If checking a claim of draw by repetition the first thing an arbiter must establish is if the player on the move is making the claim. A player should not claim after he has made a move, even if he has not pressed the clock.

The second thing is that it is the position which must be repeated and not a series of moves. Sometimes repeating moves will lead to a repetition of position but this is not always the case.

The third thing to remember is that the position can occur at any time in the game. The positions do not have to happen in consecutive, or near consecutive, moves.

If a player whose move will cause the position to occur for a third time can claim a draw before moving. Although it is often called a threefold repetition the position only has to be repeated twice. The first time it occurred also counts.

If a player wants to make a claim because the move he is about to play repeats the position then he must not play it but write it on his scoresheet\*, stop the clock and get the arbiter. It is polite to let the opponent know why this has been done. If a player simply stops his clock and informs the arbiter that his next move will lead to a draw by repetition the arbiter should inform him of the correct procedure and restart his clock asking him to write down the move and then stop his clock again. If the claim is shown to be wrong then the written move must be played regardless.

(\*This is one of only two cases where you are allowed to write the move before playing it.)

If the draw claim is rejected the opponent can still accept a draw. Indeed, provided there minimum number of moves required has been reached, an arbiter might first ask if the opponent accepts the draw offer.

Consider the following position reached after White has just played 1 f2-f4



Play continues 1 ... Be7 2 Bc4 Bf6 3. Bb3 and the pieces are back on the same squares.

This however is not the same position as 1 exf3 was possible the first time but that move is not possible the second time.

The game continues 3 ... Bd8 4 Bc4 Be7 5 Bb3 Bf6 and again the pieces are back on the same squares.

But this is a new position as this time it is White to play whereas it was black in the previous situations.

And still the game continues 6 Rf1 Be7 7 Rh1 Bf6. We now have a 4<sup>th</sup> position as White can no longer castle king side.

8 Rd1 Be7 9 Ra1 Bf6 and we have a  $5^{th}$  different position as White can no longer castle queen side either. We could have a  $6^{th}$ ,  $7^{th}$  and  $8^{th}$  situation where Black loses his castling rights eg 10 Bd1 Rd8 11 Bc2 Ra8 12 Bb3 Rf8 13 Bc2 Rh8 14 Bb3 Bd8 15 Bc2 Be7 16 Bb3 Bf6.

Four additional positions could have been created by having the position with a different player to move after each occurrence of the rook first moving. It is therefore possible to have the pieces on the same squares 14 times before a successful claim of repetition can be made!

Arbiters should step in and declare a game drawn if the same position occurs 5 times.

# Draw by the 50 Move Rule

The first thing to note is that in order for a claim to be correct both sides must make 50 moves (not 25 each) without a pawn being moved or a capture made. The implementation of this rule is very similar to repetition. To claim the player must have the move or to write down the move that is to be played. An arbiter should step in and declare the game drawn after 75 moves without a pawn move or capture.

#### Draw Claim in the Last 2 minutes

If increments are in use then a player cannot claim a draw in the last two minutes (except using the above two methods). No matter how drawish the position looks the player cannot expect the arbiter to award the draw because his opponent is not trying. (But

they will!) With increments a player can only claim a draw by repetition or under the 50 move rule.

If draw claims are allowed in the last two minutes decisions can be complicated. A useful 'rule of thumb' for the arbiter is that if they have to think about it then the draw claim is rejected.

#### The Phantom Noise

A recent incident in the 4NCL highlights what action an arbiter can take as part of the Anti-Cheating measures which should be in place at all events.

A noise was heard which sounded like a computer being started. No arbiter was close enough to identify the exact location but a general area was identified. The reaction of nearby players reduced that area to a few boards. What action should the arbiters take. Any further immediate investigation would disturb players in the area, only one of whom

was guilty. The Senior Arbiter at the venue decided that scans could be carried out after the games in that area finished. It should be remembered that although a computer was suspected it could have been a mobile with a strange ringtone.

The 4NCL has heat sensors and had one of those been on-site it could have been used to identify the location of the offending device.

As it turned out, that 'stop and scan' procedure did not have to be carried out as a similar noise was heard again and this time the bag containing the offending object identified. It was a computer. The player brought it out of his bag to show that it was not on — and it played its tune again! He was informed by the arbiter that he had lost his game. He complained that this was unfair so was referred to the Senior Arbiter. The Senior Arbiter showed him the relevant section of the Laws and pointed out that it was only on the second occasion that he had been caught. He initially denied that it had 'played' before. On being told that it had but that was irrelevant anyway he then tried to argue that he should not be punished because the arbiters had a 'moral duty' to have warned him after the first occasion. He then asked how he could appeal the decision. He was shown the appropriate part of the League Rules and the £50 fee was emphasised. He left claiming that lockers should be provided by the hotel or 4NCL. I decided not to ask how these lockers should be transported between venues or stored between times. Needless to say, no appeal was made and the 4NCL did not benefit from his £50 donation.

# Is This A Wind Up? Watch This Space

In the Olympiad and other top tournaments players are forbidden to have any watch in their possession. India too has adopted this for many of its events.

Obviously smart watches are banned from several events in this country as they could potentially receive information on moves to be played.

An Indian arbiter has received much criticism for forfeiting two players in a recent event (National Team Championship) as both were wearing analogue watches. It is easy to be critical of this decision but it is now no longer simple to tell the difference as some smart watches have been designed to look like an ordinary old fashioned watch. Such watches are on sale and are often described as 'hybrid' watches. The watch in the picture is a hybrid. Without examining it carefully it is difficult to know that this is a smart watch and capable of being connected to a mobile phone or other



A smart watch designed to look like an analogue one

device. It is very easy, as a number of players have shown, to be critical of the arbiter for being overly officious but how many arbiters would be willing or have the time at a busy congress to inspect players arms at the start of every round to ensure that the watch being worn is really an analogue or non-smart digital. Announcing that smart watches as well as phones should be put in a bag is something that all arbiters must learn to do. However that doesn't help if a player is trying to cheat and continues to wear a not-obviously smart watch. Unfortunately it is yet another thing to make the arbiter's job more difficult. Under these circumstances it is much easier to be sympathetic to the

decision of the All India Chess Federation and the arbiter who enforced its policy.

# **Arbiter Assistance from Live Boards**

Tim Harding points out the following situation which arose in the Glorney Cup, 2019. In the diagrammed position Black played 25 ... 0-0. The game was on a sensory board. The software is designed to continue recording moves even after an illegal move such as the one just played occurs. In this case neither

player pointed out the illegality, despite White being almost 1800 and Black mid 2100s, and the game continued.

Some versions of the software will display a message to the live board operator that an illegal move may have occurred. In this case the illegality went unnoticed and the game continued ending in a White win. Asked about the incident afterwards White said he thought it was odd but "he was much higher rated than me" so did not question it or call an arbiter.

It would be useful if the control team were informed when illegal moves are played. Other situations where consulting the computer is useful is in draw claims. Here the game can be replayed on the screen and the move numbers noted when the repetitions occurred. If necessary these moves can then be clicked on to show the doubting player that the draw claim is or is not accurate.

On one occasion I was involved in a high level tournament where a clock failed. During the dispute as to what should be done, one player insisting that the game should be restarted and the other that it should be annulled, the arbiter in charge of the game went to the live board operator and got the exact clock times when the failure had taken place. The game resumed with those times on a different clock.

#### Jobsworth

A rubberised cork has been fitted to a door frame at the Blackpool Congress to stop it slamming closed. A Duty Manager informs the arbiter that as it is a fire door the cork will have to be removed so that the door can close properly. The arbiter asks the Duty Manager to fix the door so that it will not bang. The Duty Manager's solution – Jam the door open!!! The arbiter showed great restraint and did not point out to the Duty Manager just how stupid her solution was but instead asked that a member of staff could be assigned to silence other hotel guests as they walked past. At this point the Duty Manager said "Well make sure you remove it if the fire alarm goes off." The door in question was not marked as a fire door and was certainly not officially designated as such.

You really couldn't invent something like this. If you saw it on TV it would be considered too far fetched to be funny.

#### **Health Precautions**

Even when chess is allowed to continue the following guidelines should still be kept in place.

Event rooms should be well ventilated with fresh air circulating.

The advice being given to players, and which organisers in this country should also give to them is:

- 1 Wash your hands frequently (either soap and water or alcohol based rub)
- 2 Practice respiratory hygene (cover mouth and nose if coughing or sneezing)
- 3 Maintain social distance (to avoid inhaling droplets containing the virus)
- 4 Avoid handshakes, hugs, kisses, etc.
- 5 Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
- 6 Seek medical care if you have fever, cough or difficulty breathing.
- Shaking hands will probably remain optional.

Organisers and arbiters should have supplies of sanitiser spray and boxes of tissues.

It may also be necessary to try to space boards as much as possible.

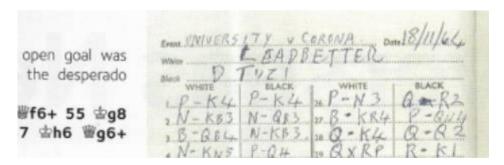
Arbiters are reminded of the importance of washing their hands. Having set up pieces or clocks there is a potential risk so arbiters should wash their hands after doing so and certainly before eating. It is also important to wash hands after clearing up at the end of the event and having your well earned pint!

Arbiters can expect many more complaints about opponent's coughing and spluttering. To minimise this arbiters may want to consider bringing a box or two of tissues to events to be distributed as necessary.

#### A Blast from the Past

The March 2020 issue of 'Chess' has an article by Geoff Chandler on a game he found in an old scorebook bought in a charity shop.

The game was played on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 1964. The home team was Edinburgh University. Note the name of the visiting team, a club no longer in existance!!



Another item from another time.

The following is taken from the Sydney Mail's chess column of 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1867. The following are described as 'a few practical maxims, which all players (beginners especially) will do well to bear in mind.' I'm not sure how some of the guidance given would be received in these more enlightened times.

1. Always play the strict game. If oversights are given back, the game ends by no real victory, but by an absurd discussion which of the two players made the worst blunders. Or, to put the question on its right footing, a quick sight of the board and close attention during play are important merits at chess.

A player must fail in both ere he can make a gross oversight; let him be punished accordingly, or he will never improve.

- 2. Never play till the business of the day is fairly done, and you feel you have earned your amusement.
- 3. Never play in mixed society when you are likely to be missed from the circle by either either hostess or company.
- 4. Don't play with persons much older than yourself, if you feel sure you can beat them and not sure they will like it.

(Ed – Does this mean a ban on all juniors playing adults!)

5. Don't play with your wife, unless you can give her odds, and then take care rather to overmatch yourself.

(Ed – Sexist, Aussie advice. Hard to believe!)

- 6. Don't play into the "small hours", lest next day's work should suffer from your late rising or want of rest.
- 7. Learn to play quick. Long delays make the game tedious, impair your confidence, and are (be it observed) absolutely injurious to any but a first-rate player. It is worse than useless to try a deeper analysis than your head can carry.
- 8. Don't play with a headache; but if you do, don't complain after losing the game.
- 9. Don't praise your opponent's play when you have won, or abuse your own when you have lost. You are *assuming* in the first case, and *detracting* in the second.
- 10. Don't play "back games", however interesting the position reverted to, unless on a distinct understanding that they shall score.

(Ed – So no post mortem then.)

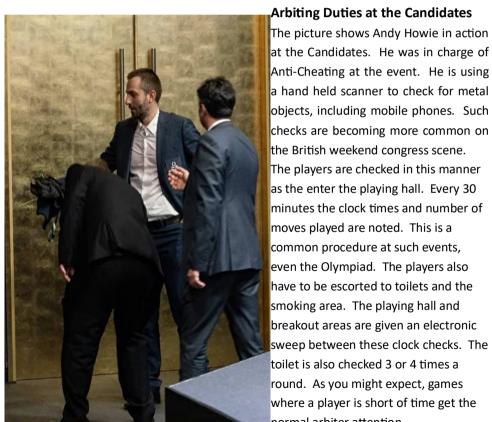
11. Try to have no choice as to board, pieces, &c.; but if you have, never speak of it to account for a defeat. (Monsieur St. Amaud (sic) made himself very ridiculous by forgetting this rule.\*)

12. Finally, let us repeat, for it is worth repeating, that chess is a recreation, and must be nothing else. We entreat our chess-loving readers (may their numbers and their skill increase) never to forget this. Better far never to play, or to give up the game when your enjoyment of it is greatest, than to let it take too strong or too persistent a hold on your thoughts.

(Ed – No professional players allowed.)

So, to paraphrase, the above. Don't take your chess too seriously, work is more important. If you play your other half make sure she wins by giving her an extra generous handicap. Don't play with older players if they are likely to get crotchety when you beat them.

\* This may refer to the match between Staunton and St Amant.



# Arbiting Duties at the Candidates

objects, including mobile phones. Such checks are becoming more common on the British weekend congress scene. The players are checked in this manner as the enter the playing hall. Every 30 minutes the clock times and number of moves played are noted. This is a common procedure at such events, even the Olympiad. The players also have to be escorted to toilets and the smoking area. The playing hall and breakout areas are given an electronic sweep between these clock checks. The toilet is also checked 3 or 4 times a round. As you might expect, games where a player is short of time get the normal arbiter attention.



#### Distraction

11.5 It is forbidden to distract or annoy the opponent in any manner whatsoever. This includes unreasonable claims, unreasonable offers of a draw or the introduction of a source of noise into the playing area.

There has been much discussion as to what constitutes a disturbance following this behaviour from Ian Nepomniachtchi in the Candidates Tournament. Is it acceptable to stand whilst thinking about the game?

In this case the opponent has not complained and the arbiters took no action. There have certainly been players who have made complaints about their opponent doing this. Does it constitute a distraction? Like so many claims of distraction it is rarely black and white and the arbiter has to exercise judgement. If a player makes a complaint then they have obviously been distracted but should action be taken against the opponent?

There are several things to be considered. It has been known for players to have a medical condition which limits the amount of time they can remain seated. In such cases they should be allowed to stand but there should still be restrictions imposed on their behaviour. The standing player should not be allowed to lean over the board in an

intimidating way. Not should the standing player be allowed to gyrate. Excessive body movement would certainly constitute a distraction.



Intimidating!

When a complaint is received the arbiter has two courses of action. The first is to monitor the situation and to judge if the behaviour is indeed a clear distraction. If it is then the arbiter should take action. A second action that can be taken is to speak to the player pointing out that some might feel that their action was distracting and ask, if possible, they could remain seated when on the

move. Most players are unaware that their behaviour has been causing problems and are only too willing to try to co-operate.

At a weekend congress it is spectators standing around the board who are most likely to cause problems. Here arbiters should not wait until a complaint is made but should be proactive. The things to watch out for are spectators invading the space around not just the board they are watching but also other nearby games still in progress. This form of crowd control can be more important that actually watching the game. Other things to look out for when spectators are around is the noise factor. Occasionally you will find two spectators discussing the game they are watching. Normally a warning is enough but it has been known for spectators to be removed from the playing hall when the behaviour has been extreme. Two unintentional spectator distractions which are common is coin/key jangling and plastic bag rustling. Arbiters should stop spectators from doing either of these. Although neither cause a great amount of noise both actions seem to be particularly disturbing to players in time trouble when they can be suffering from sensory overdrive. In this state sounds which would normally not even register with the player can acquire additional significance and severely affect concentration.

[It may be that Nepo was standing at the board because of the failure of the monitors in the playing area. Apparently there have been some problems in this area. It is not unusual in events of this status for the players to go to the breakout room between moves and only return when they have seen their opponent move on one of the screens set up there.]

# **British Universities Team Championship**

A player made an illegal move by moving his rook to check his opponent but at the same time putting his own king in check from the opponent's rook. Before restarting the player's clock the arbiter warned him that that a second illegal move would cost him the game and added that, "The touch move rule still applies". The player could move his rook and capture the opponent's. However the opponent chose to move another piece and start his opponent's clock. At that point the player was told simultaneously by the arbiter, his opponent and his team captain, all using the same phrase "The touch move rule still applies."

At the BUCA AGM which is held at this event a participant was heard to query the minutes of the previous year's AGM. Nothing too unusual you might think until you are told that the person querying them was ... the person who had written them!!!!

#### **CAA Officials**

Chairman - Lara Barnes

Secretary – Alan Atkinson

Treasurer – John Shaw

Chief Arbiter - Alex McFarlane

Information officer - Alex McFarlane

Committee - David Welch, Kevin Staveley and Mike Forster.



ECF Delegate - Mike Forster
Chess Scotland Delegate - Alex McFarlane
Welsh Chess Union - Kevin Staveley
Independent Examiner - Richard Jones
Safeguarding Officer – Lara Barnes



Items for inclusion in future issues should be sent to Alex McFarlane ahmcfarlane@yahoo.co.uk