



The Friendly Post

News from ICCF-US Friendly Matches from around the world - Issue 29, September 2019

Greetings from ICCF-US Friendly Match Central. **This begins our 8th year** of quarterly newsletters dedicated to the ICCF-US Friendly Matches! Thanks to all of you who have participated in these matches!

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're invited to participate!

Upcoming Friendly Matches

We are currently in process of completing the organization of a Friendly Match versus **Wales**. If you are first reading about this match, you are probably too late to express interest in this match and get seated.

However, we are also about to organize two other Friendly Matches. One is against the **Czech Republic**. If you are interested in playing in this match, and have not already informed Dennis of your interest, please let him know right away at dmdorenchess@gmail.com.

We will soon be organizing a Friendly Match versus **Poland** as well. The same deal goes here: let Dennis know if you have special interest in participating in this match.

These matches are scheduled to begin, one each, in each of the next 3 months. Please remember that Friendly Matches can be scheduled, organized, and started all in between the publication of these newsletters, and in fact often are. So, if you're interested in playing, let Dennis know! Be sure you write to him today (at dmdorenchess@gmail.com).



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

Are you "Going 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. Mexico has now become the 56th Member Federation of the ICCF (besides the USA). Our second "Go Around the World with US" tour is more than halfway completed. To date, we have engaged with 36 MFs (plus 3 non-MF teams), and have 21 MFs to go to complete "WT2":

(1) We started play or at least scheduled a match versus Argentina (twice!), Australia, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Cuba, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Peru, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the Ukraine, Venezuela, and Wales. This is besides the British Correspondence Chess Association, SchemingMind, and Yorkshire; all being international CC clubs affiliated with member federations.

(2) Invitations were extended but declined (either actively or passively) by: Cape Verde, Chile, Ecuador, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong (no longer an ICCF Member Federation, but it was at the time of our invitation), & Nicaragua.

(3) Remaining MFs to complete our second World Tour: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, England, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, Scotland, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland, and Turkey.

During the last two newsletters, I asked for your input as to which countries you would most like to see US play. It turned out that many countries received some votes, but none stood out as a clear favorite. Some of the most commonly chosen were Ireland, England, New Zealand, Latvia, South Africa, and Poland. As mentioned above, a match with Poland is already being organized. I will be working on the rest from among your list.



“The beauty of chess is it can be whatever you want it to be. It transcends language, age, race, religion, politics, gender, and socioeconomic background. Whatever your circumstances, anyone can enjoy a good fight to the death over the chess board.” – Simon Williams

“The game of chess is not merely an idle amusement. Several very valuable qualities of the mind, useful in the course of human life, are to be acquired or strengthened by it... Life is a kind of Chess, in which we have often points to gain, and competitors or adversaries to contend with.” – Benjamin Franklin

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 10/2/19) are as follows:

	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Server/Email/Postal</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Result (USA v. other)</u>
1.	Russia v. Zone 3***	Server	8/31/17 (USA**)	89.5 - 116.5 (2 ongoing games)
2.	Venezuela	Server	12/31/17	17.5 - 17.5 (1 ongoing game)
3.	Ukraine	Server	2/20/18	25.5 - 33.5 (1 ongoing game)
4.	Sweden	Server	4/20/18	66.5 - 56.5 (1 ongoing game)
5.	Australia	Server	5/27/18	56.0 - 24.0 (4 ongoing games)
6.	Finland	Server	7/15/18	37.5 - 43.5 (1 ongoing game)
7.	Israel	Server	7/18/18	9.5 - 8.5 (2 ongoing games)
8.	Cuba	Server	8/1/18	29.5 - 44.5 (6 ongoing games)
9.	Netherlands	Server	9/30/18	43.5 - 33.5 (6 ongoing games)
10.	Portugal	Server	11/28/18	48.5 - 32.5 (11 ongoing games)
11.	Denmark	Server	12/11/18	15.5 - 18.5 (8 ongoing games)
12.	Canada	Server	3/16/19	15.0 - 18.0 (15 ongoing games)
13.	Iceland	Server	5/4/19	4.0 - 4.0 (12 ongoing games)
14.	India	Server	5/23/19	19.5 - 12.5 (34 ongoing games)
15.	Argentina	Server	7/1/19	2.0 - 1.0 (21 ongoing games)
16.	Norway	Server	7/11/19	5.5 - 10.5 (34 ongoing games)
17.	Slovenia	Server	9/5/19	2.5 - 3.5 (44 ongoing games)

TOTAL USA RESULTS

Since 1/1/07* (6073 completed games!): 3014.5 - 3058.5 (49.6%)

This quarter, we went over the threshold of 6000 COMPLETED GAMES in our Friendly Matches since 1/1/2007 (12.75 years ago).

And since the first issue of *The Friendly Post*, in September 2012 (7 years ago), the USA's results in Friendly Matches has been 2483.5 - 2485.5: a 2-point deficit out of nearly 5000 games!!! About as "50-50" as we can get.

Let's see if we can make this a plus record by next September!

* Not including Chess960 events versus Russia and Germany. The Chess960 events had far larger rating differences per board compared to regular Friendly Matches. The Chess960 results were therefore not considered comparable to those from regular Friendly Matches.

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

*** This match often included pairings with a larger than usual rating difference, for reasons beyond Dennis's control, and usually in favor of our opponents. Hence, this match shows disproportionate losses for the USA.



Highlights and Interesting Tidbits:

(1) Last quarter there were no team wins or losses by the USA. We made up for this paucity of results this quarter. There were 5 team results: 3 wins and 2 losses.

(2) Starting with our wins, the USA made a huge surge in scoring from among the remaining games in our match versus **Sweden**. As of last quarter, we were ahead by 5 points with 12 games to go. During the past 3 months, 11 of those 12 games ended, with the USA scoring 8-3, doubling our lead and guaranteeing the team win. Way to go USA!!

(3) We started the match versus **Portugal** with a bang, and held onto a huge lead throughout. With the score now at 48.5-32.5 with 11 games remaining, our 16-point lead guarantees a USA win in this match. BTW, thanks to IM Robert Rizzo for pointing out when this match reached the deciding tipping point (following the completion of his games!).

(4) The USA held onto its double digit lead in the match versus the **Netherlands**, secured last quarter, and has brought the match to our win column. With only 6 remaining games, our 10-point lead is insurmountable. Very fine match for the USA!

(5) Unfortunately, the USA experienced some team losses as well. **Finland** held onto its lead long enough to win the match. Gaining two points this last quarter, Finland's current lead of 6 points will win, given only one remaining game.

(6) **Cuba** continues its winning ways when playing the USA in Friendly Matches. This past quarter saw an increase in the Cuban lead by 4 points, bringing their lead to 15. With only 6 ongoing games, this match gets scored for Cuba.

Then there are the **VERY CLOSE** matches:

(7) the score versus **Venezuela** is tied, 17 apiece, with literally one game remaining. The result of that game will determine the outcome from the match.

(8) the match with **Israel** has been close throughout, and the current status is the same. The USA is still 1 point ahead, but with 2 remaining games (both on the top board!), the match can still go either way (or end up tied). GO USA!

(9) We may be seeing a wonderful comeback in our match versus **Denmark**. This match had seemed to be slipping away, with the report last quarter finding the USA 5 points behind with only 14 remaining games. During this quarter, though, the USA scored 4-2, meaning we are only 3 points behind with 8 remaining games. This is still a substantial climb, but just the scoring rate we accomplished this past quarter will allow the USA to win. PRESS ON USA!

(10) The matches against **India** is going very well for US. With nearly half of the total games finishing during just this past quarter (30 out of 66!), the USA has surged ahead by 7 points.



Friendly Match (versus game) win/loss record

(Since 1/1/07) 43 wins, 32 losses, 1 tie (= 57.2%)

USA Won	USA Lost**	USA Tied
Argentina (2010)	Austria (2014)	Norway (2013)***
Argentina (2016)	Belarus (2016)	
Australia/New Zealand (2012)	Belgium (2015)	
Australia (2016)	Croatia (2015)	
Australia (2018)*	Cuba (2013)	
Brazil (2016)	Cuba (2015)	
British CCA (2016)	Cuba (2018)*	
Bulgaria (2016)	Czech Republic (2011)	
Canada (2014)	Czech Republic (2013)	
Cape Verde (2013)	Finland (2018)*	
Denmark (2014)	France (2010)	
England (2008)	Germany (2008 - Women's only)	
England (2012)	Germany (2011)	
Estonia (2016)	Germany (2014)	
Finland (2009)	Iceland (2014)	
France (2017)	Israel (2014)	
Hong Kong (2010)	Italy (2010)	
India (2014)	Italy (2017)	
Indonesia (2016)	Mexico (2017)	
Japan (2013)	Netherlands (2017)	
Japan (2017)	Panama (2015)	
Latvia (2015)	Panama (2016)	
Lithuania (2015)	Poland (2015)	
Netherlands (2013)	Russia (2013)	

Netherlands (2018)*
Panama (2013)
Peru (2013)
Portugal (2013)
Portugal (2018)*
Romania (2008)
Romania (2013)
SchemingMind (2018)*
Scotland (2008)
Scotland (2016)
Slovakia (2014)
Slovenia (2015)
Spain (2016)
Sweden (2012)
Sweden (2018)*
Turkey (2015)
Venezuela (2013)
Wales (2013)
Yorkshire (2018)*

Russia (v. Zone 3) (2017)*
Spain (2008)
Sweden (2007)
Switzerland (2014)
Ukraine (2015)
Ukraine (2018)*
Venezuela (2014)
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.

*** Isn't it amazing that after 71 completed matches, where pairings were made with as equal ratings as possible, that there has been only one tied match?



FEATURED GAME

CCM Dennis Doren (2388) - IM Luis Gonzaga Grego (2403)

USA - Portugal Friendly Match

This game is online at <https://www.iccf.com/game?id=1057858>

King's Indian, Saemisch variation (E83)

(All annotations by Dennis Doren)

After 7 years of trying to play a game I thought worth featuring in the newsletter, I recently completed one. In the still ongoing Friendly Match versus Portugal, I had already lost my other game due to a careless move (playing a move out of order from what it needed to be - AARGH...), so I had all the more incentive to play the remaining game as well as I could. What made this game stand out to me was that despite the fact the opening I played was designed for a K-side attack, I was able to find a breakthrough idea on the Q-side even with my K on that side.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 O-O 6.Be3 Nc6 (More common, and showing better results for Black is 6...c5. The move 6...Nc6 is still considered a very standard move, however.)

7.Nge2 e5 (This is an unusual move, but one my opponent had played in 4 previous games found in the ICCF archives. His tendency to play this move was one of the reasons I chose to play into this position. The far more common idea is 7...a6.)

8.d5 Ne7 9.g4 (9.Qd2 is the other option for White here. I decided to start the K-side pawn attack right away, to leave open the option of Ng3 as soon as I might need to play it. If Black allows it, White would later continue with h4 and h5.)

9...Nd7 (The usual move here is 9...Ne8, though the difference may be null given that Black typically moves that N back to f6 in both cases, after Black's f-pawn has been advanced. In the ICCF archived set of games, my opponent is now following only one other game, his own involving a different opponent.)

10.Ng3 f5 11.gxf5 gxf5 12.Nh5 [The Mega (over-the-board) database only shows 2 games through 11...gxf5, both of which continued with 12.exf5. See my note after 15.Qd2 below concerning White playing exf5 at any point. I think White is far better off taking advantage of the option to rid of Black's main K-side defender, the dark squared B.]

12...Nf6 13.Nxg7 Kxg7 14.Rg1+ Ng6 (Black is working to contest as much as he can on the K-side. In general, this can be a good plan, but this game shows that bringing too much to one side of the board can leave the other vulnerable. At the end of the game, Black's 2 Ns are still sitting on their current squares, and by that time doing nothing valuable.)



Position after 14...Ng6

15.Qd2 [This move ended the repetition of my opponent's earlier game in the same variation. In that other game, which ended as a draw, the player played 15.exf5, presumably to prevent Black's f4 blocking White's dark squared B from entering the K-side. I discarded 15.exf5 as my move, however, as it places the Black B on the fine square of f5, still allows Black to occupy f4 within one move (Nf4), and keeps the f-file (semi-)open with Black's R already lined up for it. The only other reason for playing 15.exf5 is to vacate the e4 square for White's N. That option would need some work to accomplish, and even after such work, the N can be traded off. I think 15.exf5 gives Black way too much just to avoid f4.]

15...f4 16.Bf2 b6 17.a4 a5 [White was threatening to open the Q-side with a5. After Black's 17...a5, however, White gains the b5 square for his N. The square b5 now becomes a major thorn in Black's (Q-)side.]

18.O-O-O Rg8 (Black is quite well defended on the K-side, appears protected behind his wall of pawns, but his pieces are rather passive. The first question I asked myself was how do I activate my pieces, to prepare for a breakthrough when ready?)

19.Nb5 Bd7 20.Be1 Nh5 (Preparing Nh4, though playing Kh8 first may have been the better order of moves.)

21.Qc2 (Creating room for the R on d1 to go to the 2nd rank, as well as opening up options for the B on e1. Positions where one's opponent is protected behind a wall of pawns can take a lot of maneuvering to gain a positional advantage.)

21...h6 22.Rd2 Kh7 23.Rdg2 (Showing that Black's idea of Nh4 was too slow. White would now win with Rxg8. Black's Q is also tied down to defending the pawn on c7 from White's N on b5.)

23...Qc8 24.Qd3 (Making room for Rc2, where the R would be better placed for a Q-side break.)

24...Bh3 25.Rc2 Bd7 26.b3 Qb7 (My study of where White's pieces are aimed, the coordination of lines of attack, showed a lot more potential on the Q-side than on the K-side. It was here that I found the needed Q-side breakthrough of Black's pawn wall. I just needed to get my N out of the way first, both so that the f1-a6 diagonal could be utilized when needed, and to bring the N to a more important square.)

27.Na3 Nf6



Position after 27...Nf6

28.c5(!) [To break through, I had earlier looked at sacrificing the exchange on the K-side (after Black's Bh3, allowing him to take on g2) with the idea of taking over the h3-c8 diagonal and continuing my attack on the K-side, but never found enough compensation for the exchange. On the Q-side, the breakthrough had to involve a pawn sac, either temporary one or one more designed for positional compensation. This move, 28.c5, was the culmination of those thoughts.]

28...bxc5 [28...dxc5 would have created a substantial weakness on e5 (attacked through Nc4, Bc3, and indirectly through Rcg2) which would have allowed White to gain substantial momentum in his attack. Declining White's pawn on c5 would still allow White to gain squares for his pieces (Bb5 with the Q taking over the White squares if the B's trade; Nc4) without the cost of a pawn. It would also allow White's c6, forcing Black's B to the back row, interfering with the coordination of Black's Rs and making White's Rcg2 all the better.]

29.Nc4 Qa7 30.Bxa5 (Besides opening lines of attack, this is the other real point to 28.c5: White gets a passed pawn.)

30...Qb7 31.Be1 Qc8 [It is hard to find a meaningful plan for Black. But how can White make progress? Paraphrasing GM Tigran Petrosian (I think): first figure out where you want your pieces to be, then figure out how to get them there.]



Position after 31...Qc8

32.Na3 Kg7 33.a5 [My idea was to get the pawn at least to a6 guarded by the Bf1, the R to c2, and a crushing piece on c6 (either the N through c4 and a5, or the B through b5). At some point, Black could be forced to sac the exchange for the a-pawn. After that, I believed the c7 and then d6 pawns would be sufficiently vulnerable by my bringing my Rs through the a- and b-files.]

33...Kh8 34.Ra2 Kh7 35.Qd2 Bh3 36.Bb5 Bd7 37.Bc4 Be8 38.Qe2 (Cementing control over the f1-a6 diagonal.)

38...Bf7 39.Qf1 Qd7 40.Nc2 (Here, instead of working on my original plan, I decided to implement another principle: the side with the positional advantage gains from an increase in open lines. The purpose of 40.Nc2 is seen at move 42.)

40...Rg8 41.a6 Rb6 42.b4



Position after 42.b4

42...cxb4 (42...c6, to attempt to trade light squared Bs, allows 43.dxc6 Rxc6 44.b5 where White has connected passed pawns already on the 5th and 6th ranks. A more passive approach, such as 42...Qc8, allows 43.bxc5 dxc5 44.Ra5.)

43.Nxb4 Ne7 44.Rgg2 c5 45.Nd3 Qc8 46.Nb2 (And a new way to activate my pieces emerged, once there were more open lines available. My plan now was to bring all forces to bear on the Q-side: Na4 & Ba5 & Rgb2, allowing Nb6; B-b5-c6; and my Q would follow as needed, either through b5 or h3 or g2-g4.)

My opponent presumably saw all of this, too, and decided not to subject himself to trying to defend against that onslaught: **1-0**





The new Triple Block time control system is coming to the ICCF-US!

Have you heard about the trials going on concerning the new "Triple Block" time control system? The Triple Block system, abbreviated as "TriBl" or "TB", was developed by an ICCF work group specifically appointed during the 2015 Congress to address a variety of complaints about the current 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. Since then, dozens of events have used the system without significant problem, with more events officially scheduled during 2019.

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. You can participate in helping the ICCF make a significant improvement in its 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!

You can learn more about this trial time control system by going to the following ICCF documents:

(1) Go to the ICCF home page, then to "ICCF Rules" (on the left), then in the lower box where it says "Triple Block System Documents", to find the following 3 detailed documents:

- (a) "Explanation of how it works" (This is **the document** for players to use)
- (b) "Instructions for Tournament Organizers"
- (c) "Rule differences - for TDs"

(2) You can also see the original descriptive proposal (including a Power Point presentation) at <https://www.iccf.com/Proposal.aspx?id=103> [That is, go to the ICCF home page, then to "ICCF Congresses" (on the left), then to 2016 Congress "proposals", then to proposal #028].



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.

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 causes 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.



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 Siefiring, Invitational Facilitator

Senior International Master Dan Perry, Webmaster

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 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 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!

“If your opponent offers you a draw, try to work out why he thinks he’s worse off.” – Nigel Short

Brief Note

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

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.

