Arbiting Tips

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| The Playing Hall1. In the absence of WD40 or similar, a squeaky door can be ‘cured’ by rubbing the hinge with the lead from a pencil
2. Banging doors can be silenced by using a piece of blutack to hold an eraser or wine cork in place to dampen the thud. Blutack on its own will help but tends not to last for long.
3. Consider the board position of blind and disabled players, make space for a wheelchair, consider putting the visually impaired player away from the top boards as they need to verbalise their moves. You must look after the needs of all of your players equally – you should not discriminate for OR against a disabled player
4. Position boards to get the maximum light
5. Remember to open and close curtains as the sun changes position
6. Strategically placed noticeboards can deaden noise from a doorway
7. Make sure you know the position of any lighting or heating controls that you are able to alter
8. If an alarm sounds announce to the players to stop all clocks and evacuate the building. It may be useful to the emergency services if you take a list of participants with you. If there is a power cut which affects visibility clocks should also be stopped. Make sure any visually impaired players know the reason for halting play!
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| Clocks and Time Controls1. A sticky clock button can be loosened by using a pencil and applying graphite to the point where the button enters the clock
2. Coming towards the time control look for games where there is equal time on both clocks, these are more likely to get into time ‘trouble’ where you will be required to score the game – but remember to consider the number of moves to be played as well. An initial check of those likely to be in time trouble should be done 20 minutes before the end of a session. It is more likely that lower graded players will need help to reconstruct so it is often beneficial to give these games a higher priority.
3. When doing a time scramble try to record both players’ moves, if this is not possible then record one players moves, if even this is not possible tick the moves, failing which count on your fingers
4. If you are spare during a time scramble stand behind the arbiter keeping score. Try to let them know you are there. You should keep your eye on the clock and let them know of a flag fall. This allows your colleague to concentrate on recording the moves.
5. Do not assume because a sensory board is being used that you do not need to record. These boards have been known not to cope with time scrambles.
6. Never wind an analogue clock fully, they will over-wind and not go.
7. A flag stuck in the up position can be freed by a sharp tap on the BOTTOM of the clock
8. When a clock’s hour hand is out of sync with the minute hand, it can usually be persuaded towards the correct hour mark by pushing the minute hand backwards against the flag. This requires some skill and should be done carefully.
9. Avoid leaning over a board when resetting a clock. Restart the clock from the side of the player nearer the clock
10. Regularly check that the clocks are working. This is easiest to do on an analogue clock when, if both players had taken the same time, both hands would be pointing to the 6 or 12. The minute hands should then be equidistant from the hour or half hour.
11. Label faulty clocks immediately – this prevents them being used by another arbiter!!
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| Pairings and Wall Charts1. Write numbers on charts and cards in red for White, black (or blue) for Black and green for Byes, this saves writing the colour and is easily recognised when deciding colour preference
2. When adding time at a second time control move the clock forward rather than back, this allows easy recognition of when the players are in the second period without having to look at the score sheet or the tournament hall clock. Usually the 1st time control finishes when the clock shows 6 o’clock, the 2nd at 7 o’clock.
3. On pairing cards mark floats with a dot at the top of the card (in the opponents number section) as well as the ‘float’ section, which is often at the bottom and not easily seen when doing the draw.
4. Plastic CD racks make good pairing card sorters
5. If the tournament is using a digital clock you have not used before, take time every round to practice adding 2 minutes
6. Before doing a pairing either check pairing cards against the wall chart for differences before doing a manual pairing or ensure that the results have been entered correctly if doing a computerised pairing. This can be done by entering results from the pairing sheet and checking from the scoresheet/result slip or vice versa. Do not check results with the same source as was used to enter them as this will only compound errors.
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| General Tips1. Do not be afraid to seek the advice of more experienced colleagues
2. Try to always give an appearance of being calm and in control of the situation. Players will react better and you will have fewer problems.
3. When putting down continuation sheets wait until a player has moved. The period when they are recording causes least disturbance
4. Wear soft soled shoes
5. Have a T-shirt or shirt with a pocket – for your pens.
6. Use ‘4 colour’ multi-pens – less to carry than several pens
7. Have spare pens and pencils to hand
8. Keep a copy of the laws handy
9. Correction ‘Mice’ are much better than fluid, no drying time
10. Do as much re-setting of clocks and putting out new scoresheets during play as possible. You may not have much time between rounds
11. Keep charts up to date – players are the best source of incorrectly recorded results being spotted early
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