



The Friendly Post

News from ICCF-US Friendly Matches from around the world - Issue 42, December 2022

Greetings from ICCF-US Friendly Match Central. This is the newsletter concerning everything related to ICCF-US Friendly Matches. Thanks to your ongoing interest in the Friendly Matches, this newsletter has been arriving at your email-doorstep 4 times per year for over 10 years!

To explain to any new recipients, Friendly Matches are team versus team chess contests (involving teams affiliated with different nations) where the overall team outcomes do not matter beyond bragging rights. Everyone is eligible to play. The ICCF-US uses both a standing set of interested players and new participants in virtually every match. Each match participant plays two **rated** games, one with white and one with black, against a single opponent of nearly identical rating. The fee to participate is \$5 per match. You are invited to participate!

STOP: HOLD THE PRESSES!

A USA PLAYER IS THE NEW WORLD CHAMPION!!!!

This may not be directly related to ICCF-US Friendly Matches, but it is fabulous for the ICCF-US. **Jon Edwards**, now a GM, just won the 32nd World Champion Final and the title of World Champion!! GM Edwards previously won the title of US Correspondence Chess Champion. He is also a great guy, and generous with his time. At our request, he analyzed one of his very recent friendly match games for this newsletter. You can find that game with his commentary and analysis in this issue! Congratulations to our new World Champion!



CONTEST WINNERS

Last issue, we ran a contest – requiring the accurate count of the different words in that newsletter that began with the letters t-e-n, to celebrate our 10-year newsletter anniversary. There were 9 winners, listed here alphabetically:



Aaron Anderson, Kyle Biedermann, David Cofer, Robert Cousins, Daniel Fisher,

Jeffrey French, Jason A. Smith, Matthew Tedesco, and Robert Weiser

They each won a free entry to an ICCF-US friendly match. In fact, all but one has already been placed into such a match – using their free entries! By the way, the correct answer for the contest was, as you may have suspected, 10 different words that began with the letters t-e-n.



A NEW PUZZLE FOR YOU

Online you can find the following saying attributed to Aristotle: “**When you are lonely, when you feel yourself an alien in the world, play chess. This will raise your spirits and be your counselor in war**”. Putting aside the use of the English language, how can we know Aristotle did not say anything like this? Write your answer to Dennis at dmdorenchess@gmail.com.

Note: Please see the [notice about the new rule](#) of high relevance to friendly matches, [page 15](#).

Upcoming Friendly Matches

A friendly match versus **Hungary** is nearly fully organized. The USA has not had a friendly match versus this country in over 22 years (exactly how much over is not known!). That is because Hungary declined previous invitations from the USA (during our World Tours 1 and 2).

New invitations were sent to **Portugal** and **South Africa**. We have not yet heard back from those invitations. South Africa has regularly declined our invitations (typically by not responding), but so had Hungary. So, we shall see.

The match versus **Sweden** was slightly postponed – from January to February. That means I expect to be sending out invitations for this match in January, as I must wait for the Swedish team roster before I can do that.

The advertised match versus **Lithuania** is still “postponed”, a status that is expected for some time to come. Hence, it will not be listed here again until there is something new to report.

Matches can go from an idea to an active reality within any 90-day period – that is, between newsletters – just like the Hungary match did. So, if you have not already let it be known that you want to play, be sure to let us know by writing to Dennis at dmdorenchess@gmail.com!

“The older I grow, the more I value pawns.” - Paul Keres

“A pawn ahead is worth a little trouble.” - Wilhelm Steínitz

Around the World a Third Time!!

The USA Friendly Match World Tour 3

Whether you want to “collect countries”, wish to have an opportunity to communicate with people from your ancestors’ home country, or just like the opportunity to meet people from around the world, the Friendly Matches bring you that opportunity. During our third World Tour (WT3), we again plan to make offers for Friendly Matches to all ICCF member federations: all 54 of them (besides us). Come go around the world with US!

So far in WT3:

We have at least started play against the following (19) countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cape Verde*, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Philippines, Russia*, Wales
[* No longer a member federation]

Matches are scheduled versus (a) Lithuania, start date to be determined and (b) Sweden starting in February. A match versus (c) Hungary is currently being organized.

Active invitations were sent to (a) Portugal and (b) South Africa.

Our **invitation was declined or received no response** by (a) Panama.

Countries (30) yet to be included in WT3: Argentina, Aruba, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, England, Estonia, Greece, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Romania, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and Ukraine.



"A pawn, when separated from his fellows, will seldom or never make a fortune." - Philidor

The Friendly Matches that are Already Ongoing...

You can always find the current results from any of our Friendly Matches by visiting www.iccf.com, Tables and Results, Friendly Matches, but this newsletter continues to make it easy for you to stay up-to-date. The first three issues of "The Friendly Post" listed all our matches from 1/1/07 to the date of newsletter circulation. (You can find those 3, and all other issues of "The Friendly Post" at www.iccfus.com). There became too many Friendly Matches to keep doing that, so each issue now lists only those currently in progress or just completed since the last newsletter. The current standings (through 12/12/2022) are as follows:

	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Server/Email/Postal</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Result (USA v. other)</u>
1.	England	Server	6/16/2020	102.5 - 106.5 (1 ongoing game)
2.	Romania	Server	4/8/2021	34.5 - 44.5 (1 ongoing game)
3.	Slovenia	Server	6/6/2021	18.5 - 22.5 (1 ongoing game)
4.	Spain	Server	6/18/2021	35.0 - 45.0 (4 ongoing games)
5.	Japan	Server	9/30/2021	14.0 - 8.0 (2 ongoing games)
6.	Indonesia	Server	10/31/2021	22.5 - 24.5 (1 ongoing game)
7.	Cuba	Server	11/29/2021	71.5 - 85.5 (3 ongoing games)
8.	NCA/ECU/GUA/CPV	Server	1/2/2022	12.5 - 6.5 (3 ongoing games)
9.	Russia	Server	1/9/2022	52.0 - 48.0 (4 ongoing games)
10.	Australia	Server	3/14/2022	55.5 - 37.5 (9 ongoing games)
11.	France	Server	3/23/2022	38.0 - 33.0 (11 ongoing games)
12.	Belgium	Server	3/26/2022	32.0 - 29.0 (3 ongoing games)
13.	Mexico	Server	6/6/2022	9.5 - 14.5 (10 ongoing games)
14.	Wales	Server	7/25/2022	24.0 - 21.0 (25 ongoing games)
15.	Finland	Server	7/26/2022	13.0 - 13.0 (39 ongoing games)
16.	Germany	Server	10/12/2022	33.5 - 49.5 (245 ongoing games)

TOTAL USA RESULTS

Currently (as of 12/12/2022) = **362 ongoing games**

Completed games since 1/1/2007* = 8990 games (by the time you read this, call it 9000!)

Completed games during past 10 years = 7842 games
(over 2 per day, every day, for 10 years!!)

Total score since 1/1/2007* = 4445.5 – 4544.5 **(49.4%)**

(* 1/1/2007 is the beginning of USA friendly match records on the ICCF server)



"An isolated pawn spreads gloom all over the chessboard." - Tartakover

Highlights and Interesting Tidbits:

- (1) The USA teams' match outcomes this quarter were vastly better than they were last quarter! We won 3 matches with another 2 being brought to the verge of wins for us as well (meaning even a draw from among multiple remaining games will give the USA a win). Five wins including near wins is a fantastic quarter. We also tied 1 and lost 2. By the way, this tie (against **Peru**) was only the 5th tie we have had among 116 friendly matches despite the pairings being made with near equal ratings for virtually all opponents!
- (2) Our new wins for this quarter were against **Japan**, **NCA/ECU/GUA/CPV**, and **Australia**. In all three matches, the USA team took an early lead and never gave it up. Versus **Australia**, we took developed such a large lead that we can proclaim we won with 9 games still in progress! Congratulations to the USA teams in these matches!
- (3) Our two losses this quarter both came from close matches. It went down to the last few games in matches against **Austria** and **Indonesia** before we succumbed.
- (4) We have almost won our match against **Russia**. This would be a first win for the USA against this country across multiple matches. We need only a single draw out of the 4 remaining games to claim this win. Go USA!!

- (5) The same situation exists versus **Belgium**. With 3 remaining games, even a draw will give the USA another win. We also have not won against this country in recent time. Keep pressing USA!
- (6) The USA has also accomplished quite a lead this quarter versus **France**. We had been tied as of last newsletter, but the USA now leads in this match by 5 points! There are still 11 ongoing games, so this win is not yet assured. Keep going for it USA!
- (7) We also came back from a small deficit versus **Finland**. The match is now tied, with a lot of play (20 games) yet to occur. Go USA!
- (8) We even came from behind to gain the lead versus **Wales**! Last quarter we were 2 points back but now hold a 3-point lead. Again, though, there are lots of games (25) remaining in this match.
- (9) Unfortunately, the opposite has occurred versus **Mexico**. The USA was ahead by a point 3 months ago. We are now down by 5 points. With only 10 ongoing games, that lead looks rather large.

Friendly Match (versus game) win/loss record

(Since 1/1/07) 57 wins, 54 losses, 5 ties (= **51.3% for USA**)

USA Won	USA Lost**	USA Tied
Argentina (2010)	Aruba (2020)	Argentina (2019)***
Argentina (2016)	Austria (2014)	Norway (2013)***
Australia/New Zealand (2012)	Austria (2021)	Peru (2021)***
Australia (2016)	Belarus (2016)	Slovakia (2020)***
Australia (2018)	Belgium (2015)	Wales (2019)***
Australia (2022)*	BeNeLux (2020)	
Belarus (2021)	Canada (2019)	
Brazil (2016)	Croatia (2015)	
Brazil (2020)	Cuba (2013)	
British CCA (2016)	Cuba (2015)	
Bulgaria (2016)	Cuba (2018)	
Bulgaria (2021)	Cuba (2021)*	
Canada (2014)	Czech Republic (2011)	
Cape Verde (2013)	Czech Republic (2013)	
Denmark (2014)	Czech Republic (2019)	
England (2008)	Denmark (2018)	
England (2012)	Denmark (2021)	
Estonia (2016)	England (2020)*	
Estonia (2020)	Finland (2018)	
Finland (2009)	France (2010)	
France (2009)	Germany (2008 – Women's only)	

Hong Kong (2010)
 India (2014)
 India (2019)
 Indonesia (2016)
 Israel (2016)
 Israel (2021)
 Japan (2013)
 Japan (2017)
 Japan (2021)*
 Latvia (2015)
 Latvia (2020)
 Lithuania (2015)
 Mexico (2020)
 NCA/ECU/GUA/CPV (2022)*
 Netherlands (2013)
 Netherlands (2018)
 New Zealand (2020)
 Panama (2013)
 Peru (2013)
 Portugal (2013)
 Portugal (2018)
 Romania (2008)
 Romania (2013)
 SchemingMind (2018)
 Scotland (2008)
 Scotland (2016)
 Scotland (2020)
 Slovakia (2014)
 Slovenia (2015)
 Spain (2016)
 Sweden (2016)
 Sweden (2018)
 Turkey (2015)
 Venezuela (2013)
 Wales (2013)
 Yorkshire (2018)

Germany (2011)
 Germany (2014)
 Germany (2020)
 Iceland (2014)
 Iceland (2019)
 Indonesia (2021)*
 Israel (2014)
 Italy (2010)
 Italy (2017)
 Mexico (2017)
 Netherlands (2017)
 Norway (2019)
 Panama (2015)
 Panama (2016)
 Philippines (2021)
 Philippines B (2021)
 Poland (2015)
 Romania (2021)*
 Russia (2013)
 Russia (v. Zone 3) (2017)
 Slovenia (2019)
 Slovenia (2021)*
 Spain (2008)
 Spain (2021)*
 Sweden (2007)
 Switzerland (2014)
 Switzerland (2020)
 Ukraine (2010)
 Ukraine (2015)
 Ukraine (2018)
 Venezuela (2014)
 Venezuela (2017)
 Wales (2016)

* Still officially ongoing, but the final team outcome is already determined.

** Chess960 matches versus Germany and Russia are not included in this list because it is a different game coupled with the very large rating differences in these matches. The USA lost both matches.

*** After 116 completed matches, where pairings were made with as equal ratings as possible, that there have been only 5 tied results.

"The pawns are the soul of the game." - Philidor

"Nothing so easily ruins a position as pawn moves." - Tarrasch



Featured Game

Our featured game this issue is from none other than our new World Champion! He was asked to analyze a draw from a friendly match game he recently played, a match he played to help prepare himself for the WCCC Finals. All comments and annotations are by World Champion Jon Edwards.

Jon Edwards (2519) - Alexandr Alexandrovich Korolev (2516)

[C47] Belarus-USA, 09.03.2021

[ICCF Game](#)

Our four-game match became a two-game match when the Russian war against Ukraine broke out. I know that I was not alone in not wanting to play on pretending that the war could be ignored. Still, we did get in two of the four games, and they were both very interesting.

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 [The Vienna? Why not? The traditional Nf3 lines would have led against this opponent to the Berlin or the Petrov. I used to play the Bishop's Opening in my youth and indeed, even in my US Championship win. There are plenty of possible transpositions and, armed with all my tools, some interesting, new ideas. Unfortunately, in the Bishop's Opening, Black has lines that easily hold.]

2...Nf6 [Other responses permit the game to transpose into lines with a true Vienna Game flavor or into variations of the King's Gambit Declined.]

3.g3 [Certainly a strange choice, but very much a part of my World Final approach. By selecting this variation, I avoid the Petroff, the Berlin, and the Marshall Gambit, none of which offer white enough of an advantage.]

3...d5 [Certainly the most critical response, although Osipov instead played 3...Bc5 in our World Final encounter. That game was an odyssey, 119 moves in length. I sadly did not win it, but I can safely report that I gave it my all.]

4.exd5 Nxd5 5.Bg2 Nxc3 [5...Be6?! prematurely posts the bishop and leaves b7 unanchored. To avoid the following line, Krishnan Sasikiran instead tried 5...Nf6 against me in the Kurt Stein Memorial. Remarkably, after 6.Nf3 Nc6 we arrived by transposition to a line in the Scandinavian(!): 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qd8 4.g3 Nf6 5.Nf3.]

6.bxc3 [I find this position very appealing. There is relatively little theory. White's developmental edge is pronounced, and while white will need to cope with three pawn islands, the b-file provides potentially interesting and early play for the rook.]



Position after 6.bxc3

6...Bc5 7.Nf3 Nc6 8.0-0 0-0 9.Re1 [There are interesting move order possibilities worthy of exploration, and that's a really good reason to try this out in a friendly match.]

9...Qf6 [There are only 170 games in ChessBase's Online Database here and so, of course, I played through them all. Don't run away from data, I tell my students.]

10.d3 [10.Rb1 is an example of a variation that I'd be willing to try if I ever get back here.]



Position after 10.d3

10...Bg4 11.h3 Bh5 12.g4 [12.Be3 was tried by Mamedyarov twice]

12...Bg6 13.Bg5 Qd6 14.Nh4 [Aiming to transform white's Bg2 into a monster.]

14...Bb6 15.Rb1 [The right square for the rook, but my timing may be off. I am sure that the recent GM games had an impact on the timing of this move, but perhaps we correspondence players can inform their play!]



Position after 15.Rb1

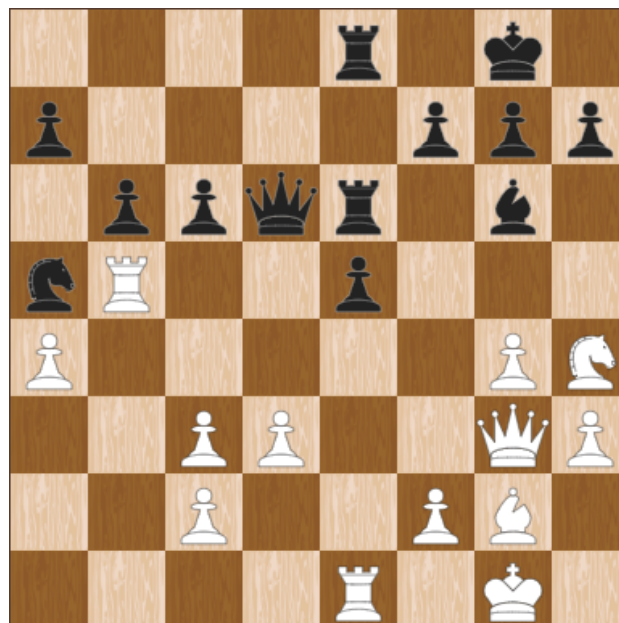
15...Rae8 16.Be3 [Aiming to reach an active endgame with the light-squared bishop pitted against his knight.]

16...Re6 17.a4 Rfe8 18.Qd2 Na5 [The engines give white a small edge here, which is about as much as white can hope for in such non-standard openings. Let's Check says that eight players have examined this position with an engine. Golly. Are folks starting to pay attention to my games?]

19.Rb5 [The right idea but almost certainly not the correct sequence. I am hoping to reach fixed pawn structures with enough pieces left to maneuver around for a while. But here, Black gains the second minor piece exchange.]

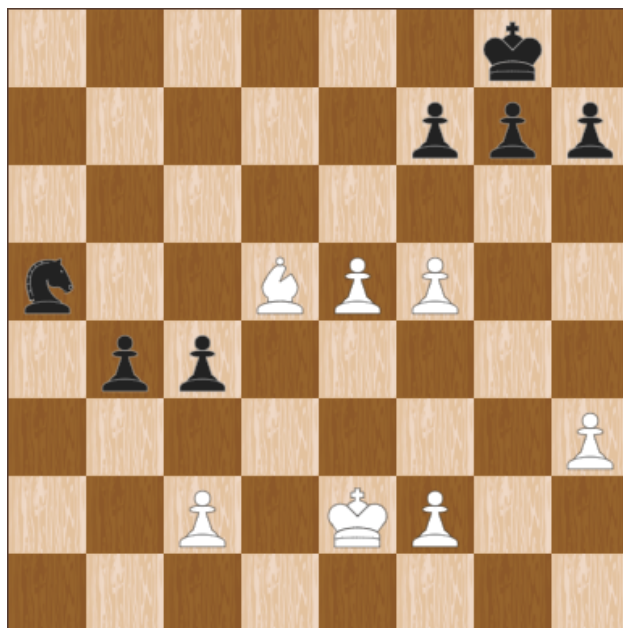
19...Bxe3 20.Qxe3 b6 [We've reached the dreaded 0.00 evaluation around through here, but there's no reason to end the game quite yet. I truly like my bishop here and the weaknesses in white's structure are not easy to exploit.]

21.Qg3 c6 [Sadly, there's no way to fix the pawn on the light square.]



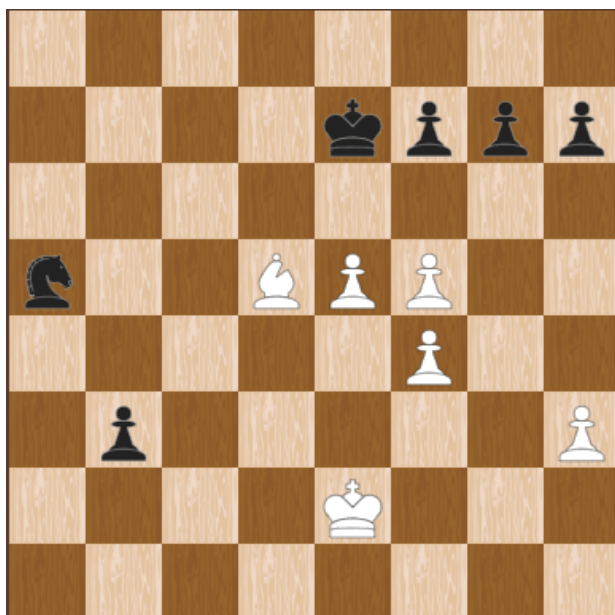
Position after 21...c6

22.Rb4 c5 23.Rbb1 c4 24.Nf5 Bxf5 25.gxf5 R6e7 26.d4 Qf6 27.Rb5 exd4 28.Rxe7 Qxe7 29.cxd4 Qf6 30.Re5 Rxe5 31.Qxe5 Qxe5 32.dxe5 a6 33.Kf1 b5 34.axb5 axb5 35.Ke2 b4 36.Bd5 [As good as it gets for me. The bishop dominates the knight, I like my central pawns, and I'd likely be winning were my king just slightly more active. Could I have found a way to pick up a tempo earlier?]



Position after 36.Bd5

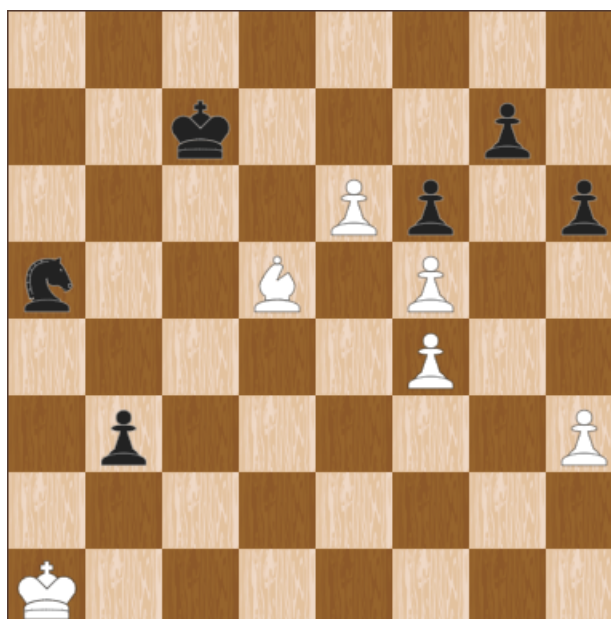
36...Kf8 37.f4 b3 38.cxb3 cxb3 39.Kd3 Ke7



Position after 39...Ke7

[The rest of this long game requires no comment. I will win a pawn, but the extra pawn will be on the f-file. Once the white pawns are fixed on light squares, the nice bishop loses its luster.]

40.h4 f6 41.e6 Kd6 42.Kc3 Ke7 43.Kb2 Kd6 44.Kc1 Ke7 45.Kb1 Kd6 46.h5 h6 47.Ka1 Kc7 ½ - ½



Position after 47...Kc7

[Note: Long-term readers of this newsletter may realize that this is the THIRD time a featured game, always from an ICCF friendly match, was a game played and analyzed by an ICCF World Champion!]

The Triple Block time control system has come to the ICCF!

Have you heard about the "Triple Block" time control system? The Triple Block system, most often abbreviated as "TB", was developed by an ICCF work group specifically appointed during the 2015 Congress to address a variety of complaints about the standard time control system. (There were 6 different proposals during the 2015 Congress alone for changes in the ICCF time control system.) The new system was approved for trials by the 2016 Congress, and officially approved by the 2020 Congress. Since then, hundreds of events have used the system without significant problem.

Some of our recently started Friendly Matches are using this system. Some of our as-yet-to-be scheduled Friendly Matches will also use this new time control system.

In brief, the Triple Block system gives you your reflection time, your leave time, and some additional time right from the beginning. The time keeping is simplified in that there is no doubling of reflection time (as there is currently after 20 days without a move), no 40+ day loss by default and therefore no registering to be allowed to go beyond that time limit, no watching your time at each 10-move interval, and no recording of leave time. Instead, each player has far more control of his/her reflection time. Problematic play related to the "dead man's

defense" is also lessened. And you will typically have more reflection time per move available to you than you currently do!

The rules and procedures for the TB system are incorporated as Appendix 3 in the document "ICCF Rules".



NEW RULE PERTAINING TO FRIENDLY MATCHES

The ICCF Congress (its governing body, consisting of the set of National Delegates from all member federations) **voted to eliminate the withdrawal system** (the system that involved accepted withdrawals, silent withdrawals, and other unaccepted withdrawals; each with its own period of suspension from all ICCF play). **In its stead, players are penalized any time they let a game be lost by exceeding the scheduled time limit (what is termed an "exceeding of the time limit", or ETL).** If the player is not already on such a suspension, then the player who allows a game to go ETL is placed immediately on a 30-day suspension from being allowed to register for any new event on the server. If the player was already on such a suspension and lets another game go ETL, then the suspension is for 90 days from the time of the most recent ETL. Unlike previous (withdrawal system) suspensions, players are allowed to continue playing existing games while an ETL-related suspension.

This all applies to friendly matches! You cannot play in a new friendly match if at the time it is going online you are under such a suspension! It will not matter if you were told you by Dennis that had a slot on a team if the server will not allow your registration! It is your responsibility to watch your reflection time in every game you play.

Watch you game time management. The server quite typically gives you many warnings before your game goes ETL.

By the way, if you abandon your games, you can still be suspended from all ICCF play (including ongoing games) by the World Tournament Director. Don't abandon your games, even in "just" one event!

Where to Find Us

The ICCF-US home website is at www.iccfus.com. You can always find copies of "*The Friendly Post*" at that site, with a link on the top in the home page. The server for playing games is at www.iccf.com.

Contact Dennis Doren at dmdorenchess@gmail.com concerning anything related to the Friendly Matches.



The People Behind the Organization

Thanks to the people who keep it all running, the ICCF-US Administrators:

Grandmaster Jason Bokar, Director

Senior International Master Tom Biedermann, Deputy Director & Treasurer

International Master Corky Schakel, Registrations Director

Grandmaster Carl Siefring, Invitational Facilitator

Senior International Master Dan Perry, Webmaster

International Master Bob Rizzo, Norms and Communications Organizer

Yours truly, **IM Dennis Doren**, Friendly Matches Organizer (dmdorenchess@gmail.com)



How Do I Get On A Team?

Getting selected to play on a USA Team in a Friendly Match takes almost no effort. Just let me know you are interested! Send an email to dmdorenchess@gmail.com and say you wish to play in a Friendly Match. When I have a team slot for you (meaning there is an opponent with about the same rating as your current one), I will let you know. You can also let me know of any specific country you wish to play against, but you do not have to do that.

When I have a specific team placement to offer you, you will receive an email from me - sent to the same address you have listed on the ICCF server. (Don't forget to update any email address changes!) My email will offer you a position on a team in a Friendly Match against a specifically listed country.

Please know that you need to respond to that email, and typically to do so **within 3 days** of my having sent it! I have a lot of positions to fill while all the members of the opposing team simply wait for me to complete my task. That is why there is a time frame for your response. If I do not hear from you within the specified time, I will offer your slot to someone else. However, even if you do not want, or cannot take the offered position, I strongly request that you do me the courtesy of a quick reply saying so. In that way, I can make an offer of "your" team position to someone else right away.

After you accept your offered position, you will get a reply email from me telling you what you need to pay and how to pay it. Please do NOT pay anything to anyone for a Friendly Match before you receive this email from me. "Pre-paying" only makes our administrative task more complicated, not easier. You will be asked to pay your fee before the match starts.

Finally, you will automatically receive your pairings, including an email from the ICCF server informing you that the match has begun and who you are paired against.

That is it! Let me know your interest, accept my invitation for you to play in a specific match, pay your fee, and enjoy your games!

You Can Play on the USA Team in a Friendly Match!

You, too, can play in a Friendly Match, no matter the degree to which you have played in an ICCF-US event of any kind previously. Each match consists of two **rated** games (one white, one black) against the same opponent who is very close in rating to yours. The total fee is \$5 for your participation per match. Just contact Dennis Doren, the ICCF-US Friendly Match Organizer, at dmdorenchess@gmail.com and tell him your specific interest in playing.

Do **NOT** send any money to Dennis or anyone else at this point to pay for your participation! You will only need to pay (through Paypal, money order, or by check) when your placement on a USA team in a specific Friendly Match has been confirmed by Dennis. Dennis will tell you when that is.