

REPORT OF THE RULES COMMISSIONER

Dennis Doren, submitted on 8 May 2017

From June 2016 - May 2017

The Commission Membership

The following are the people who were selected and served this year as members of the Rules Commission:

IA SIM Thomas Biedermann, TD Committee Chair & Deputy Rules Commissioner; SIM Gerhard Binder, Rating Commissioner; IA Jean-Christophe Chazallette; IA IM Juan Alberto Martello; SIM Josef Mrkvicka, Auditor; IA Andrey Nikolaevich Pavlikov, World Cup 20 Tournament Officer; IA SIM Nikolay Poleschchuk; IA SIM Uwe Staroske, outgoing National Delegate (GER) & Qualifications Commissioner

Status of Regular Rules Commissioner Duties

During this past year, the Rules Commission collectively or I alone addressed the following regular duties:

- A. Kept Tournament Directors (TDs), Tournament Organizers (TOs), and Adjudicators informed of rule and procedural developments. This was typically accomplished through mass mailings.
- B. Ensured players were informed of a significant computational change in how title norms were to be determined, this being accomplished through a note on the ICCF home page.
- C. Responded to inquiries about rules and procedures from TDs, TOs, adjudicators, ICCF officials, and players.
- D. Updated most ICCF documents for 2017 based on Congress decisions and server procedural changes. This process included updating the Tournament Rules a second time during March to reflect the new rating and title norm computational systems, found in Appendices 1 and 2, accomplished with substantial guidance from Mariusz Wojnar, Gerhard Binder, and Austin Lockwood.
- E. Participated in offering input/answers to inquiries concerning server updates.
- F. Reviewed all new proposals for Congress 2017 (through the date of this report), specifically to ensure that any existing rule that would be affected by a proposal is mentioned in the proposal.
- G. Made requests to the Executive Board for rule clarifications. The following were the nature of those requests during this past year:

- (1) 19 November 2016: Concerning the cancellation of games as described by both TDMs (section 7), clarification that the phrases "not yet finished any game in the event" and "none of the player's games already finished" exclude by ETL (by either player) and by cancellation.
- (2) 19 November 2016: Within both TDMs, section 7, clarification of the phrase "never made a move" to mean made zero moves in all games in the event.
- (3) 24 November 2016: Clarified that proposal 2016-034 applies both to the open Olympiad and to the Ladies' Olympiad.
- (4) 27 November 2016: Clarified that the Thor Lovholt Team tournament does not have a mandated 4-year cycle (in keeping with the Olympiad) but has a more flexible schedule to be defined by the NTTC.
- (5) 27 November 2016: Clarified 2016-023 (Reverting the Champions League to Its Previous Format) concerning the intention to switch back to the historical names of the Champions leagues division and sections.
- (6) 4 December 2016: Clarified that the concept of the "ICCF-approved event" (from TR 8.3 - TR 8.5, as well as from the EB rule clarification a year ago) does not include the Free 2-game unrated matches.
- (7) 30 December 2016: Clarified the definition of "friendly match" for ICCF rule documents.
- (8) 1 March 2017: Clarified the extent to which the Congress approval of 2016-012 ("Allow changes to Playing Rules - Server only once in 2 years") was to be applied.
- (9) 6 March 2017: Clarification pertaining to withdrawal procedures was made with a correction made in the TDM-P, section 6.1.2.f., by deleting the phrase "there is no response within that time".
- (10) 2 April 2017: Clarification of title norm tournament requirements (TR Appendix 2, segment d) that the phrase "at least three ICCF affiliated federations" excludes isolated players from representing one of those federations.
- (11) 2 April 2017: Determined that the phrase "shall be members" (in TR Appendix 2, segment "e") does not clearly mean the flags under which players play, and that this ambiguity should be addressed by the Rules Commission and result in a clarifying Congress proposal.
- (12) 11 April 2017: Relevant to the TDMs, section 1.4, clarified that since a Level 2 TD was required to direct any event in which a norm could be earned previously (except where a GM norm could be earned, starting at CAT 7), then a Level 2 is also now needed to direct any minor norm category event.

(13) 11 April 2017: Relevant to the TDMs, section 1.4, clarified that an International Arbiter (IA) is needed for any event in which there is a GM-norm eligibility even if the event's overall Category was less than 7. (Due to the temporary lack of automation in this regard, the temporary method for implementing this rule involved requesting all Tournament Organizers to employ only IAs for any event that is Category 6+.)

(14) 26 April 2017: Clarified that Tournament Rule 1.0.8 ("ELO ratings used in these Rules refer to any of those rating lists published in the preceding 12-months.") refers to all ELO ratings that were first published during the 12 months preceding the start of the tournament, and not simply to any ELO rating that was valid during those 12 months.

New Projects

A. Concerning the Triple Block (TriBl) time control system (as ongoing Chair of a Work Group):

(1) Prepared the server specifications (with input from Austin Lockwood, Michael Millstone, and Gino Figlio). Scheduled to be working with Martin Bennedik and Austin Lockwood on the implementation prior to Congress 2017.

(2) Prepared 3 brief manuals explaining TriBl system procedures, one each for TDs, TOs, and players.

B. Gathered ideas suggested by others during the year for consideration by the Rules Commission for potential Congress proposals; presented those ideas to the Commission; wrote and submitted Congress proposals for the ideas garnering at least majority support (while rejecting the others).

C. The Rules Commission had two different detailed discussions about how the ICCF might address the issue of collusion between players. There was full agreement that collusion was a violation of the rules. However, despite both a general and very specific set of parameters being discussed, no recommendation for Congress resulted.

D. In service to the World Tournament Director, in keeping with the issue reported to Congress last year, developed server specifications for a new extensively automated withdrawal system; revised those specifications based on feedback and recommendations from Martin Bennedik and Austin Lockwood; worked with those people to facilitate the server's programming.

E. In service to the World Tournament Director, monitored and serviced the newly developed **automated adjudication system**; manually organized all adjudication appeals given these are not automated. **This past year's data (3 May 2016 - 7 May 2017) concerning adjudications follow:**

(1) **Dates of service**: The system came online 4 April 2016. The first adjudication was completed on 3 May 2016. Therefore, the following data, through the date of this report, pertains to **about 1 year of activity**.

(2) Pool of adjudicators: The original number of volunteers in April 2016 was 98. One needed to withdraw his participation prior to any assignments due to personal reasons. During March/April 2017, a set of another 16 adjudicators were put on "inactive" status for reasons described below. There are **currently 81 active adjudicators** including 19 GMs, 61 SIMs, and 1 IM (the last rated 2511).

(3) Among 81 active adjudicators, the self-reported languages understood include **26 different languages**: English (79), German (39), French (16), Russian (13), Spanish (12), Dutch (7), Italian (7), Czech (4), Swedish (4), Norwegian (3), Slovak (3), Ukrainian (3), Finnish (2), Hebrew (2), Portuguese (2), Bengali (1), Bokmål (1), Bulgarian (1), Danish (1), Greek (1), Hindi (1), Hungarian (1), Latvian (1), Luxembourgish (1), Polish (1), & Romanian (1).

(4) Number of MFs represented by the active adjudicators: **31**

(5) Number of completed adjudications: **277** as of 7 May 2017 (In last year's report, the projected annual rate was about 260 adjudications per year.)

(6) Timeliness (once all material is available for adjudicator**):

(a) Average time per completed adjudication:

(i) mean # of days = **5 days**

(ii) median # of days = **3 days**

(iii) mode # of days = **0 days**

(**Meaning after players have filed claims and analysis. Those earlier things typically occur well within the regularly allowed 7 days + 14 days.)

(b) **Total number of adjudications taking longer than 30 days: 4 of 277** (including one where the adjudicator forgot to record the result that had been determined on timely basis).

(c) Average # of days till completion per adjudicator (once all material is available):

0 - 2 days: 42 of 83 (51%) adjudicators with at least 1 completed assignment

3 - 8 days: 26 of 83 (31%) " " " " " "

10 - 14 days: 6 of 83 (7%) " " " " " "

19 - 26 days: 3 of 83 (4%) [Most of the cases taking this long were "early" cases.]

37 days: 1 of 83 (1%) [Reason for one adjudication: adjudicator forgot to record adjudication outcome]

[Total percentage averaging completion within 1 week: 78%; but better recently]

(7) Three (3)-person Adjudication Review Panels. By rules, there is a 3-person panel review of the "reasonableness" of any adjudicated loss for a deceased/seriously ill player. There were 4 such reviews during April - June 2016. However, this whole past year **only saw 2 such reviews**:

(a) 30 August 2016: 2-1 upholding original finding

(b) 21 March 2017: 3-0 upholding original finding

(8) Number and outcome of adjudication appeals:

Seven (7) [or eight (8)] filed during the past year; only 2 to date with changed result:

(i) one (1) was currently in progress as this report was written

(ii) two (2) were completed with the appeal adjudicator supporting the original finding

(iii) one (1) resulted in changed outcome to remedy the fact the server should have automatically determined a draw (there was a win claim with no analysis from non-withdrawn player, along with a draw claim)

(iv) one (1) original adjudication decision was overturned by appeal adjudicator (the original adjudicator analyzed the wrong position through transcription error)

(v) two (2) appeals were denied due to player's failure to submit analysis with original claim

[(vi) one (1) was retracted by player after it was explained that the players' rating difference does not determine the adjudication result]

(9) Reason for making 16 adjudicators "inactive": The server was programmed to keep the frequency of assignments to each adjudicator as even as possible, after taking other factors into consideration. An unanticipated problem developed. Many assignments were taking way too long to find an adjudicator who would accept the assignment. What was happening was that the server kept making requests of the same set of adjudicators who were actively or passively declining (just letting 4 days go by) all assignments; this occurring because these people had fewer completed assignments than the other adjudicators. To correct this situation, I informed these adjudicators that their status was being changed to "inactive", a status they could change back to "active" simply by informing me they were ready to take assignments. Within a short period of time, the unnecessary delays in assigning adjudications went away. There has been no such problem since. Those "inactive" adjudicators are still invited to make themselves "active" as soon as they are ready to accept assignments.

(10) Solicited feedback from adjudicators:

On 23 April 2017, all active adjudicators were asked for feedback concerning how the system was working, and ideas for improvement. Of those who responded, the feedback was quite regularly positive, with some ideas for improvement (the first two listed below already being planned):

- (a) allow place for recording notes/comments explaining the basis for the adjudication decision;
- (b) automate adjudication appeal process (including a process to keep original adjudicator informed);
- (c) make players' analyses available in pgn format (Chessbase program readable);
- (d) develop a downloadable link to pgn of the game/position without the event's and players' names;
- (e) develop method by which adjudicator can later access all positions he decided on;
- (f) quick screening to eliminate positions with "obvious" outcomes (such as those with "decisive material advantage");
- (g) inform adjudicators if a multi-round event is involved (so they know of relative urgency);
- (h) make it public to new adjudicators that adjudicators learn a lot when judging positions/games (!)

The ideas mentioned repetitively were "a" through "d"; the others being mentioned once. There was also an idea from an ICCF Official to report players' ratings in bands (such as 2200, 2300, 2400) to help ensure anonymity of players during adjudications.

Completion of prior ACO Chair activity

Prior to leaving the ACO Chair position last year, I was already an active participant concerning a potential disciplinary issue involving a TD. I therefore remained involved until the conclusion of this issue. Ultimately, this meant I was involved in the decision to suspend the TD role from one person, working with the General Secretary and the WTD in that regard. That suspension is for what was considered the minimum time period of 2 years.

Final Comment

Just as in my report last year, I wish to thank Congress for giving me the honor and privilege of serving the ICCF in this role. It has continued to be rewarding to know that my efforts serve the international correspondence chess community and this great organization. Thank you.

Dennis Doren, Rules Commissioner