



The Friendly Post

News from ICCF-US Friendly Matches from around the world - Issue 46, December 2023

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 11 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!

This issue's quotes will reflect non-chess sources with ideas seemingly applicable to chess.

The SWEEPS Winners!

In this issue, we do not feature a game, but instead our most successful friendly match players. These are the players who scored one or more “sweeps”. (A sweep involves winning both games in a 2-game match.) We congratulate our sweep winners from the USA (23) friendly matches that began in 2022 and 2023 – including the five players who achieved this accomplishment twice, and one player who swept an amazing four times!!!

The following is our list of featured players – those with at least 1 sweep during the past 2 years-worth of friendly matches. The parenthetical country name(s) following each player's name refers to the match(es) in which a sweep was accomplished.

USA players who accomplished a sweep 1 time

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| (1) Joseph Aiken (Germany) | (21) Gary Lewis (Hungary) |
| (2) Richard Aiken (France) | (22) William Lindberg (Estonia) |
| (3) Juandris Asin Velaquez (Russia) | (23) William Merrell (Latvia) |
| (4) Christopher Braider (Peru) | (24) Eric Merrill (Belgium) |
| (5) Zev Burton (Cuba) | (25) Bruce Messinger (Germany) |
| (6) Alexander Cacas (Hungary) | (26) Paul Muljadi (Latvia) |
| (7) Thomas Chromczak (Sweden) | (27) Mark Nicholas (Mexico 2022) |
| (8) James Clawson (Sweden) | (28) Michael Powe (Germany) |
| (9) John Davis (Australia) | (29) Michael Quirk (Estonia) |
| (10) Jeffrey French (Hungary) | (30) Russell Rice (Cuba) |
| (11) Joseph Fuller (Germany) | (31) Timothy Sawyer (Australia) |
| (12) Mark Herrmann (Australia) | (32) Gert Smalberger (Germany) |
| (13) David Huff (Germany) | (33) Jason A. Smith (Finland) |
| (14) Victor Huffstatler (Russia) | (34) Randy Smolensky (Russia) |
| (15) David Jacobson (NCA/ECU/GUA/CPV) | (35) Roland Sorel (NCA/ECU/GUA/CPV) |
| (16) Ed Jakobas (NCA/ECU/GUA/CPV) | (36) Cesar Tamondong (Peru) |
| (17) Stanley Jarosz (NCA/ECU/GUA/CPV) | (37) Bobby Taylor (Wales) |
| (18) Archie Keiper (Australia) | (38) Jon Vander Hill (Germany) |
| (19) Thomas Kirk (Wales) | (39) John Walton (Latvia) |
| (20) Michael Thomas Larson (Australia) | |

USA players who accomplished a sweep 2 times

- (1) Duncan Foster (Australia, Wales)
- (2) John Haines (Australia, Wales)
- (3) Timothy Julkowski (NCA/ECU/GUA/CPV, Belgium)
- (4) Jesse McNulty (Germany, on two different boards)
- (5) Bradley Rogers (Hungary, Sweden)

Winning by a sweep is a great accomplishment. Doing it twice is fantastic!

USA players who accomplished a sweep 3 times

(no one)

USA player who accomplished a sweep (a whopping!) 4 times

- (1) Raymond Grinsteiner (Australia, Wales, Germany, Netherlands) = 4 sweeps out of the 5 friendly matches in which he played!!

Raymond Grinsteiner is clearly our Friendly Match Sweep King over the past 2 years!!
Congratulations to Raymond for his great result and contribution to the USA teams!

To unfailingly take what you attack, attack where there is no defense. Sun Tzu (The Art of War)



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 53 of them (besides us). Come go around the world with US!

So far in WT3:

We are about 3/4 through our third World Tour! Come join us!

We have at least started play against the following (31) countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cape Verde*, Croatia, Cuba (x 2), Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Mexico (x 2), Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Russia*, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and Wales [* No longer a member federation]

Scheduled matches: (1) Canada (soon?) and (2) Italy (tentatively in April).

Active invitations: (1) Argentina, (2) Poland, and (3) Slovakia

Our **invitation was declined by, or we received no response** from the following (7) countries: Chile, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Panama, Portugal, South Africa.

Countries (11) **yet to be included in WT3:** Brazil, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, England, Ireland, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Romania, Scotland, Slovenia, and Spain.

The Current Friendly Matches...

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. Each new issue lists the friendly matches currently in progress. Previous issues of "The Friendly Post" can be found at www.iccfus.com. The current standings (through 12/7/2023) are as follows:

	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Server/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.	Slovenia	Server	6/6/2021	18.5 - 22.5 (1 ongoing game)
3.	Wales	Server	7/25/2022	38.0 - 31.0 (1 ongoing game)
4.	Germany	Server	10/12/2022	147.0 - 174.0 (7 ongoing games)
5.	Hungary	Server	12/26/2022	30.0 - 41.0 (5 ongoing games)
6.	Sweden	Server	2/26/2023	47.0 - 41.0 (12 ongoing games)
7.	Switzerland	Server	4/14/2023	17.5 - 20.5 (13 ongoing games)
8.	Latvia	Server	4/18/2023	35.5 - 28.5 (12 ongoing games)
9.	Estonia	Server	4/27/2023	8.5 - 5.5 (2 ongoing games)
10.	Cuba	Server	5/1/2023	32.5 - 29.5 (10 ongoing games)
11.	Turkey	Server	5/10/2023	6.5 - 8.5 (5 ongoing games)
12.	Ukraine	Server	6/19/2023	16.0 - 19.0 (5 ongoing games)
13.	Peru	Server	7/22/2023	17.5 - 18.5 (32 ongoing games)
14.	Norway	Server	10/21/2023	3.5 - 3.5 (57 ongoing games)
15.	India	Server	10/30/2023	2.0 - 2.0 (36 ongoing games)
16.	Croatia	Server	11/2/2023	5.0 - 5.0 (24 ongoing games)
17.	Mexico	Server	11/19/2023	0.0 - 0.0 (50 ongoing games)
18.	Netherlands	Server	11/21/2023	2.0 - 0.0 (126 ongoing games)

TOTAL USA RESULTS

Currently (as of 12/7/2023) = 401 ongoing games

Completed games since 1/1/2007* = 9768 games (averaging 575 games per year for 17 years)

Total score since 1/1/2007* = 4835.5 – 4932.5 (49.5%)

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



Some year-end Friendly Match facts:

--- Invitations to play on a USA team in friendly matches during 2023 were sent to 289 different players (all with individualized emails*). A majority received more than one invitation.

--- There were 13 USA friendly matches this year, one shy of the record for friendly matches within a calendar year, but still averaging more than one per month.

--- The USA has averaged **about 800 completed friendly match games per year** over the past 10 years (as compared to the average number of completed games over the past 17 years being 575 per year.) We played far fewer friendly match games during the early years of this complete time. Thanks for your interest in the Friendly Matches!!

*Please respond to each invitation, including if you need to decline it. Please do not just ignore invitations as this causes me more work and more delay in completing the organization of a match. If you need to decline, please just tell me that. I do not need you to tell me why.

“...think yourself into the enemy’s position. In the world people tend to think of a robber trapped in a house as a fortified enemy. However, if we think of becoming the enemy, we feel the whole world is against us and that there is no escape....In single combat you must put yourself in the enemy’s position. If you think, ‘Here is a master of the Way, who knows the principles of strategy’, then you will surely lose. You must consider this deeply.” Myamoto Musashi (The Book of Five Rings)

Highlights and Interesting Tidbits:

- (1) Four matches ended this quarter, with the USA scoring 3 – 1. We won versus a combined team from **NCA/GUA/ECU/CPV**, and from **Russia** and **Finland**, and lost versus **Spain**.
- (2) Five new matches started this quarter, in fact during just a one-month period. That is a record for a rate of new matches.
- (3) The match versus **Estonia** was close all the way, but the USA held on to a slim lead to win! With 2 games still in play, the USA increased its lead to 3 points, guaranteeing the win. Congrats USA!
- (4) **Cuba** has been a nemesis for us (our score in recent times being 0 – 4), but we just moved from last quarter’s even score to a 3-point lead in this match with 10 games to go. We haven’t won this match yet, but we are getting close enough to taste it. GO USA!! Let’s finish out this win!
- (5) The **Ukraine** match seems to be slipping away from us. With 5 remaining games, the USA has slipped to a 3-point deficit. We need to score 4 points out of these 5 games to tie up the match, a tough goal.
- (6) Unfortunately, something similar can be said about our match versus **Turkey**. The USA is 2 points behind with only 5 remaining games. We need to score 3.5 out of those 5 games to tie things up. Push on USA!!
- (7) The USA maintained its significant 6-point lead versus **Sweden**. After 21 games were completed this quarter, Sweden has only 12 remaining games to battle our extra 6 points.
- (8) And the USA increased its already significant lead versus **Latvia**. Now with 12 remaining games, our lead is up to 7; even better than what we have versus Sweden. Go USA!!
- (9) The **Peru** match remains very close. The USA is currently down 1 point, but with 32 games still being played, the match is completely open for either team to win.
- (10) **Switzerland** maintains its 3-point lead with 13 remaining games. There is still time to catch up and go ahead! Best of luck USA!

“Strategy is not the consequence of planning, but its opposite: the starting point.” Henry Mintzberg

Friendly Match (versus game) win/loss record

(Since 1/1/07) 64 wins, 57 losses, 5 ties (= 52.8% 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)	
Belgium (2022)	Croatia (2015)	
Brazil (2016)	Cuba (2013)	
Brazil (2020)	Cuba (2015)	
British CCA (2016)	Cuba (2018)	
Bulgaria (2016)	Cuba (2021)	
Bulgaria (2021)	Czech Republic (2011)	
Canada (2014)	Czech Republic (2013)	
Cape Verde (2013)	Czech Republic (2019)	
Denmark (2014)	Denmark (2018)	
England (2008)	Denmark (2021)	
England (2012)	England (2020)*	
Estonia (2016)	Finland (2018)	
Estonia (2020)	France (2010)	
Estonia (2023)*	Germany (2008 – Women's only)	
Finland (2009)	Germany (2011)	
Finland (2022)	Germany (2014)	
France (2009)	Germany (2020)	
France (2022)	Germany (2022)*	
Hong Kong (2010)	Hungary (2022)*	
India (2014)	Iceland (2014)	
India (2019)	Iceland (2019)	
Indonesia (2016)	Indonesia (2021)	
Israel (2016)	Israel (2014)	
Israel (2021)	Italy (2010)	
Japan (2013)	Italy (2017)	
Japan (2017)	Mexico (2017)	
Japan (2021)	Mexico (2022)	
Latvia (2015)	Netherlands (2017)	
Latvia (2020)	Norway (2019)	
Lithuania (2015)	Panama (2015)	
Mexico (2020)	Panama (2016)	
NCA/ECU/GUA/CPV (2022)	Philippines (2021)	
Netherlands (2013)	Philippines B (2021)	
Netherlands (2018)	Poland (2015)	
New Zealand (2020)	Romania (2021)	
Panama (2013)	Russia (2013)	
Peru (2013)	Russia (v. Zone 3) (2017)	
Peru (2017)	Slovenia (2019)	
Portugal (2013)	Slovenia (2021)*	
Portugal (2018)	Spain (2008)	

Romania (2008)
Romania (2013)
Russia (2022)
SchemingMind (2018)
Scotland (2008)
Scotland (2016)
Scotland (2020)
Slovakia (2014)
Slovenia (2015)
Spain (2016)
Sweden (2016)
Sweden (2018)
Turkey (2015)
Venezuela (2013)
Wales (2013)
Wales (2022)*
Yorkshire (2018)

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

“Appear where they cannot go, head for where they least expect you. To travel hundreds of miles without fatigue, go over land where there are no people.” Sun Tzu (The Art of War)



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".

"Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat." Sun Tzu (The Art of War)

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

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.