



The Friendly Post

News from ICCF-US Friendly Matches from around the world - Issue 22, December 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!

Quiz Question

Within 25 boards, how many Friendly Match boards were there for USA players during 2017? 2016? 2015? Answers on last page.

Upcoming Friendly Matches

Here are the upcoming Friendly Matches that are currently planned:

- (1) **Ukraine** - scheduled to start in late January or early February 2018.
- (2) **Sweden** - scheduled to start March 2018
- (3) **Australia** - scheduled to start May 2018
- (4) Anticipated challenges to be extended in the near future: **Czech Republic, Finland, Norway, Portugal**

Please remember that Friendly Matches can be scheduled, organized, and started all in between the publication of these newsletters, and in fact often are. (The Mexico 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).

All quotes in this issue are from Emanuel Lasker, World Champion 1894 - 1921.

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

Last year, we completed the ICCF World Tour by extending invitations to all of the 55 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 22 MFs (plus 2 non-MF teams), and have 33 MFs to complete "WT2":

(1) We have started play or at least scheduled a match versus Argentina, Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico (a future ICCF Member Federation), 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: Cape Verde, Chile, Ecuador, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong, & Nicaragua.

Are you "Going Around the World with US"?



Show me three variations in the leading handbook on the openings, and I will show you two of those three that are defective. - Emanuel Lasker

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 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). 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 12/3/2017) are as follows:

	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Server/Email/Postal</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Result (USA v. other)</u>
1.	Belarus	Server	4/25/16	33.0 - 43.0 (4 games still ongoing)
2.	Panama (rematch 2)	Server	7/26/16	27.0 - 34.0 (3 games still ongoing)
3.	Spain	Server	8/9/16	52.5 - 46.5 (11 games still ongoing)
4.	Brazil	Server	9/13/16	41.5 - 25.5 (15 games still ongoing)
5.	Argentina	Server	10/19/16	15.5 - 19.5 (19 games still ongoing)
6.	Peru	Server	12/13/16	9.0 - 9.0 (14 games still ongoing)
7.	Bulgaria	Server	12/25/16	12.5 - 11.5 (22 games still ongoing)
8.	Russia (Chess960)	Server	2/10/17	8.0 - 18.0 (12 games still ongoing)
9.	Germany (Chess960)	Server	2/12/17	3.5 - 14.5 (14 games still ongoing)
10.	France	Server	3/31/17	21.0 - 15.0 (30 games still ongoing)
11.	Japan	Server	6/15/17	2.5 - 1.5 (28 games still ongoing)
12.	Russia v. Zone 3***	Server	8/31/17 (USA bds**)	4.5 - 10.5 (195 gms ongoing)
13.	Netherlands	Server	9/12/17	0.0 - 0.0 (20 games still ongoing)
14.	Mexico	Server	11/12/17	6.5 - 5.5 (60 games still ongoing)
15.	Italy***	Server	12/1/17	0.0 - 1.0 (185 games ongoing)

TOTAL USA RESULTS since 1/1/07*: 2306.0 - 2339.0 (**49.6%**)

* 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.

*** These matches often included pairings with a larger than usual rating difference, for reasons beyond Dennis's control, and usually in favor of our opponents. Hence, these matches are likely to show disproportionate losses for the USA.

Some people do not think a move strong unless it is audible in the next room.
- Emanuel Lasker

Highlights and Interesting Tidbits:

(1) The lead the USA maintained against **Spain** has almost become another win for us. There are still 5 ongoing games, but Spain would need to win them all just to tie the match. Even a draw in any of those 5 games would result in a win for the USA.

(2) 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!

(3) **Argentina** continues to prove itself hard to catch. They have been leading for almost the whole match, but still only by 4 points (as it was last quarter). With 14 games still ongoing, we still have time to make up that difference, but each quarter that time is growing shorter...

(4) All we need versus Argentina is what we are doing versus **Peru**. Early on, we fell behind by 3 points. As of last quarter, we tied it up. Well, this quarter I am glad to report we have moved ahead by a point! Our momentum has apparently continued. With 9 games left in this match, we just need to continue this momentum a little bit longer! GO USA!

(5) The match versus **Bulgaria** started and has remained very close. That is still true. The USA has maintained its 1 point lead since last quarter. With 16 games still remaining, every point matters! Go Team!!

(6) **Chess960** has few participants from the USA, and most are quite inexperienced. That showed itself in the two Chess960 Friendly Matches in which we are involved (along with the fact that large rating differences obviously have an effect as well). We quickly fell far behind in both matches, and never came close to recovering. The results from this past quarter were the first positive showings for the USA in either match (v. Russia: 4-3 in USA favor; v. Germany: 2-2); but the few points we surrendered still cemented our losses in both matches.

(7) On the positive side, last quarter I reported that the USA had taken an early 6 point lead in our match versus **France**. We maintained that same lead during this quarter. With 17 remaining games in this match, that lead is looking bigger and better. Yeah Team!!

(8) Also on a positive note, the USA took a large advantage in its match versus **Japan**. This quarter saw 7 - 1 results for the USA in this match, bringing our lead up to 7 points. That will be a lot for Japan to make up with only 20 remaining games. Go Team!

(9) Finally, a note about the **Russia v. Zone 3** and **Italy v. USA** matches. The pairings in these matches did not come close to adhering to the usual guidelines I use for maximum rating differences between opponents. And the large differences are quite regularly in favor of our opponents in these matches. Hence, we can all expect worse than usual scores by the USA Teams in these events, simply reflecting these rating differences. I expect not to allow the reasons for these pairing differences to occur again, but these two matches were allowed to proceed as they were paired. Just so you know...



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

<u>USA Won</u>	<u>USA Lost</u>	<u>USA Tied</u>
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.



In the beginning of the game ignore the search for combinations, abstain from violent moves, aim for small advantages, accumulate them, and only after having attained these ends search for the combination - and then with all the power of will and intellect, *because then the combination must exist, however deeply hidden.* - Emanuel Lasker

Our Featured Game

In this issue, we begin a series of featured games that concentrate on an often ignored aspect of the game: saving the draw from a "down" position. Most games end in draws, a tendency that is increasing over time. Knowing how to secure the draw from a "lesser" position is invaluable skill, probably at least as important as knowing how to win a won position.

In this first game, our newest IM norm holder, CCE Kyle Biedermann, shows what he had to do to hold the draw in a recent Friendly Match. All annotations are by CCE Biedermann unless otherwise stated. The symbol "□" in the annotations means "essentially forced move".

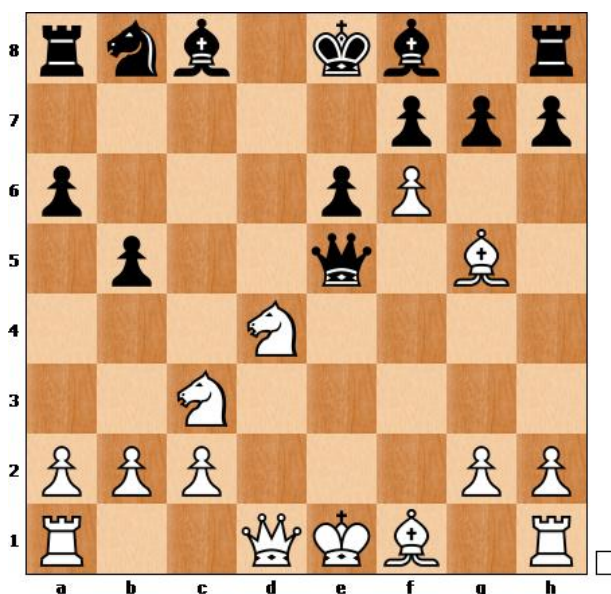
Martín González Ángel (2324) - Biedermann Kyle (2317)

USA - Spain Friendly Match 2016

B96: Sicilian, Najdorf, Polugaevsky variation

(The game, including in pgn format, can be found at <https://www.iccf.com/game?id=872495>.)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bg5 e6 7.f4 b5 8.e5 dxe5 9.fxe5 Qc7 10.exf6 Qe5+



Position after 10...Qe5+

I decided to test my luck in the well known Sicilian Najdorf Polugaevsky Variation to play something a little less sound but to have fun with something new. From the game, I learned that the opening is fairly painful for black, with little to no benefit for black. The endgames following most positions are complex and typically imbalanced; and quite a few positions throughout the game are forced.

11.Be2 Qxg5 12. O-O Ra7 13. Qd3 Rd7 14. Ne4 Qe5 15. Nf3 Qc7

(15... Qxb2 {Greedy move for the pawn but leads to unpleasant series of forced moves with black not getting much out of it.} 16. Qe3 ♠ Bb7 ♠ 17. Rab1 ♠ Qxa2 (if instead 17... Qxc2 18. Nfg5 +-) 18. Nfg5 Bxe4 ♠ 19. Nxe4 ♠ Qd5 ♠ 20. Kh1 +-)

16. Qe3 ♠ Qa7 At this point in the game my position doesn't look very good so liquidating may relieve some of the pressure that white can create. [If instead 16... Bb7 17. a4 b4 (17... Bxe4 18. Qxe4 +/-) 18. Kh1 +/-]

[Point #1: when in a lesser position, trading down pieces can help secure the draw. - Dennis]

17. Qxa7 □ Rxa7 □ 18. a4 Bb7

If 18...gxf6 19. axb5 f5 20. Nf6+ Ke7 21. Nh5 Ke8 22. Kh1 Bc5 23. c3 axb5 24. b4 Bb6 25. Bxb5+ Kd8 26. Rxa7 Bxa7 27. c4 Be3 28. c5 Bb7 +/- [1/2-1/2 Ermolaev,A (2300) - Gesicki,J (2281) WC-2014-T-00002]

If 18...b4? 19. Ne5 gxf6 20. Nxf6 Ke7 21. Rad1 Bg7 22. Ng8+ Ke8 23. Nxf7 Rd7 24. Nxb8 Bxb8 25. Bh5+ Kd8 26. Nf6 Rxd1 27. Rxd1+ Kc7 28. Ne8+ Kb7 +- [1-0 Mulugeta,D (2218) - Bozinovic,B (2251) CRO-chT2 Center 2010]

19. Nfg5 Bxe4 □ 20. Nxe4 □ bxa4N

If 20...b4 21. Rf4 gxf6 22. Nf6+ Ke7 23. Raf1 Nc6 24. Re4 Bg7 25. Nd5 Kf8 26. Rxe6 Nd4 27. Re4 Nxe2+ 28. Rxe2 Bxb2 29. Nxb4 Kg7 30. Nd5 Rc8 +/- [1-0 Verhaeren,G (2302) - de Minho Matias,J (1800P) DE10A/pr 18 ICCF 2016]

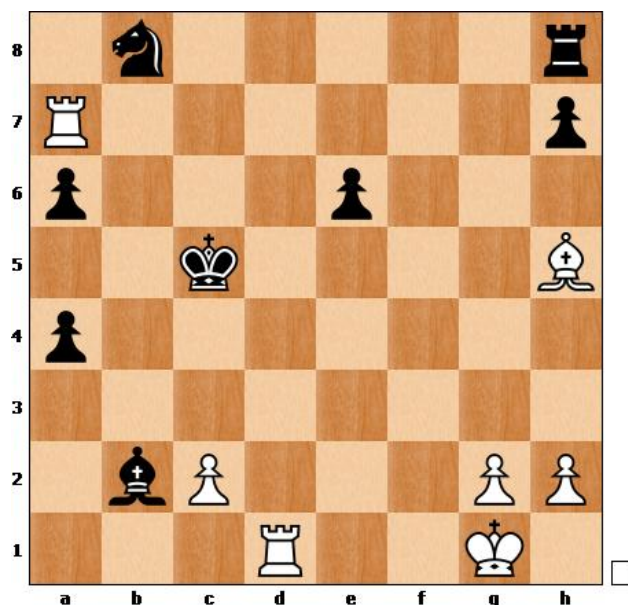
21. fxg7

If 21. Rxa4 gxf6 +/-

21... Bxg7 22. Nd6+ Kf8 □ 23. Bh5 Ke7 □ 24. Rxf7+ Kxd6 □ 25. Rd1+ □ Kc5 □ 26. Rxa7 □ Bxb2 □

Now after another series of forced moves the position has led to a endgame that is imbalanced with knight and pawn for rook, but black has problems with three isolated pawn islands and doubled pawns leading to later liabilities. Is the passed pawn on the a-file far enough to poise as a threat for black?

[Point #2: Look for a feature of your position that can be used to pressure the other side. If the other side needs to stop its attack to address your threat, it can either buy you the time to stop your opponent's attack or cause the other side's pieces to get tied down. - Dennis]



Position after 26...Bxb2

[Point #3: Take the time to notice features of your position that can lead to a draw despite material difference. In the above position, two features stand out : B's of opposite colors (so various blockades become possible), and white's rook pawn's queening square is the opposite color from his B (meaning that black can consider giving up even more material if that would only leave white with his B and h-pawn, as long as black's K can get to h8. - Dennis]

27. Bg4

(27. Rc7+ Kb6 □ 28. Re7 a3 29. Rxe6+ Kc5 30. Re4 Nc6 31. Bf7 Rf8 =) (One engine shows this line, rating as white's strongest, culminating in either a RBP v. RB with opposite colored Bishops and the pawn not advanced - the drawing line involving black's sacrificing his B for the P, to leave a RB v. R draw - or BPP v. BP, with both white pawns on the h-file with Black's K and B where they need to be; again a dead draw. - Dennis)

27... a3 (In the mean while, black uses his main threat rather than worry about a backward pawn. - Dennis)

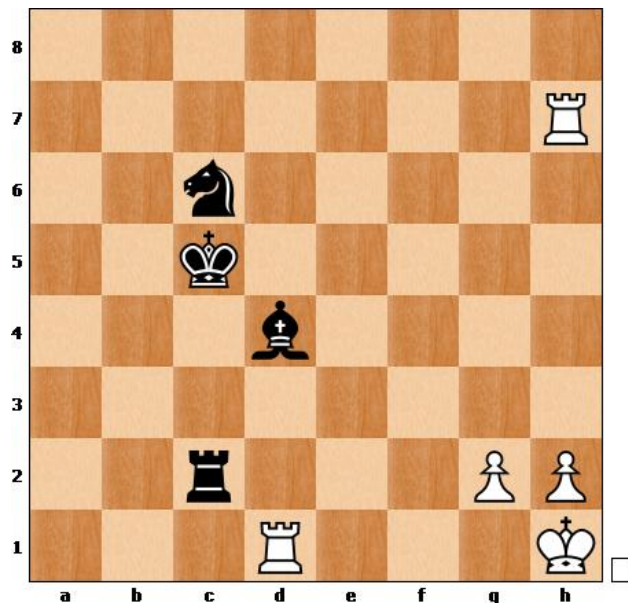
28. Bxe6 □ Nc6 29. Rad7

(An interesting sideline, not specifically in keeping with the above comments, is the perpetual that ensues is white played 29.Rxa6: 29...Kb5 30.Bc4+ Kxc4 31.Rxc6+ Kb5 32.Rc7 Kb6 33.Rc4 Kb5 34.Rc7. Always watch for this type of draw.)

29...a5 30. Bb3

If 30. c3 Re8 31. Ba2 Bxc3 32. Rc1 Re1+ ♠ 33. Rxe1 ♠ Bxe1 ♠ 34. Rxh7 Bc3 35. Bg8 Bd4+ 36. Kf1 Nb4 37. Rc7+ (Decent advantage for white but leads to opposite colored bishop ending with good drawing chances for black.) (In particular when coupled with black's advanced a-pawn: 37...Kb5 38.Rd7 Bc3 39.g4 a2 40.Bxa2 Nxa2 41.g5 Nb4 42.g6 a4 43.Rb7+ Na6 44.g7 Bxg7 45.Rxg7 is a 6-piece tablebase draw despite white being up the exchange. - Dennis)

30... a4 31. Bxa4 Ra8 32. Bb3 a2 33. Bxa2 Rxa2 ♠ 34. Rxh7 Bd4+ 35. Kh1 Rxc2



Position after 35...Rxc2

(A complicated looking endgame position in which Black still needs to prove that the 2 minor pieces can compensate for a R and 2 connected passed pawns. Since the drawing factors of opposite colored Bs and white having the "wrong" colored B for his h-pawn are gone, black needs to find a new strategy. - Dennis)

36. Rd7 Rc4 37. g3

37. h3 luft square move is a more logical move over the board instead of ensuring a king stuck on the first rank, but it is still drawish with 37...Ne5 =

37... Rc2 38. Rf7 Kd5 39. Rf4

If 39. Rff1 Re2 40. Rfe1 Rf2 41. Re8 Rb2 42. Rc8 Rc2 ♠ +/- (This was probably a better line for white, as Kyle indicated, but it is still not clear that white can win. Extricating his K from the back row to avoid weakening his pawns with insufficient support seems problematic. Key point: make sure your pieces are as active as possible, such as black's Rc2, and/or ensure your opponent's pieces are not actively placed. - Dennis)

39... Ke5 (Black begins marching his K to where it would be useful - in front of white's pawns. - Dennis)

40. Rff1 Ra2 41. Rf8 Rc2 42. h4

If 42. Re8+ Kf6 43. Rf1+ Kg6 44. Rc8 Be5 45. Rff8 Kg5 46. Rg8+ Kf6 47. h4 +/- (This is one line I was curious about if it leads to better possibilities for white, but due to the dark colored bishop having power as a blockade could be enough to prevent too much danger from the two passed pawns, as well as most endings it leads to is 2 rooks vs 1 rook + 1 knight or 1 rook vs 1 knight which are both very drawish.)

If 42.Re1+ Kd5 43. Rfe8 Be5 □ =. It is important for black to not exchange rooks at any point as that is not good as stated in Reuben Fine's Basic Chess Endings Pg.456 "Rook plus one Pawn vs. two pieces is usually a draw, though either side may have winning chances. Rook plus two Pawns always win." So the goal now is not to liquidate the rook as it is the piece that keeps black's chance alive in the game to draw.

42... Ke6 43. Re8+ Kf7 (A main strategic element is accomplished. - Dennis)

44. Re4 Be5 (Next, keep other pieces as active as possible. - Dennis)

45. Rg4 Ke6 (45...Rf2 was also good. - Dennis)

46. Re1 (46.Rg6+ was rated better by one engine, but it still only led to RR v. RB with no pawns remaining. The point is that black's strategy now involves trading either minor piece for both white pawns. - Dennis)

46...Ne7 47. Rf1 Rc3 48. Kg2 Nd5 49. Rg6+ Nf6

At this point in the game the next few moves came in pretty quickly. We agreed to a draw a few moves later as white has too many difficulties with moving his pawns without overextending them. Black has his pieces on strong squares limiting white's future possible moves.

50. Rf3 Rc2+ 51. Kh3 Rc1 52. Re3 Kd5 53. Kg2 1/2-1/2

When evenly matched opponents play "correctly", the games seldom have any content and frequently end in draws. - Emanuel Lasker

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 ICCF rules that governed that "withdrawal from one event means withdrawal from all events". That exemption no longer applies. If you have dire need to stop playing, ask the Tournament Director for an accepted withdrawal. If you simply wish to stop playing, it is recommended you resign your Friendly Match games rather than simply abandon them. The latter comes losses in all of 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 now counts towards the required number of directed games to earn the title of International Arbiter. Before 1/1/17, that was not true.



In mathematics, if I find a new approach to a problem, another mathematician might claim that he has a better, more elegant solution. In chess, if anybody claims he is better than I, I can checkmate him. - Emanuel Lasker

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 left 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, 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)

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 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: dmdorenychess@gmail.com; not my old yahoo address.



The FRIENDLY MATCH ELITE

The Elite program has been phased out in keeping with the reduced participation fee for everyone. The regular fee, until 1/1/16, was \$6 per match. It became \$5 per match on that date. Elite members who still had credit were given two years to use that credit.

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 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.

Answers to Quiz Question from page 1

2017: 328 boards

2016: 350 boards

2015: 309 boards

What do these numbers mean? They mean that if you are not yet playing in ICCF-US Friendly Matches, you could be! See details above.