



The Friendly Post

News from ICCF-US Friendly Matches from around the world - Issue 3, March 2013

Greetings from ICCF-US Friendly Match Central! This issue continues our process of bringing you the news from our collective set of Friendly Matches. To explain to any new recipients, Friendly Matches are national team versus national team chess contests 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.

BIG NEWS: THERE ARE MANY UPCOMING MATCHES!!

The historic first friendly match between the USA and Russia has started. It is the largest friendly match the USA has had since, well, in a very long time. We are fielding 81 boards, well more than the 63 boards we fielded against the Ukraine in December 2010 (the most since at least 2007).

We at the ICCF-US Friendly Match Central are looking to offer you a lot more as well. We conducted an informal survey to find out your degree of interest in playing Friendly Matches. The results were educational, and, well, rather overwhelming. It appears there are many of you who are interested in playing in as many Friendly Matches (FM) as we can offer.

So, we are trying to offer you what you want! This required a change in procedures to add efficiency for the organization of multiple matches at the same time. Instead of writing to each of you each time a new FM is being offered, we are lining up a number of potential matches and are now asking you to let us know your interest across the set of proposed FMs. We in FM Central will then do our best to match your interest (both in frequency of new FMs and against which specific countries) with what we have available.

Here is what we are doing and offering at the current time:

(a) FM versus Panama: This is Panama's first FM ever (another historic first) as they just became a Member Federation to the ICCF! This is a 12-board match, made up quite substantially with unrated players, reflecting Panama's new entry to the ICCF. The pairings are already made and the match already began, so please do not send new requests to participate in this FM. The official start date for this match was the day this newsletter was completed.

(b) FM versus Cape Verde: This FM involves 15 players, again apparently the first time the USA will have played this country. The anticipated official start date is in mid-March. Almost all opportunities for playing in this FM were for players in the lower half of our range of ratings, including players new to FMs, again reflecting the other nation's players. The pairings are already made for this match, so please do not send new requests to participate in this FM.

(c) FM versus Norway: Given Norway's playing strength, it seems surprising that we have not played this country in quite a while. According to Alex Dunne (THE go-to guy for correspondence chess history!), the USA last played Norway in 1984. (We lost that match 20.5-29.5). Virtually all of the 21 boards in this new FM will be filled by players in the upper half of our rating range. Pairings are already being finalized for this match. The expected official start date for this FM is in late March.

*The next three FMs listed against The Netherlands, The Czech Republic and Portugal, **were not advertised** when the emailed "survey" went out about 1.5 months ago as they were not yet a gleam in your organizer's eye. The considerable size of your collective interest in playing in FMs documented from the survey inspired this organizer, such that various other FMs were sought beyond those initially advertised. We want to give you plenty of possible matches in which to play. **You are all invited** to express interest in any/all of these specific FMs if you wish. (Please do NOT bother if you already responded to the survey by saying you are ready to play in essentially any FM that will be offered. We do not need to hear you are still interested in any FM if you already told me this - I already have you on my lists showing interest in these FMs.) If you never responded to the survey, and/or wish first to inform me of your interest in any to all of the following (as well as all others that come along?), please write to Dennis at dmdoren@yahoo.com **as soon as possible**. Dennis will be formulating teams based in the near future based on the interest **already expressed** to him at the time.*

(d) FM versus The Netherlands: We have not played this strong team in nearly 30 years. Alex Dunne was again kind enough to check his records and found our last FM against The

Netherlands was in 1985. (We lost that match 79.5-118.5, in a whopping 99-board match!) We expect between 30-35 boards, again disproportionately made up of higher than average players from among the USA ranks, though inclusive of the full range overall.

(e) FM versus The Czech Republic: We last played The Czech Republic in a match that started just two years ago. It was close, but we lost that match 23.6-26.5. So, this organizer challenged them to a rematch and they accepted! This match is expected to involve 30-32 boards involving a very wide range of ratings. Its start date is expected to be somewhere during the first two weeks of April.

(f) FM versus Portugal: This newly formulated match is expected to involve between 20-25 boards, probably with a rather full range of ratings represented. The start date will likely be in mid-April.

(g) FM versus Romania: This FM is not scheduled until August or so, but interest is already quite substantial in participating in it. We last played Romania in an FM starting in 2008, winning that match 36-30. Our scheduled match for August is also expected to involve between 30-35 boards, with a full range of ratings being needed.

If you wish to play in any FM, please just write to Dennis at dmdoren@yahoo.com and let him know (a) which FMs are of interest to you, and (b) in general, about how often you wish to start new FM participation. Come and join the fun!!

JUST SO YOU KNOW: The number of players per FM can be quite small, as noted above. It is already clear that there is more demand from USA players for any single FM than available opportunity for everyone to play. Your "signing up" for a specific FM does not mean you will automatically be selected to play in that FM. Selections are based both on stated interest and a strong attempt to match our players to opponents with near equal ratings. If you are not selected for a specific match, you can be assured that you will be given the possible priority for placing you in other FMs (which you can then accept or decline).

**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.
(Attributed to Aristotle)**

Our Friendly Match History

You can always find the current results from any of our Friendly Matches by visiting the relevant portion of the ICCF website (at www.iccf-webchess.com, Tables and Results, Friendly Matches), but this newsletter will also make it easy for you to stay up-to-date. The past two issues listed all of our matches from 1/1/07 onward. This issue lists only those already in progress but not yet completed. The current standings (through 2/28/13) for ICCF-US Friendly Match teams are listed below.

	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Server/Email/Postal</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Result (USA v. other)</u>
1.	France	Postal	4/15/10	9.5 - 9.5 (1 game being adjudicated)
2.	Germany	Server	5/25/11	37.5 - 62.5 (2 games still ongoing)
3.	Sweden	Server	5/1/12	44 - 20 (26 games still ongoing)
4.	England	Server	8/1/12	24 - 21 (23 games still ongoing)
5.	Australia/NZ	Server	11/1/12	19.5 - 14.5 (76 games still ongoing)
6.	Russia	Server	2/1/13	3.5 - 9.5 (149 games still ongoing)
7.	Panama	Server	3/4/13	0 - 0 (24 games just begun)
TOTAL USA RESULTS since 1/1/07:				595 - 626 (48.7%)
Match Win/Loss Record since 1/1/07 (excl.# 4-7 listed above):				7/9 (43.8%)



Where to Find Us

The ICCF-US home website is at www.iccfus.com. The server for playing games is at www.iccf-webchess.com. Contact Dennis Doren at dmdoren@yahoo.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:

International Master Corky Schakel, USA National Federation Representative

Senior International Master Tom Biedermann, Treasurer

Senior International Master Dan Perry, Webmaster

International Master Bob Rizzo, Norms and Communications Organizer

Senior International Master Kristo Miettinen, Tournament Organizer, Tournament Director

International Arbiter Franklin Campbell, Tournament Organizer, Tournament Director

Wolff Morrow, US Correspondence Chess Championship (USCCC) Organizer

Yours truly,

Dennis Doren, Friendly Matches Organizer (dmdoren@yahoo.com)

Of chess it has been said that life is not long enough for it - but that is the fault of life, not chess. - Napier



Games from the Matches

Each newsletter will show games and/or interesting positions from the ICCF-US friendly matches. Do you have a game you would like published here? A position with a great move? Our intention is to show games from across rating levels, so do not be shy about submitting your games (to Dennis Doren at dmdoren@yahoo.com). You can also offer your own commentary, or just leave that to us (which you can review pre-publication) if you prefer.

For the record, all game commentary from the first two issues, as well as from this issue, were written solely by Dennis Doren unless specifically stated otherwise. While Dennis does the best he can, it is likely there were improvements to be made from time to time. The USA player for each game has been given a brief opportunity to review the commentary prior to circulation.

Both of this issue's featured games were played against Argentina, start date 12/20/10. Our teammates both won with the Black pieces against titled players!

IM Juan Carlos Zárate (2318) - Dr. Carl Siefring (2378)

We are glad to report that Dr. Carl Siefring, a frequent player of Friendly Matches, just received his SIM title this past month. Congratulations! Here is a game of his (from before he was even an IM) in which he played an innovative opening variation, presses for small positional improvements, and later takes control with a pawn sacrifice. His winning technique portrays the SIM he was later to become!

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.g3 Bb4 4.Nf3 (Historically, the most common move and still quite popular is 4.Bf2. The Nf3 move, however, is the most popular in 2012, and with a fine success rate according to a large database.)

4...e4 (More popular are 4...Bxc3 and 4...Nc6, though this move is commonly played as well.)

5.Nd4 Nc6 6.Nc2 Bxc3 7.dxc3 Ne5 (An unusual move, 7...h6 being more common.)

8.b3 d6 (Apparently treading into new waters. In the two games I found that played this line, Black played 8...O-O. Still, a strong popular chess engine supported both of the last two Black moves.)

9.Bg2 h6 10.O-O O-O 11.Ne3 Re8 12.Nd5 (It is unusual to see a piece moved 5 times in the opening. Here it finally finds a fine home, but where it can just be traded by a piece that has moved only once.)

12...a5 13.Qc2 a4 14.Be3 (Multiple chess engines rate this position quite even. However, 14.Nxf6 Qxf6, 15.Bxe4 ab3 and Black has positionally gained some.)

14...Nxd5 (14...Neg4 was also an option.)

15.cxd5 Ng4 16.Bd4 e3 (From Dr. Siefring: The pawn is a short-term strength but can become weak. 16...e3 takes advantage of an opportunity to create a weakness in White's position.)

17.f4 Nf2 18.b4 Nh3+ 19.Kh1 Bg4 20.c4 Qd7 21.Rfe1 Bf5 22.Qc3



Position after 22.Qc3

22...Be4 (A positional pawn sacrifice, as Black's pieces become more active than White's. The chess engines still rate the game essentially even. From Dr. Siefring: "On your comment to moves 22 and 25 about engines scoring the position even. I'd point out that if you are up (or down) a pawn and an engine thinks the positional considerations add up to equal, then the player with the extra material is usually in trouble. Of course, you have to make sure the engine is not just seeing the return of the material or a perpetual. Neither is the case in the game." From Dennis: An important point!)

23.Bxe3 Qg4 24.Bd2 Re7 25.Bf3 Rae8 (Black's position looks to be improving incrementally with each move, though the chess engines still rate the position as dead even.)

26.Rf1 Qf5 (26...Qh5 and 26...Bxf3 were also possible.)

27.Rae1 g5 (Black's pieces are placed about as well as they can be. It is now time to bring pawns into the attack. Black is not afraid of opening his K with this move because White has no way of opening lines.)

28.Qd4 g4 29.Bxe4 Rxe4 (29...Qxe4 seems conceptually mistaken, as it allows White to trade off another of Black's attacking pieces without gaining anything for the trade.)

30.Qd3 Kg7 31.e3 (Black has taken control of a crucial center file, has an outpost N, and White's pieces are all cramped behind his backward extra pawn. Multiple chess engines rate Black with a half-pawn advantage. But how does Black press this home for a win?)



Position after 31.e3

31...Kg6 (Sure. Bring the last remaining piece, his K, into play!)

32.Kg2 (We can immediately see a point to Black's last move: 32.Bc3 Rxf4 33.Qxf5+ Rxf5 34.Rxf5 Kxf5)

32...Rxf4 33.Qxf5+ Rxf5 34.Rxf5 Kxf5 (And now we go into endgame play with even material but with Black's pieces in far better position.)

35.Kf1 Re4 (Keeping White contained, besides threatening the c-pawn.)

36.Rc1 Ng5 37.Ke2 Nf3 (Here is a very clear example of when a N is far better than a B in an endgame.)

38.h4 h5 (From Dr. Siefring: "fixing pawns on Black squares")

39.a3 Ne5 (Black just keeps placing his pieces into better and better positions, while all White can do is try to consolidate.)

40.Rf1+ Kg6 41.Bc3 (41.Rc1 or 41.c5 were other tries, but White is in great trouble in any case. From Dr. Siefring: White wants to trade the bad Bishop for the good Knight but unfortunately the resulting Rook and Pawn ending is lost.)

41...Rxc4 42.Bxe5 dxe5 43.Kd3 b5 44.e4 c6 45.dxc6 (45.d6? Rd4+)

45...Rxc6 46.Rf5 f6 47.Rf1 Rc8 (47...Rc4 is also good. Black's extra pawn with multiple pawns on both sides of the board will win.)

48.Re1 f5 49.exf5+ Kxf5 50.Rf1+ Ke6 51.Rf2 Rc1 (White cannot protect both of his a3 and g3 weaknesses.) 0-1



SIM Carlos Alberto Rinaldi (2099) - Mark Robledo, Sr. (2130)

Mark Robledo, Sr., is our most active Friendly Match player. In this game, his play is methodical in first gaining equality with the Black pieces, and then breaking through White's defenses, and taking advantage of created weaknesses to win the game.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 d5 3.Bg2 c6 4.O-O g6 5.d3 Bg7 6.Nbd2 O-O 7.e4 dxe4 8.dxe4 Na6 (Not as common as 8...Bg4, but historically seems to give better results for Black)

9.Qe2 Nc5 10.e5 Nd5 11.Nb3 Nxb3 12.axb3 a5 13.Rd1 Qc7 14.c3 h6 (14...Bg4 was also good, stopping White's next move besides developing the piece.)

15.b4 Rd8 16.b5 (16.bxa5 seems slightly better, ridding of both White's doubled pawns and Black's more advanced one.)

16...cxb5 (16...c5 was possible, leaving White with his doubled pawns)

17.Qxb5 e6 18.Qa4 Nb6 19.Rxd8+ Qxd8 20.Qc2 (This seems somewhat passive. Better would seem to be 20.Qe4 or 20.Qd4.)

20...Qc7 (The position is now rated quite equal by two different chess engines.)

21.Qe4 (This could have been played a move earlier...)

21...a4 22.Qh4 (22.Nd4 maintained equality, potentially followed by 22...Qxe5 23.Qxe5 Bxe5 24.Bxh6, but White may have been trying to avoid trading down. On the other hand, a plan that involves White moving his Queen 5 of the last 6 moves seems conceptually dubious, especially

given he could have moved his Q directly from a4 to h4 and saved 2 moves.)



Position after 22.Qh4

22...h5 (22...g5 was also possible, though the move played probably was safer.)

23.Bg5 Bd7 24.Rd1 a3 (Black's advanced pawn causes White to have weaknesses on the Q-side, and compensation for White's K-side gathering of pieces.)

25.bxa3 Qxc3 26.Be7 Nd5 27.Bd6 Rc8 (27...Ba4 was also an interesting possibility.)

28.h3 Qc2 29.Rf1 b6 30.Kh2 (White's last 3 moves, while sound, did not cause Black any difficulties while allowing Black to continue his development.)

30...Bh6 31.Nd4 Qc4 32.Rd1 (Again, a passive option. 32.Rb1 offered more.)

32...Ba4 33.Re1



Position after 33.Re1

33...Nf4 (! Breaking up White's defense.)

34.gxf4 (34.Nf3 Nxf3 35.Kxg2 Qxh4 36.Nxh4 was another try, and probably better than what this move allowed.)

34...Qxd4 35.Re4 (Black has the better of it, with two different chess engines rating Black up about 1.5 pawns, but White still has everything protected. Can Black press this into a win?)

35...Qd1 36.f5 (Involving the discovered attack of the B on a4, but opening more lines for attack when positionally down is often a fatal mistake.)

36...Rc1 (36...exf5 was also good, because if 37.Rxa4, 37...Rc1 wins; or if 37.Rd4 first, then 37...Qe1. The played move seems best.)

37.fxg6 (37.Qd8+ was the only other try, but after 37...Kh7 38.fg6+ fg6 39.h4 Qg1+ 40.Kh3 Bc6 41.Qe7+ Bg7 42.Qg5 Bxe4 Black wins.)

37...Qg1+ 38.Kg3 Rc3+ 39.f3 fxg6 40.Qd8+ Kh7 (The threat of 41...Rc2 is crushing.) 0-1

**The passed pawn is a criminal, who should be kept under lock and key. Mild measures, such as police surveillance, are not sufficient.
- Nimzovitch**

The "FRIENDLY MATCH ELITE

Both as an incentive for participation as well as a reward for never silently withdrawing, we recently began a new status within the world of ICCF-US Friendly Matches, a status whose reward includes **reduced fees** for future Friendly Matches.

The designation is called the Friendly Match Elite. The Elite are the people who have played in at least 7 Friendly Matches (since 1/1/07) and have never silently withdrawn. As a token of thanks for their fine and regular participation, these players will have their fees reduced for each of the next 3 Friendly Matches in which they play, from the usual \$6 to \$4 per match.

To everyone: **Anyone can reach this status!** Just play in enough Friendly Matches and never default a game through silent withdrawal. Your total number of Friendly Matches will automatically be tallied without any effort by you. (If you wish to know your current number of FM's played to date, just ask Dennis at dmdoren@yahoo.com.)

So who are the current Friendly Match Elite? Congrats to those 34 players on the ICCF-US current list:

Richard Aiken; David Ballard; John Ballow, IM; Edward Barr; Kyle Biedermann; Thomas Biedermann, SIM; Chris Cendrowski; Gregory W. Cross; Gary Deskin; Dennis Doren; James R. Ellis; Gordon Everitt; Leonid Gleyzer; Michael G. Hayes; Harry Ingersol; Joseph Korman; Jon S. Leisner; Edward Lupienski; Edwin Meiners; Charles Mellow; Jean L. Moeckel; Chris O'Connell; Larry Parsons; Michael Quirk; Donald Randolph; Mark Robledo, Sr.; Patrick J. Ryan; Corky Schakel, IM; Fred Sharpell; Carl L. Sieftring, SIM; Gerald K. Thomas; Lester Weiss; David V. White; & William C. Young, III

Who is just one Friendly Match away from becoming Elite?

Michael Brooks; Steven W. Chilson; Robert Fass; Alex Herrera; Roger Martindale; & IM Cesar Musitani

To everyone: you need not complete play from your 7th FM to become FM Elite and have reduced fees for 3 of your next FMs - just start play in your 7th FM, be up-to-date in your fee payments, and continue to avoid defaulting a game.



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 games (one white, one black) against the same opponent who is very close in rating to yours. The total fee is \$6 for your participation per match (unless you are FM Elite as described above, when the fee is \$4 for your next 3 FMs). Just contact Dennis Doren, the ICCF-US Friendly Match Organizer, at dmdoren@yahoo.com and express an interest in playing. Do **NOT** send any money to Dennis or anyone else at this point! You will only need to pay (through Paypal, money order, or by check) when all arrangements have been finalized.