Chess Player’s Instructor Charles Henry Stanley 1859

The Laws of Chess, given as follows, are, for the most part, precisely similar to those in universal acceptation by the Clubs of Great Britain, and Europe generally. The additions, or alterations, therein contained are rather explanatory than invasive ; and having the sanction of the New York Chess Club in full conclave, may, I think, be considered as binding upon Chess practice throughout the country.

To these laws, their principles, and even minutia, I take leave expressly to direct the attention of my young readers.

A strict compliance therewith will prevent the possibility of any conceivable misunderstanding across the chess board—an extremity which all lovers of the game would deprecate and deplore.

Some few hints or maxims for the guidance of young players, not possible to reduce to rule, I may yet venture to add.

As a matter of choice, where opportunity may offer, try your metal against more experienced players. In such cases, however, never refuse to take odds when offered. Under no circumstances perpetrate a deviation from the rules of the game. If you touch a piece, move it: and when placed, leave it where so deposited : no matter whether or no your game be thereby lost. A request for permission to retract a move is mean and unmanly.

Never permit yourself to show impatience at the length of time consumed by your adversary in considering his moves ; and bear in mind that, in order to become a good player yourself, you must not commence by attempting undue rapidity. Avoid, as much as possible, the exhibition of annoyance on experiencing defeat, or ,exultation in the event of success ; and, of all things, on such occasions as the former, do not complain of being " out of play," either in consequence of a " sick headache," or from having just risen from the dinner-table. '

Do not whistle, hum a tune, drum, or otherwise fidget at the chess-board. If in a player such conduct is exceptionable and disagreeable, in a looker-on it is intolerable.

Never touch a piece until your mind is made up where to put it.

Hovering over the board with your hand is not only inelegant, but the indecision so exhibited and cultivated is apt seriously to affect your play.

When having a physical superiority in pieces, it is, of course, under ordinary circumstances, to your advantage to exchange with your adversary pieces of equal value; but, in so doing, you must keep a sharp lookout for the applicability, on either side, of such pieces to the peculiar contingencies of the position.

I think that back games, so called when, having been lost or won, they are played over from a given point, had better be recurred to when by yourself. They are certainly never examined with the same attention on both sides as they would receive in actual play.

And now to the Laws of Chess.

Laws of Chess.

I.

POSITION OF THE BOARD.

The chess-board shall be so placed that each player has a white corner square at his right hand.

II.

CAPTURING A PAWN IN PASSING.

When a Pawn, in moving two steps, passes over a square commanded by an adverse Pawn, it may be captured by the adverse Pawn in passing, in the same manner as if it had moved but one square. When a player has no other move at command, capturing such Pawn is compulsory

III.

PAWN AT THE EIGHTH RANK.

Every Pawn, upon reaching the eighth or last rank, ceases to be a Pawn, and must be immediately exchanged for a Queen, a Kook, a Bishop, or a Knight—even though none of these pieces may have been previously lost.

IV.

CHECKING THE KING.

Whenever a player attacks the adverse King, he shall audibly utter the word check! either just before or at the time the attacking move is made.

In case the check is inaudibly announced, or not announced at all, the attacked King is neither obliged to move nor in any other way to parry the check.

A man touched by the adverse party, after an unannounced or inaudible check, need not be moved or captured.

If the player who has failed to announce check at the proper time, afterwards announce it, then the intervening moves of each party must be recalled, the check parried, and the game continued. If this be not practicable, the game shall then be abandoned as null and void, and the player who moved first in the annulled game, shall again have the first move.

If the check is announced but not given, the adversary's following move may be recalled and another made, provided the player who falsely announced check has not already touched one of his men for the purpose of making his next move.

V.

DRAWN GAME.

No game can be won except it end with a checkmate. The game is drawn, or won by neither party, in the following cases : ,

1. When one player gives perpetual check, or when both players insist upon a continual repetition of the same moves.

2. When either King is stale-mated—that is, when the King of one of the players is not in check and cannot, move to any square not commanded by an adverse man, and when that player possesses no other man which can be legally moved.

3. When neither party possesses force sufficient to effect mate.

VI.

MATING IN END-GAMES IN SIXTY MOVES.

In an end-game where one player remains with a King alone, or where the King and one or more pieces are opposed to the King and one or more pieces, the player having the inferior force shall have the privilege of requiring his adversary to give checkmate within sixty moves on both sides, to commence from the time the player gives notice that he shall count them. If this be not accomplished, the game is drawn.

This rule shall also be applicable to end-games, where a perfect equality of force exists, but which either party is unwilling to abandon as drawn.

VII..

FIRST MOVE AND CHOICE OF MEN.

At the beginning of the first game of a sitting or match, the first move, and at the desire of either player, the choice of men, shall be decided by lot. Each player retains the same men during the whole sitting or match, but the first move changes with every game. If the odds of a piece be given, the player giving the odds, unless it be otherwise expressly agreed, shall always have the first move.

VIII.

DURATION OF A GAME.

The time for consideration upon any move is not limited. Players who desire to limit the duration of their games shall previously agree upon the time allowable to each move, and the penalties for exceeding it.

IX.

INCORRECT ARRANGEMENT OF THF. BOARD OR MEN, ETC.

If it be discovered, before each player has made four moves, that the arrangement of the board or men is incorrect, or that a man has been omitted, the game, at the desire of either player, shall be recommenced ; but to do this after four moves have been completed, the consent of both parties shall be required.

If a player have moved first when he had no right so to do, the game must be recommenced if his adversary demand it, unless four moves shall have been made on each side ; after both parties have completed four moves, the game must be continued. This rule shall also apply to postponed games.

In games at odds, a wrong arrangement of the board or men may be corrected previous to the completion of the fourth move, as above. But if it be at any time discovered that the man given has not been removed from the board, the player receiving the odds shall decide whether he will recommence the game or continue it without odds. In a game where a certain number of moves are given, if the player receiving the odds neglect to make these moves, the mistake may be rectified at any time previous to the completion of the fourth move. After that time the game must be continued without any change.

X.

A MAN TOUCHED TO BE MOVED OR CAPTURED.

A man touched must be moved, and an adversary's man touched must be captured, unless the player touching the man previously says, J'adoube (or I replace). But any man accidentally misplaced or overturned, may be replaced in silence, without obliging the player replacing it, either to move or capture it. In castling, either the King or Rook may be first moved at the pleasure of the player.

A move is completed, and cannot be recalled as soon as the hand is withdrawn from the man moved—until then the man touched may be moved to any square. If a player, in this or any other respect, depart from the strict laws of chess, he cannot excuse himself by citing a similar violation of the laws by his adversary.

XI.

TOUCHING MOKE THAN ONE MAN, OB ONE WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED.

If a player touch more than one man, his opponent may decide which of the men touched shall be moved or captured, or instead may require the player touching the men, to move his King when it can be done without going into check.

If a man touched cannot, in accordance with the laws of the game, be moved, or if one of the opponent's men touched cannot be captured, then the player who commits the error must move his King.

The penalties resulting from the violation of this and the following laws must be enforced by the adverse player before he shall make his own next move. After that, except in cases where the game may be annulled, no penalty can be exacted. In cases where none of the above penalties can be exacted without violating some law of the game, there is no further penalty.

It is understood that in all cases where the penalty exacted, is the moving of the King, it must be moved without castling.

XII.

FALSE MOVES.

If a player capture one of his own men ; move one of his adversary's men ; or make any move which violates the laws of the game, his opponent may either allow the move to remain, permit the move to be recalled, compel the player capturing falsely to move the man touched correctly, or may compel him to move his King.

If a player castle improperly, his adversary may either allow the false castling to remain, permit his opponent to castle correctly, or he may replace the pieces, and require the moving of either the King or the Rook as he shall see fit.

If a player capture, either with his own man or one of his opponent's men, an adverse man illegally, his opponent may either allow the move to remain, permit the move to be recalled, compel the player capturing falsely to move the man touched correctly, or may compel him to move his King.

If a player, upon advancing a Pawn to the eighth rank, should accidentally exchange it for one of his adversary's pieces, or, if in placing his own piece upon the board, he should place it upon the wrong square, then the move shall be recalled, the Pawn replaced, and the King moved.

XIII.

MOVING INTO CHECK.

If a player place his King in check, his adversary shall immediately notify him of his error, otherwise the game, if the players cannot agree upon its continuation, must be annulled, and, without changing the first move, begun anew. If the player be immediately informed of his error, the King must then be moved to some other square. If a piece has been moved so as to discover check, and cannot be moved so that the check still remain covered, then the King must be moved, if it can be legally done.

XIV.

SUCCESSIVE MOVES BY THE SAME PLAYER.

If the same player make two or more moves in succession, his adversary may permit all the moves to remain, or any one of them at his pleasure. He may also oblige the player to recall all the moves, and he may decide which of the men touched shall be moved, or he may compel the moving of the King.

If a man be played, cither on the board or in a game by correspondence, to a square upon which a man of the same party already stands, the adverse party may permit the same man to be legally played, or may compel the King to move.

If the penalty be not immediately exacted, the game is annulled, unless the parties can agree upon the terms of its continuance, and must be recommenced without changing the first move.

XV.

GAMES BY CORRESPONDENCE, CONSULTATION, ETC.

An error commited in a game by correspondence, is to be treated in accordance with the spirit of these laws, except in cases provided for by previous arrangements between the contesting parties. The sending of a letter or message is equivalent to touching a piece; its arrival with the opposite party is the completion of the move. In games played by consultation, the players consulting are regarded as one party. A violation of the laws by one is a violation by all.

In playing without sight of the board, the blindfolded player is responsible for no fault committed by his representative at the board, but a move announced by himself is a move completed.

XVI.

GAMES AT ODDS.

In games at odds, the following regulations are to be observed :

1. When a Pawn is given, it shall be the King's Bishop's Pawn.

2. When a player undertakes to give mate with a certain Pawn, he can never exchange it for a piece, but must give mate before it reaches the eighth rank.

3. A player giving a Rook, cannot castle on the side from which the Rook is removed, unless it be previously so agreed.

4. If the odds consist of more than one move, the party receiving the odds, cannot, with those moves, play any of his men across the middle of the board.

XVII.

SPECTATORS.

Spectators shall neither by word or sign, take any part in, or express any opinion concerning the game.

XVIII.

CASES NOT PROVIDED FOR, ETC.

Disputed points, either arising in cases not provided for by these laws, or concerning the interpretation of the laws themselves, shall be referred to the spectators, or to a committee selected by the players.

Any or all of these laws can be temporarily set aside by previous and common agreement between the players.