



# The Friendly Post

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## **News from ICCF-US Friendly Matches from around the world - Issue 21, September 2017**

Greetings from ICCF-US Friendly Match Central. 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 regular fee to participate is \$5 per match. You're invited to participate!

### **The World Champions play Friendly Matches!**

This issue, marking the beginning of our 6th year of quarterly newsletters (!) is dedicated to the World Champions, those rare individuals among us who rise to the top.

#### Chess "would be laughable, were it not so serious" - Emanuel Lasker

Did you know that even the World Champions play ICCF Friendly Matches? It's true. In fact, the current World Champion (WC-28) GM Leonardo Ljubičić played in two different Friendly Matches at the same time he was playing in the WCCC 28 Finals!

**In this issue, we are honored to present a self-annotated game from the World Champion-28 himself!!** He played this game in a Friendly Match that ended just a half year ago - after he had become the World Champion. See the featured game section later in this issue.

At Congress this year was a second World Champion (WC-11), GM Fritz Baumbach. He not only plays in many Friendly Matches, he recently played in a match against the USA (in which our own SIM Tom Biedermann secured two draws against him). WC-11 Baumbach is

playing in a Friendly Match at the time of this newsletter's circulation (that is, Germany - Poland)!

Besides for these two Champions, last year's Congress attendees included two other World Champions as well. GM Marjan Šemrl (WC-24) played in a Friendly Match as recently as one year prior to his starting the WCCC Finals that resulted in his becoming World Champion. GM Pertti Lehtikoinen (WC-20) played in a Friendly match in 2015, just four years after winning the World Champion title.

I am not going to say that playing in Friendly Matches will make you World Champion. But it seems if the Friendly Matches are good for the World Champions, it seems reasonable to conclude they are good for the rest of us, too!



The highest art of the chessplayer lies in not allowing your opponent to show you what he can do.- Garry Kasparov

### Upcoming Friendly Matches

Here are the upcoming Friendly Matches that are currently planned:

- (1) **Hong Kong** - This was scheduled to start this past summer. I never received their team roster, but will continue to try.
- (2) **Italy** - scheduled to start in November 2017.
- (3) **Ukraine** - scheduled to start in late January or early February 2018.
- (4) **Sweden** - scheduled to start March 2018
- (5) Anticipated challenges to be extended in the near future: **Cape Verde & Finland**

Please remember that Friendly Matches can first be scheduled, organized, and started in between the publication of these newsletters, and in fact often are. (The Netherlands match just started was one such example.) Therefore, if you want to play in the Friendly Matches, make sure you let Dennis know (at [dmdorenchess@gmail.com](mailto:dmdorenchess@gmail.com)).

**Chess is one of the few arts where composition takes place simultaneously with performance. - Frank Brady, writing about Bobby Fischer**

### **The US Friendly Match World Tour 2 (WT2): "Go Around the World with US"**

We recently completed the ICCF World Tour by extending invitations to all 55 of the other ICCF Member Federations (MFs) and playing all takers. We are now in the midst of our second "Go Around the World with US" tour. To date, we engaged with 20 MFs (and 1 non-MF team), and have 35 MFs to complete "WT2":

(1) We have started play or at least scheduled a match versus Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Netherlands Panama, Peru, Russia, Spain, Sweden, and the Ukraine. This is besides the British Correspondence Chess Association, an international CC club.

(2) Invitations were extended but declined (either actively or passively) by: Chile, Ecuador, Greece, Guatemala, & Nicaragua.

**Are you "Going Around the World with US"?**



If you wish to succeed, you must brave the risk of failure.- Garry Kasparov



## 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](http://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 of 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](http://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 9/12/2017) are as follows:

	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Server/Email/Postal</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Result (USA v. other)</u>
1.	<b>Croatia</b>	Server	6/25/15	19.0 - 26.0 (1 game still ongoing)
2.	<b>Panama</b> (rematch)	Server	10/15/15	24.5 - 35.5 (2 games still ongoing)
3.	<b>Australia</b>	Server	3/1/16	44.5 - 32.5 (3 games still ongoing)
4.	<b>British CCA</b>	Server	4/24/16	23.5 - 17.5 (1 game still ongoing)
5.	<b>Belarus</b>	Server	4/25/16	33.0 - 43.0 (4 games still ongoing)
6.	<b>Panama</b> (rematch 2)	Server	7/26/16	27.0 - 34.0 (3 games still ongoing)
7.	<b>Spain</b>	Server	8/9/16	52.5 - 46.5 (11 games still ongoing)
8.	<b>Brazil</b>	Server	9/13/16	41.5 - 25.5 (15 games still ongoing)
9.	<b>Argentina</b>	Server	10/19/16	15.5 - 19.5 (19 games still ongoing)
10.	<b>Peru</b>	Server	12/13/16	9.0 - 9.0 (14 games still ongoing)

11.	<b>Bulgaria</b>	Server	12/25/16	12.5 - 11.5 (22 games still ongoing)
12.	<b>Russia (Chess960)</b>	Server	2/10/17	8.0 - 18.0 (12 games still ongoing)
13.	<b>Germany (Chess960)</b>	Server	2/12/17	3.5 - 14.5 (14 games still ongoing)
14.	<b>France</b>	Server	3/31/17	21.0 - 15.0 (30 games still ongoing)
15.	<b>Japan</b>	Server	6/15/17	2.5 - 1.5 (28 games still ongoing)
16.	<b>Russia v. Zone 3</b>	Server	8/31/17 ( <b>USA bds**</b> )	4.5 - 10.5 (195 gms ongoing)
17.	<b>Netherlands</b>	Server	9/12/17	0.0 - 0.0 (20 games still ongoing)

**TOTAL USA RESULTS** since 1/1/07\*: 2245.0 - 2268.0 (**49.7%**)

\* Not including the two Chess960 events, #'s 12 and 13 on the above list. The Chess960 events have far larger rating differences per board compared to regular Friendly Matches. The Chess960 results are therefore not considered comparable to those from regular Friendly Matches.

\*\* Only the results involving USA players are shown or counted in the summary totals.

You may learn much more from a game you lose than from a game you win. You will have to lose hundreds of games before becoming a good player. - José Raúl Capablanca\*

[\*He was only recorded to have lost 70 games...]

## Highlights and Interesting Tidbits:

(1) A highlight is the match versus **Indonesia**. When we started this match, Indonesia was not even officially an ICCF Member Federation. The ICCF Congress changed that earlier this month, by approving Indonesia's application. Almost on cue to the anticipated acceptance, the Indonesian players surged at the end of this match. Three months ago, they were 3 points behind with 5 remaining games. Those games ended with 3.5 points for the Indonesians, and only 1.5 for the USA. This meant the match ended with the USA winning a nail biter - by only 1 point! Whew...

(2) The match versus **Canada** finally ended, after 3.7 years. This took so much longer than other matches because there was a postal section, with one of those games recently ending.

(3) Our second rematch with **Panama** has been decided, and again not in our favor. The Panamanians have shown themselves to be a formidable team (when paired with equally rated opponents).

(4) The USA has maintained its lead versus **Spain** - the same 6 points we had last quarter. The difference is that 18 games were completed in this match in the interim. This means Spain only has 11 remaining games to overcome those 6 points. Way to go USA!!

(5) We took an early lead against **Brazil**, and made it grow quickly. We have now won the match despite there still being 15 of the original 82 games remaining. Our lead of 16 points cannot be overcome. Impressive win!

(6) **Argentina**'s lead over the USA has grown by just a little, but they are proving hard to catch. With 19 games still ongoing, we are now behind by 4 points. We've caught up and won from behind before, and we can do it again. GO USA!!

(7) Speaking of catching up, we just did exactly that in our match versus **Peru**. We had been behind 6.0 - 9.0 last quarter, but we just tied it up 9 apiece! With 14 games remaining in this match, you might say we have the momentum...

(8) Unlike many of our other recent matches, the one versus **Bulgaria** started and has remained very close throughout. In the last newsletter, the score was 6.5 - 6.5. We are now up by 1. With 22 games remaining, it still looks like this one will require every point we can get. Go Team!!

(9) Our inexperience in **Chess960** continues to show. In the two events together, we have scored only 11.5 points compared to our opponents' total of 32.5. As emphasized last quarter, some of the rating differences have also been substantial. Please keep in mind that rating differences in Chess960 matches tend to be far larger than in regular Friendly Matches reflecting the fact that there are very few players who signed up to play in a Chess960 event. Pairings were made simply "as best I could", but not even close to staying within the guidelines used for regular Friendly Match pairings.

(10) Concerning my last highlight to be discussed here, I will point out that we have taken an early significant lead in our match versus **France**. Although there are still 30 ongoing games, our lead of 6 points is looking good. Nice going USA!

Whoever sees no other aim in the game than that of giving checkmate to one's opponent will never become a good chess player. - Max Euwe

"There are some things we do much better than computers, but since most of chess is tactically based they do many things better than humans. And this imbalance remains. I no longer have any issues. It's bit like asking an astronomer, does he mind that a telescope does all the work. He is used to it. It is just an incredible tool that you can use." - Viswanathan Anand

**Match (versus game) win/loss record since 1/1/07: 32 wins, 26 losses, 1 tie  
(55.1%)**

USA Won	USA Lost	USA Tied
Argentina (2010)	Austria (2014)	Norway (2013)
Australia/New Zealand (2012)	Belarus (2016)*	
Australia (2016)*	Belgium (2015)	
Brazil (2016)*	Croatia (2015)*	
British CCA (2016)*	Cuba (2013)	
Canada (2014)	Cuba (2015)	
Cape Verde (2013)	Czech Republic (2011)	
Denmark (2014)	Czech Republic (2013)	
England (2008)	France (2010)	
England (2012)	Germany (2008 - Women's only)	
Estonia (2016)	Germany (2011)	
Finland (2009)	Germany (2014)	
Hong Kong (2010)	Iceland (2014)	
India (2014)	Israel (2014)	
Indonesia (2016)	Italy (2010)	
Japan (2013)	Panama (2015)*	
Latvia (2015)	Panama (2016)*	
Lithuania (2015)	Poland (2015)	
Netherlands (2013)	Russia (2013)	
Panama (2013)	Spain (2008)	
Peru (2013)	Sweden (2007)	
Portugal (2013)	Switzerland (2014)	
Romania (2008)	Ukraine (2010)	

Romania (2013)

Ukraine (2015)

Scotland (2008)

Venezuela (2014)

Scotland (2016)

Wales (2016)

Slovakia (2014)

Slovenia (2015)

Sweden (2012)

Turkey (2015)

Venezuela (2013)

Wales (2013)



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





## **Our Featured Game - From the World Champion Himself!**

The current ICCF World Champion (WC-28) is GM Leonardo Ljubičić. At our request, he was gracious enough not only to let us publish one of his Friendly Match games, but also personally to annotate the game. This game was completed just 6 months ago, after the WC won the championship.

Imagine playing the standing World Champion in a Friendly Match!! GM Edgar Flacker had that opportunity. Unfortunately for him, he experienced the skill of a World Champion...

### **IM Edgar Flacker (2541) - GM Leonardo Ljubičić (2603)**

(England - Croatia Friendly Match, Board 1; started 2/22/15; D45)

(All annotations are from the World Champion. The game, including in pgn format, can be found at <https://www.iccf.com/game?id=778580>.)



WC-28 GM Leonardo Ljubičić

Friendly matches are great opportunity to a) play a bit more casual, with match result being somewhat of less importance compared to Olympiads

and such, b) meet new chessfriends you might not otherwise encounter in everyday tournament arena. I never played Edgar before so was really looking forward to this game.

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 c6 3.e3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.Qc2 Bd6 6.d4 Nbd7 7.b3 0-0 8.Bb2

I just don't like this move. It would certainly be unjust to call it a mistake, but at such high level of chess played that is nowadays standard at ICCF, one should not allow small white starting advantage to vanish so easily. Yes, b3 lines in Slav are meant to - among other things - lure black into tempting but often dangerous ..Ne4 lines, and yes, it is legitimate right of white to develop his black squared bishop, but in terms of castling he is 3 tempi down. My choice here would be

[8.Bd3 e5 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.dxe5 Nxe5 11.Nxe5 Bxe5 12.Bb2 Re8 13.Ne2 d4 14.e4 with at least some illusion of advantage.]

8...e5 9.Be2?!

And I definitely don't like this move! Call me old fashioned, but I believe black's ..e5 should be contested with play against isolated black d pawn. Therefore either

[9.cxd5 cxd5

A) 10.dxe5 Nxe5 11.Nxe5 (11.Nb5?! Bb4+ 12.Bc3 Bxc3+ 13.Qxc3 and black has enough compensation for isolated pawn in terms of white slow development and unsafe king.; 11.Be2?! Nxf3+ 12.Bxf3 d4 =/+) 11...Bxe5 12.Bd3 Re8 13.Ne2;

B) 10.Nb5?! Bb4+ 11.Bc3 Bxc3+ 12.Nxc3 e4 and I prefer black here.]

[or 9.dxe5 Nxe5 10.0-0-0?! with interesting play, are better choices.]

9...e4 10.Nd2 Nb8

Knight heads for c7 via a6, where it will support black queen side advance while not getting in the way of his light squared bishop. Centre is blocked so spending a few tempi is not a big deal.

[Another good choice here for black is 10...Re8 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.Nb5 Nf8 13.Nxd6 Qxd6 14.Qd1 with very comfortable play.]

11.h3

It's damage control time. White has to make a choice here, and none of the alternatives look particularly more promising:

[11.0-0 It takes a lot of gut to play such a move. The position might still be holdable for white, and most likely is, but show this to your Stockfish and it will start to drool.]

[11.a3?! White just does not have time for such moves. Bf5!?→]

[11.cxd5 cxd5 12.Nb5 Na6 13.Nxd6 Qxd6 14.a3 Bg4=/+]

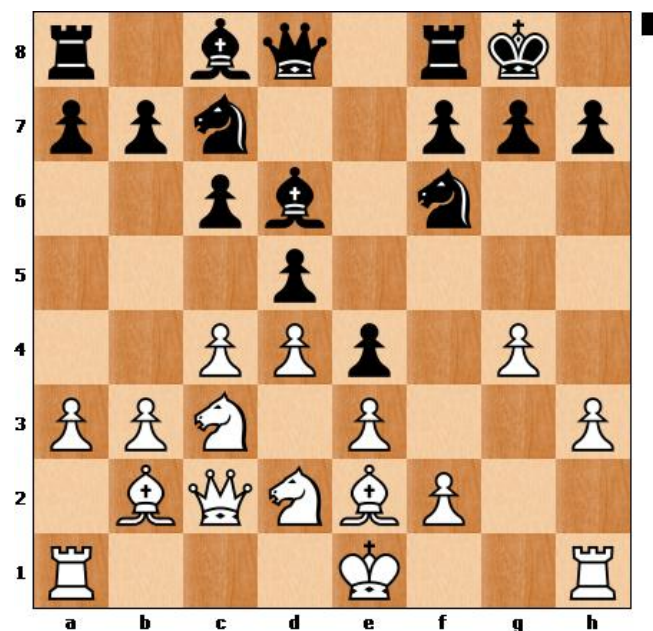
**11...Na6 12.a3 Nc7 13.g4**

Again, white is forced to choose among several murky lines. All of them unpleasant. This one had the best ICCF games stats (2 white wins).

[13.b4?! Bf5 ±]

[13.0-0 Nfe8 14.c5 Be7 15.b4 f5 -+]

[13.0-0-0 In hindsight, this move might be best white choice here. 13...b5 14.c5 Be7 =/+]



Position after 13.g4

**13...Be7!?N**

This is one of those multipurpose moves you can't spot immediately, but once it is played, makes perfect sense. This bishop has finished his duty on

b8-h2 diagonal, and by moving to e7 it makes room for other pieces to maneuver, and at the same time discourages white king side pawn advances, as it converts them from small menace to small liability, just enough so to make black queen side advance that bit faster.

[RR13...Be6?! Although looking natural, this move is of dubious value. Black does not want to open centre, and if white ever decides for c5 push, it will just look badly placed. 14.0-0-0 b5 15.c5 Be7 16.g5 Nd7 17.h4 a5 18.f3 b4+/- Vassilev 2383 - Coyne 2326, 1/2-1/2, WS/MN/140, 2016]

[13...h6? Seriously weakening king's defense for no reason at all. White is winning now. 14.0-0-0+- Vassilev 2382 - Henri 2318, 1-0 AUS-UKR 2016 Friendly]

[13...b6?! as seen in Dullemond 2349 - Goffin 2343, 1-0, AUS/NZL - NED 2013 Friendly, is just too slow.]

14.0-0-0 b5 15.c5 a5 =/+

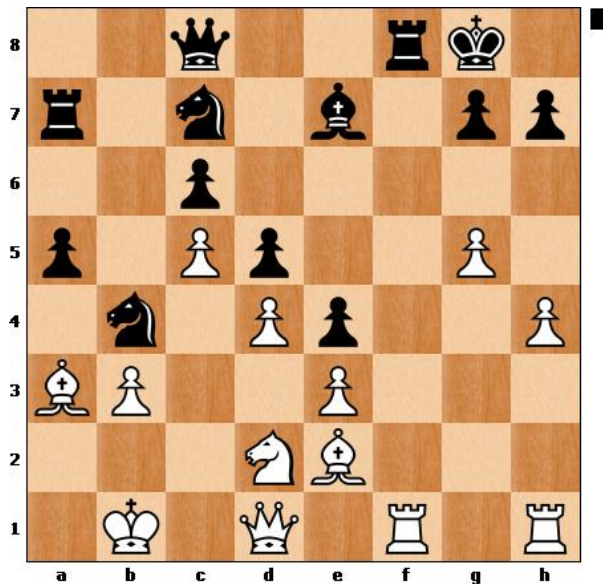
A typical pawn rush ensues. Black's chances are better, because there is no way to block black a-b pawns, while the same cannot be said for white g-h pair. Winter is coming.

16.g5 Nd7 17.h4 b4 18.Na4 f5 19.Kb1

Another notable feature of friendly matches is that almost all of them are transmitted live, which in case of ICCF usually means with 5 move delay. If I recall correctly, at some point this game was broadcasted as one of the promo games on ICCF front page, and by that time black advantage was already decisive. At the same time another game was played, and reached this position. FIDE GM Kovalenko 2680 played white against GM Korže 2532, and decided for

[19.f4 which didn't bring too much of a result in the end. 19...Ba6 20.Bxa6 Rxa6 21.h5 Qb8 22.Kb1 Ra7 23.Ka2 Qb7 24.Ra1 Nb8 25.Nf1 Nba6 26.Ng3 Nb5 27.Kb1 bxa3 28.Bxa3 ♯ Kovalenko 2680 - Korže 2543, 0-1, USA Invitational 2016. Note how white g-h pawns are harmless, while at the same time white is unable to block black queen side drilling. Btw., judging by the speed GM Korže played his moves 13-18, which is few minutes per move, it is safe to say that game followed the pattern, and most likely poor OTB GM was unaware of it. No wonder our game database becomes more and more of a valuable commodity among top OTB players of today.]

19...bxa3 20.Bxa3 Nb8 21.Nb6 Ra7 22.Nxc8 Qxc8 23.f3 Nba6 24.fxe4 fxe4  
25.Rdf1 Nb4 26.Qd1



Position after 26.Qd1

26...Rd8! ♖

Again, looks perfectly sensible once it is played. The side with either space advantage, or faster attack, should try to keep as much of firepower aboard as feasible. It is known.

27.g6 Bf6 28.gxh7+ Kh8 29.Bb2 a4 30.bxa4 Qb7 31.Rhg1 Rb8 32.Rxf6

White attack has come to a halt, while black is penetrating with impunity. You know things have gone horribly wrong when you have to make a move like this.

32...gxf6 -+ 33.Bf1 Ne6 34.Rg8+ Kxh7 35.Rxb8 Qxb8 36.Qh5+ Kg8  
37.Qg6+ Ng7 38.h5 Qe8 39.Qxe8+ Nxe8 40.a5 Rxa5 41.Nb3 Ra4 42.Nc1  
Ng7 43.Bh3 Ra7 44.Bc3 Na6 45.h6 Nh5 46.Ba5 Kh7 47.Bb6 Rf7 48.Be6  
Re7 49.Bc8 Nb8 50.Ne2 Kxh6 51.Kc2 Kg5 52.Nc3 Ng3 53.Kd2 Rh7 54.Be6  
Nf5 55.Nd1 Na6 56.Ba5 Nc7 57.Bxc7 Rxc7 58.Nc3 Rh7 59.Nd1 Rh2+  
60.Kc1 Ne7 61.Nc3 f5 62.Kd1 f4 63.exf4+ Kxf4 64.Ne2+ Ke3 65.Ng3 Rg2  
66.Nf5+ Nxf5 67.Bxf5 Rg7 68.Bc8 Kf2 69.Ba6 e3 70.Bd3 Rg1+ 71.Kc2 e2  
0-1



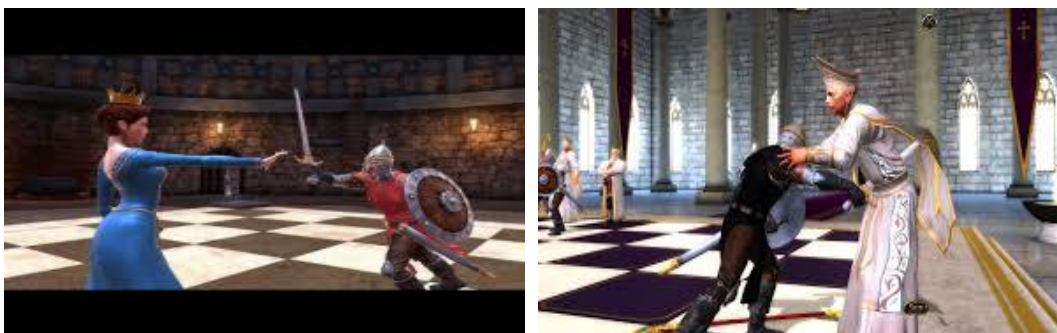
"I think the draw quotient has always been high in world championship matches because the amount of effort people put into neutralizing each other's openings. It's just now with computers that it has reached a new level." - Viswanathan Anand

### ICCF RULES PERTAINING TO FRIENDLY MATCHES

Since 1/1/17, Friendly Matches are viewed like any other ICCF-approved event, meaning a couple different things of possible relevance to you.

For players, it means that a player withdrawal (of any type, accepted, unaccepted, or silent) from a Friendly Match will also be considered a withdrawal (of the same type) from all other ICCF events; and a withdrawal from any other ICCF-approved event will also mean a withdrawal of the same type from all Friendly Matches. Until 1/1/17, Friendly Matches were exempt from Tournament Rules 8.3 through 8.5 that governed the "withdrawal from one event means withdrawal from all events" rules.

For Tournament Directors interested in working towards the International Arbiter title, directing Friendly Matches now counts towards the required number of directed games to earn the title of International Arbiter. Before 1/1/17, that was not true.



### Where to Find Us

The ICCF-US home website is at [www.iccfus.com](http://www.iccfus.com). You can always find copies of "*The Friendly Post*" at that site, with a link on the left in the home page. The server for playing games is at [www.iccf.com](http://www.iccf.com). Contact Dennis Doren at [dmdorenchess@gmail.com](mailto:dmdorenchess@gmail.com) concerning anything related to 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**, Tournament Organizer

**Senior International Master Dan Perry**, Webmaster

**Senior International Master Kenneth Holroyd**, Tournament Facilitator

**Senior International Master Kristo Miettinen**, Tournament Organizer

**International Master Bob Rizzo**, Norms and Communications Organizer

Yours truly, CCM Dennis Doren, Friendly Matches Organizer ([dmdorenchess@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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 specific country you wish to play against, but you do not have to do that.

When I have a specific something 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 of 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 actually 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's it! Let me know your interest, accept my invitation for you to play in a specific match, pay your fee, and enjoy your games!

### **Brief Note**

If you wish to contact me, Dennis Doren, please use my current email address: [dmdorenchess@gmail.com](mailto:dmdorenchess@gmail.com); not my old yahoo address.





### The FRIENDLY MATCH ELITE

The Elite program is being phased out in keeping with the reduced participation fee for everyone. If you already earned Elite status, your reduced fee for up to 3 remaining matches will still be honored. There will be no new members of the Elite program starting 1/1/2016.

### Why couldn't I find any quotes on the net from Correspondence Chess World Champions?? - Dennis Doren

#### 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 [dmdorencchess@gmail.com](mailto:dmdorencchess@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 in either of the listed FMs! 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.