



The Friendly Post

News from ICCF-US Friendly Matches from around the world - Issue 41, September 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 nearly 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!

Our Ten-Year Anniversary!!

Ten years. One decade. Issues numbering beyond two score. Every quarter year since the Kardashians first became a thing, the first “Transformer” film was released, and the TV hits “Mad Men” and “The Big Bang” began.

To celebrate, **this issue has two special features!**

We have a **featured friendly match game** from a World Champion! **WC24 GM Marjan Šemrl** analyzed one of his own friendly match games exclusively for this newsletter (page 11).

Additionally, we are offering a **CONTEST!** Within this newsletter are numerous words that begin with the letters t-e-n. When counting such words (only once each!), how many are there? The first ten people who email me the correct answer (to dmdoren@yahoo.com) will

win a free entry to a future ICCF-US friendly match. Be sure to show tenacity in getting the proper number! Don't let the competitive tension get to you!

[Thanks to SIM Michael Millstone for some of the chess art included in this issue.]



[My favorite chess image from all 10 years of newsletters! – Dennis]

Upcoming Friendly Matches

The previously mentioned matches scheduled against **Curacao** and **Suriname** will not be happening. Something very suspicious was discovered about those countries' application procedures that resulted in the ICCF Executive Board withdrawing its support for those applications. This was the first time such a thing has happened in the Board's memory, maybe ever, in the ICCF.

Germany agreed to pick up the slack for our scheduled match versus Curacao. We thank the German Federation tenfold for helping us in this way. The USA players who had been scheduled to play versus Curacao have now been placed on the USA team versus Germany being organized simultaneously to this newsletter's circulation. A great many other invitations for this match have also been sent out already, such that any USA eligible player (and for whom there is space on the team) should have already received such an invitation.

The advertised match versus **Lithuania** was reportedly being scheduled this month (September), but this match has again been postponed. That seems to be the tendency in our trying to schedule this match.

Sweden has agreed to play the USA in a friendly match to be organized during January.

Other friendly matches to be organized soon have not yet been determined. See the next section about our World Tour #3 concerning possible options in that regard.

Matches can go from an idea to an active reality within any 90-day period – that is, between newsletters. 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!



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 started play against the following (18) countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cape Verde*, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, 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 January. A match versus Germany is currently being organized.

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

Countries yet to be included (35) in WT3: Argentina, Aruba, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, England, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and Ukraine.





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 9/25/2022) 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	33.5 - 43.5 (4 ongoing games)
3.	Peru	Server	6/4/2021	41.0 - 42.0 (1 ongoing game)
4.	Spain	Server	6/18/2021	34.5 - 44.5 (5 ongoing games)
5.	Slovenia	Server	6/6/2021	18.0 - 22.0 (2 ongoing games)
6.	Austria	Server	8/15/2021	28.0 - 30.0 (4 ongoing games)
7.	Japan	Server	9/30/2021	12.0 - 7.0 (5 ongoing games)
8.	Indonesia	Server	10/31/2021	21.0 - 22.0 (5 ongoing games)
9.	Cuba	Server	11/29/2021	68.0 - 82.0 (10 ongoing games)
10.	Israel	Server	12/21/2021	9.5 - 5.5 (1 ongoing game)
11.	NCA/ECU/GUA/CPV	Server	1/2/2022	10.5 - 6.5 (5 ongoing games)
12.	Russia	Server	1/9/2022	47.5 - 45.5 (11 ongoing games)
13.	Australia	Server	3/14/2022	42.5 - 28.5 (31 ongoing games)
14.	France	Server	3/23/2022	29.0 - 29.0 (24 ongoing games)
15.	Belgium	Server	3/26/2022	25.5 - 21.5 (17 ongoing games)
16.	Mexico	Server	6/6/2022	7.5 - 6.5 (20 ongoing games)
17.	Wales	Server	7/25/2022	10.0 - 12.0 (48 ongoing games)
18.	Finland	Server	7/26/2022	2.5 - 4.5 (39 ongoing games)

TOTAL USA RESULTS

Currently (as of 9/25/2022) = 233 ongoing games [The soon-to-start Germany match is tentatively scheduled to involve 166 boards, or 332 more games!]

Completed games since 1/1/2007* = 8773 games

Total score since 1/1/2007* = 4338 – 4435 **(49.4%)**

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



Highlights and Interesting Tidbits:

- (1) Our results this quarter reflected both the relatively low game scoring from the previous quarter, and a very positive set of game outcomes more recently. Match outcomes were not good for US this quarter, being 1 win, 1 tie, and 4 losses. However, during the past 3 months, we scored nearly 53% of the possible points; a very fine turnaround from last quarter's 45%. The 4 match losses reflected previous game results from which we could not recover, but the new scoring rate bodes well for our "recovery"!
- (2) First, the unfortunate news:
 - (a) We had been 1 point behind with 1 game to go versus **Switzerland**. That game ended in a draw, so the USA lost that match by 1 point.
 - (b) Similarly, we had been 4 points down versus **Slovenia**, with 4 remaining games. Two of those games since ended with a 1-1 score, meaning we lost the match with 2 games still ongoing.
 - (c) The same situation existed versus **Denmark**, with the USA being 4 points down with 4 games to go. Those 4 games ended this past quarter, with the USA only scoring a half-point among them.
 - (d) We were never close versus **Cuba**. That country has already won the match despite there still being 10 active games.
- (3) On the other hand, the USA played a very strong match versus **Israel**. This past quarter saw US score 5.5 – 2.5, and in doing so won the match easily even with one remaining game.
- (4) The rarest match outcome happened versus **Slovakia**. In that match, we were behind, then we caught up, then went ahead, then gave up our lead, and most recently were tied going into the final stretch. Well, the final score showed a tie. This was only the fourth time the USA has tied in the past 110 friendly matches! One might have thought that the evenness of paired ratings in all these matches would tend to result in many tied outcomes. For whatever reason, that just has not been the case.
- (5) Matches approaching their end, and are still very close include the following:
 - (a) Versus **Peru**, the USA is down 1 point with 1 remaining game. We can only hope for another tie. Go USA!!
 - (b) We have ALMOST won versus **Japan**. With 5 remaining games, the USA leads by 5 points, meaning we only need another half-point to win the match!
 - (c) The situation is similar versus the team from the combined countries of **Nicaragua, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Cape Verde**. The USA leads by 4 with only 5 remaining games. Any win or 2 draws by the USA will win the match.
 - (d) **Austria** leads the USA by 2 points with 4 remaining games. The USA needs to score at least 3-1 in those remaining games to hold on. Press on USA!!

- (e) The match is even closer versus **Indonesia**. With 5 games still ongoing, the USA trails by a single point. There is still time to take over the lead!! No tenderhearted attitude will win this match, as we need to press forward!
 - (f) We may have “an upset” in the making!! During the past 15 years, the USA has lost versus **Russia** 3 times (including a Chess960 match). In our current match, the USA is 2 points ahead with 11 remaining games. That is still plenty of time for our opponents to catch up, but having the lead so far is a great sign. GO USA! Be tenacious!
 - (g) The match is very tense versus **France**. The score is currently tied. With 24 ongoing games, anything can still happen.
- (6) Finally, to end this section on a very positive note, the USA is crushing against **Australia**. Having just scored 25-11 this past quarter alone (!!), the USA leads by those 14 points with 31 remaining games. That is still a lot of games, but 14 points is a huge margin from which our opponents would need to recover. Yeah USA!



Friendly Match (versus game) win/loss record

(Since 1/1/07) 54 wins, 52 losses, 4 ties (= 50.9% for USA)

USA Won	USA Lost**	USA Tied
Argentina (2010)	Aruba (2020)	Argentina (2019)***
Argentina (2016)	Austria (2014)	Norway (2013)***
Australia/New Zealand (2012)	Belarus (2016)	Slovakia (2020)***
Australia (2016)	Belgium (2015)	Wales (2019)***
Australia (2018)	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)	Germany (2011)
India (2014)	Germany (2014)
India (2019)	Germany (2020)
Indonesia (2016)	Iceland (2014)
Israel (2016)	Iceland (2019)
Israel (2021)*	Israel (2014)
Japan (2013)	Italy (2010)
Japan (2017)	Italy (2017)
Latvia (2015)	Mexico (2017)
Latvia (2020)	Netherlands (2017)
Lithuania (2015)	Norway (2019)
Mexico (2020)	Panama (2015)
Netherlands (2013)	Panama (2016)
Netherlands (2018)	Philippines (2021)
New Zealand (2020)	Philippines B (2021)
Panama (2013)	Poland (2015)
Peru (2013)	Romania (2021)*
Portugal (2013)	Russia (2013)
Portugal (2018)	Russia (v. Zone 3) (2017)
Romania (2008)	Slovenia (2019)
Romania (2013)	Slovenia (2021)*
SchemingMind (2018)	Spain (2008)
Scotland (2008)	Spain (2021)*
Scotland (2016)	Sweden (2007)
Scotland (2020)	Switzerland (2014)
Slovakia (2014)	Switzerland (2020)
Slovenia (2015)	Ukraine (2010)
Spain (2016)	Ukraine (2015)
Sweden (2016)	Ukraine (2018)
Sweden (2018)	Venezuela (2014)
Turkey (2015)	Venezuela (2017)
Venezuela (2013)	Wales (2016)
Wales (2013)	
Yorkshire (2018)	

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



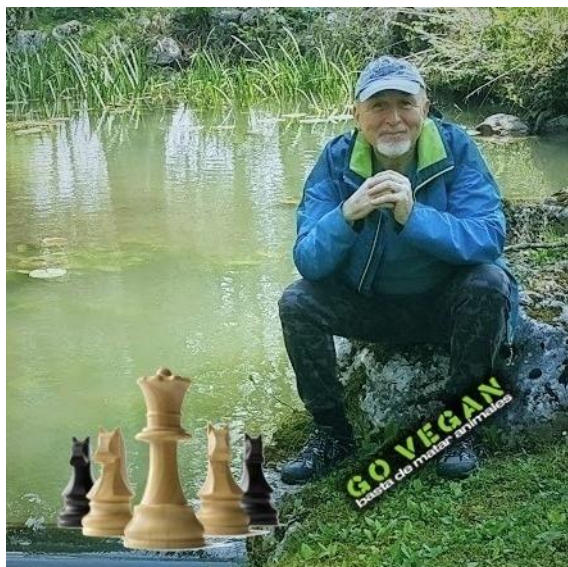
Featured Game

All comments and annotations are by World Champion Marjan Šemrl. Photos printed with permission from WC Šemrl.

Marjan Šemrl (2539) – Sakari Pesonen (2349) [B49]

Slovenia – Finland Friendly Match (2007)

<https://www.iccf.com/game?id=123045>



I am one of the correspondence players of the old style who started playing correspondence chess way back in 1977, when I was serving my mandatory military service in my former country, Yugoslavia. Those were interesting times. My fellow soldiers did not understand what I was doing and mocked me 'Look at him, he must be crazy when he plays chess with himself'.

At that time, I played correspondence chess for over ten years and then stopped for a long time because it was necessary to take care of my family, existence, and career. Those were turbulent times in this area of the world. I returned to correspondence chess in 1999, when I was already a citizen of the newly independent country of Slovenia, which was already a new member of the ICCF. Computers have already been used in correspondence chess.

But I have maintained my correspondence habits to this day. I still think that correspondence chess needs to be played with one's own head, and computer technology is just a welcome accessory. But developments are turning my point of view on its head more and more and I have to admit that today's correspondence chess is something else entirely, as even players with little chess knowledge and many GB of computer technology are prospering.

Because of my specific relationship with correspondence chess, I only play a small number of games at a time. For this reason, I rarely appear even in friendly matches. In this article, I will present my game from the 2007 friendly match against Finland.

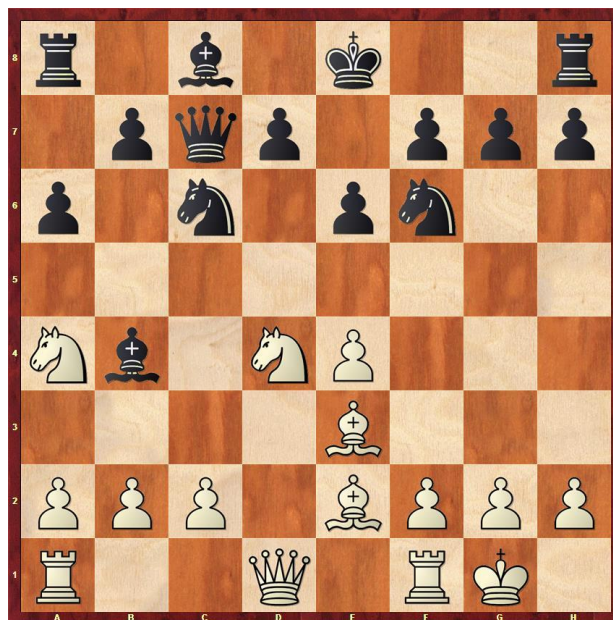
An old game with a new view

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 (In those days, 15 years ago, I used a distinctly aggressive style of play with the opening 1.e4 and avoiding major lines in the openings. Move 2.Nc3 is in this style and quite tricky. The aim was to distract opponents from the main lines of the Najdorf and Lasker and

force them to use their own head early on. The move 2...Nc6 could be followed by 3.Bb5 with the idea of f4 and a transition to Grand Prix Attack systems. At the time, Najdorf fans did not know that they could play 2...d6 (or even 2...a6) here as well, and after the eventual 3.Nf3 they would also switch to their popular opening.)

2...e6 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nxd4 Qc7 (The opening is a complete success from white's point of view. Instead of the main, deeply analyzed lines of Najdorf or Lasker, the line of the Paulsen variation in Sicilian Defense appeared on the board, in which Black already had problems. Today it hardly even appears in correspondence practice.)

6.Be2 a6 7.O-O Nf6 8.Be3 Bb4 9.Na4



Position after 9.Na4

9...O-O!?

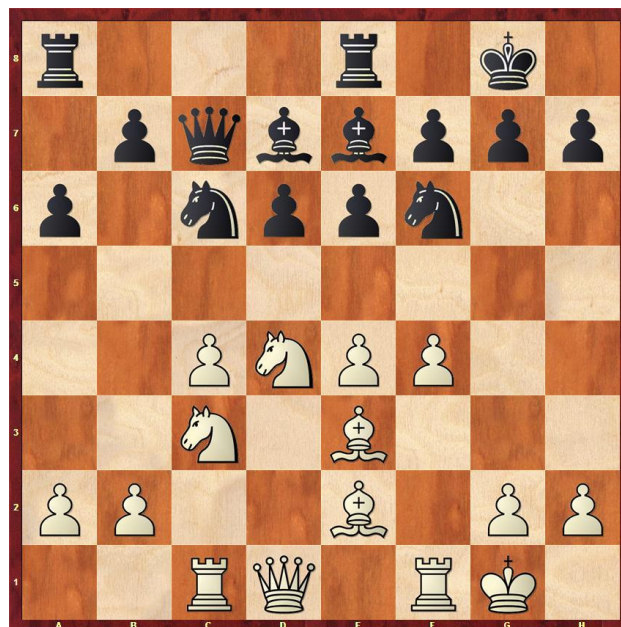
(An old main move which gives white a terrible initiative. Better seems to be 9...Be7. My opponent must have noticed somewhere the game Šemrl - Fleetwood 1-0 (<https://www.iccf.com/game?id=23627>), which was played in the ICCF Olympiad 15 Final a while ago. The game with one of the best USA players is extremely beautiful, but what is especially interesting is the long journey of the white king from the h2 square to the a2 square in the middle game on the board full of pieces.

After 9...O-O, an intermediate move 10.c4 is possible, which exerts additional pressure in the center and especially on the queenside.

10.c4 Be7 11.Nc3 d6 (It is extremely difficult for black to find the right plan in the passive position. He certainly shouldn't play the patterned d6 and Bd7. In any case, it is necessary to at least try a more active game; e.g., Ne5 by pressing the c4 pawn, or b6 with the idea of Bb7. Thus, in the long run, black agrees to a one-goal game.)

12.f4 Bd7?! (There might still be time to relieve the position with a counterattack of e5, or at least a little relaxation after the exchange of knights Nxd4.)

13.Rc1 Rfe8?! (It was the last moment for black to try 13...e5!? Now the passivity of his position reached its maximum.)



Position after 13...Rfe8?!

Such positions simply do not exist in today's top correspondence chess! No one plays this passively with black pieces anymore. Believe it or not, the game is barely from the opening, the material is equal, there are no serious weak points in the black camp... but the game is already won for white at this moment. There is simply no counterplay left for black. I am talking, of course, about correspondence chess at a high level from 2022, 15 years after the game was played.

14.Nb3 Bc8 15.Bf3 Bf8 16.Qd2 Nd7 (While white is placing his pieces in the active places and black is maneuvering the pieces on the last two rows, it may be time for me to give away a 'secret' about my way of playing correspondence chess. I already wrote that I play a very small number of games. But this does not mean that I play a little correspondence chess... On the contrary, in my games I spend almost all available time thinking and really try to go in my

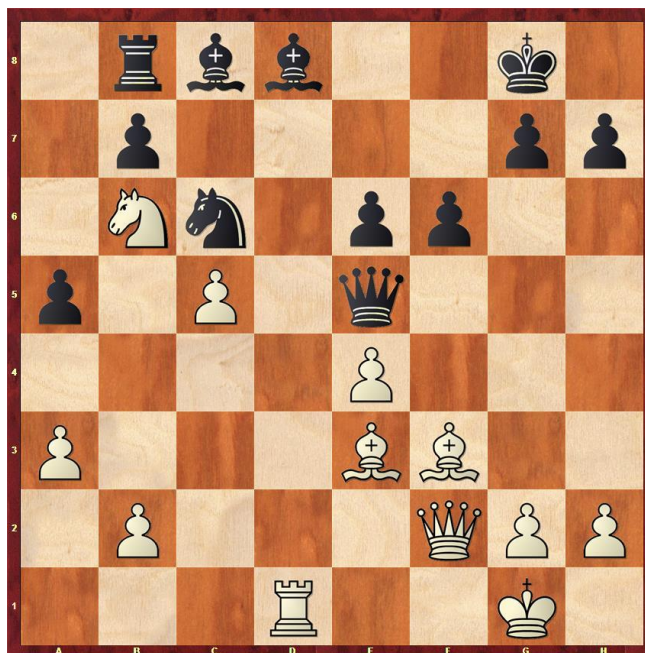
analysis deeply. After the analysis, when, in my opinion, I know all the insights into the position, it is time to make a decision. As a rule, I make difficult decisions in nature, far away from the chessboard. I really like to go to beautiful places, to the hills, to the forest, to lakes, rivers... to the most beautiful places that creation offers us.)



17.Qf2 Nc5?! (17...b6 was more resistant.) 18.Nxc5 dxc5 19.Bxc5 Qxf4 20.Be3 Qe5

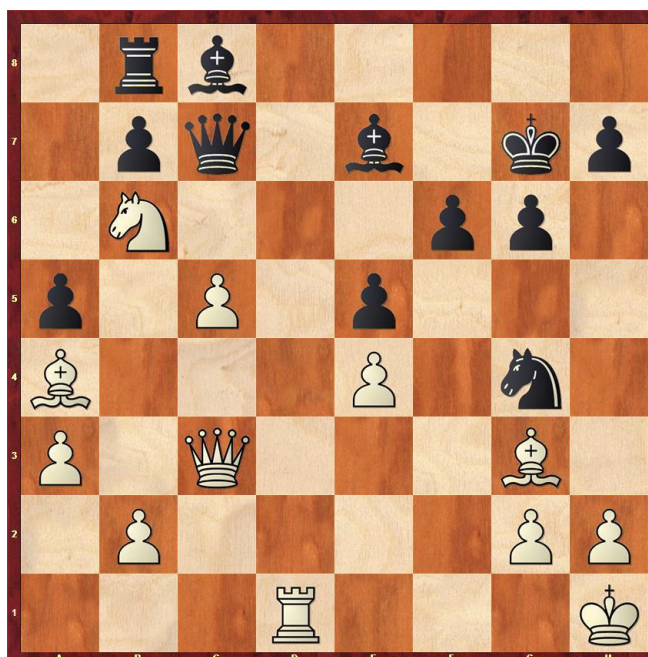
21.Rcd1 f6 22.Na4 Be7 23.Nb6 Rb8 24.a3 a5 25.c5 Rd8 26.Rxd8+ Bxd8 27.Rd1

(The queen is the only active black piece. All the others are practically tied to their places.)



Position after 27.Rd1

27...Be7 28.Qc2 g6 29.Bf2 Kh8 30.Kh1 Qc7 31.Qc3 Ne5 32.Be2 Kg8 33.Bb5 Kg7 34.Ba4 Ng4 35.Bg3 e5



Position after 35...e5

36.Bd7 (White finally converts his positional advantage into a material one.)

36...Nh6 37.Bf2 Ng8 38.Nxc8 Rxc8 39.Bxc8 Qxc8 40.Qxa5 Qc6 41.Rd5 1-0



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".

RULES PERTAINING TO FRIENDLY MATCHES

Since 1/1/17, Friendly Matches are viewed like any other ICCF-approved event, meaning a couple 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.

The latter causes losses in all your other ICCF games and a 2-year suspension during which you will not be allowed to register for any other ICCF event.

For tournament directors interested in working towards the International Arbiter title, directing friendly matches count towards the required number of directed games to earn the title of International Arbiter.

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 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 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! 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.