



The Friendly Post

News from ICCF-US Friendly Matches from around the world - Issue 7, March 2014

Greetings again from ICCF-US Friendly Match Central! This issue continues our process of bringing you the news from our collective set of Friendly Matches. To explain to any new recipients, Friendly Matches are national team versus national team chess contests where the overall team outcomes do not matter beyond bragging rights. Everyone is eligible to play. The ICCF-US uses both a standing set of interested players and new participants in virtually every match. Each match participant plays two **rated** games, one with white and one with black, against a single opponent of nearly identical rating. The regular fee to participate is \$6 per match.

WE DID IT!!

A Friendly Match against Germany just began. As anticipated, it has now set the record for the largest the ICCF-US has ever played! Back in 1995, we had a match involving 157 boards, also against Germany. Our players were actually a combination of USA players from 4 different organizations that existed back then: 50 players from the USCF, 50 players from the CCLA, 50 players from the APCT, and 7 players from NOST. (Thanks, and a tip of our hat to Alex Dunne for this historical information!)

But does anyone know the final results from the match? Many of us think we recall that Germany won, but no one yet contacted has the final score. If you do, please let Dennis know.

SO WHAT OTHER MATCHES ARE ON DECK?

There are 55 Member Federations in the ICCF against which the USA can potentially play a Friendly Match. Here are the (7) new Friendly Matches that are scheduled to begin within the next 6 months (!), beside the 17 Friendly Matches currently in progress (see list in the next section). That's 24 of the possible 55 Member Federations all on our schedule at the same time. If you're not playing in the Friendly Matches, it's because you don't want to, or you are first

hearing about them!! If you want to play and have not yet told Dennis, please just contact him and say so at dmdoren@yahoo.com. Coming up are the following:

- (1) India - To start early April.
- (2) Israel - To start near the end of May.
- (3) Austria - To start about June 1.
- (4) Denmark - To start in July.
- (5) Hong Kong - To start in July.
- (6) Switzerland - Start date August 1.
- (7) Slovakia - To start in the Fall.

And the Friendly Matches that are Already Ongoing...

You can always find the current results from any of our Friendly Matches by visiting www.iccf-webchess.com, Tables and Results, Friendly Matches, but this newsletter will also make it easy for you to stay up-to-date. The first three issues of "*The Friendly Post*" (which can be found at www.iccfus.com) listed all of our matches from 1/1/07 to the date of newsletter circulation. There are now too many Friendly Matches to keep doing that, so this issue lists only those currently in progress but not yet completed. The current standings (through 3/4/2014) are as follows:

	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Server/Email/Postal</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Result (USA v. other)</u>
1.	Sweden	Server	5/1/12	61.0 - 28.0 (1 game still ongoing)
2.	Australia/NZ	Server	11/1/12	63.0 - 44.0 (1 game still ongoing)
3.	Russia	Server	2/1/13	59.0 - 91.0 (12 games still ongoing)
4.	Cape Verde	Server	3/24/13	20.0 - 8.0 (2 games still ongoing)
5.	Norway	Server	3/31/13	19.5 - 20.5 (4 games still ongoing)
6.	Netherlands	Server	4/11/13	52.0 - 53.0 (23 games still ongoing)
7.	Czech Republic	Server	4/25/13	36.5 - 47.5 (28 games still ongoing)
8.	Portugal	Server	4/25/13	23.5 - 20.5 (10 games still ongoing)
9.	Romania	Server	9/1/13	20.5 - 13.5 (36 games still ongoing)

10.	Venezuela	Server	9/16/13	12.0 - 7.0 (21 games still ongoing)
11.	Peru	Server	9/25/13	9.5 - 9.5 (33 games still ongoing)
12.	Japan	Server	10/25/13	0.0 - 0.0 (18 games still ongoing)
13.	Cuba	Server	12/11/13	2.5 - 5.5 (76 games still ongoing)
14.	Wales	Server	12/12/13	6.0 - 8.0 (28 games still ongoing)
15.	Iceland	Server	1/2/14	1.0 - 1.0 (60 games still ongoing)
16.	Canada	Server & Post	1/17/14	10.0 - 6.0 (88 games still ongoing)
17.	Germany	Server	3/22/14	0.0 - 0.0 (162 games still ongoing)

TOTAL USA RESULTS since 1/1/07: 947.5 - 969.5 (**49.4%, up from 49.1% in just 3 months**)

Highlights:

(1) We made a major comeback during the past 3 months in the Netherlands match. We were behind 40-47 just 3 months ago, but have all but completely caught up. With the score now at 52-53 and with 23 games still in progress, we are right back in the hunt to win. Go team!

(2) Our total results since 1/1/07 has steadily been improving! When the newsletters began, back in September 2012, USA players had scored 48.1% out of 1004 games in Friendly Matches. (Put another way, we scored 42 points under 50% during the 5.75 years between January 2007 through September 2012.) We have now made up virtually half of those points (20 of those 42) in just the past 1.5 years, scoring 51.2% of 813 games during that time.

Match (versus game) win/loss record since 1/1/07: 11 wins, 9 losses (55.0%)

<u>USA Won</u>	<u>USA Lost</u>
Argentina (2010)	Czech Republic (2011)
Australia/New Zealand (2012)*	France (2010)
Cape Verde (2013)*	Germany (2011)
England (2008)	Germany (2008 - Women's only)
England (2012)	Italy (2010)
Finland (2009)	Russia (2013)*
Hong Kong (2010)	Spain (2008)

Panama (2013)
Romania (2008)
Scotland (2008)
Sweden (2012)*

Sweden (2007)
Ukraine (2010)

* Still officially ongoing, but the final team outcome is already determined.

The USA just won the 2012 match against England. The win literally came down to the last game being played! With this win, the USA has increased its plus score in Friendly Match outcomes (and we had a minus score just a year ago). Congratulations and thanks to all of you who have participated!



"If you are not big enough to lose, you are not big enough to win"

A Statistical Brain Teaser...The Answer

In the last issue, the following "Statistical Brain Teaser" was offered, with the answer promised for this issue. Here is the brain teaser, repeated for your convenience, based on an actual statistical finding:

"The higher a player's rating, the more likely his/her games will end in draws; or said the other way around, the lower a player's rating, the more likely his/her games will end in either a win or loss (versus a draw). The finding was statistically quite strong."

My question to readers is this: which one of the following is correct?

(a) This outcome is regularly found only when people play equally rated opponents, such as in the Friendly Matches.

(b) An implication of this statistical finding is that your rating will go up to the degree that you increase the proportion of your games that end in a draw.

(c) Although this finding was statistically strong in this analysis, it probably will not hold up over time.

(d) None of the above is true.

The correct answer is.....

"a". Draws are regularly seen when top rated players play each other, with a lower frequency of draws found when lower rated players play each other. On the other hand, it is not simply a characteristic of top rated players to draw a lot, as we also know that top rated players show a relatively high frequency of winning their games when playing lower rated players. Similarly, players rated in the middle-range most often draw between themselves, versus against higher or lower rated players. Option "b" is not correct because just drawing a lot will only keep your rating at the average of the ratings of the people you play. Option "c" is arguably wrong because the finding was based on a huge number of games and was found to be statistically meaningful. Of course, we cannot completely and totally rule this option out, as anything based on statistics is probabilistic in nature and not based in absolute certainty. Then again, what is? This writer considers the probability for option "c" to be correct to be so small that it is simpler just to say option "c" is wrong.



"Victory goes to the player who makes the second-to-last mistake" Tarkatower

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-webchess.com. Contact Dennis Doren at dmdoren@yahoo.com concerning anything related to Friendly Matches.



"After the game, the King and Pawn go into the same box."

The People Behind the Organization

Thanks to the people who keep it all running, the ICCF-US Administrators:

International Master Corky Schakel, USA National Federation Representative

Senior International Master Tom Biedermann, Treasurer

Senior International Master Carl Siefring, Tournament Organizer

Senior International Master Dan Perry, Webmaster

International Master Bob Rizzo, Norms and Communications Organizer

Glen Shields, North America/Pacific Zone (NAPZ) Tournament Organizer

Senior International Master Kristo Miettinen, Tournament Organizer

International Arbiter Franklin Campbell, Tournament Organizer

Yours truly,

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

*"The only way to get smarter is by playing a smarter opponent."
Fundamentals of Chess, 1885.*



Games from the Matches

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

This issue's highlighted game is from our Friendly Match versus Romania started in September 2013.

Humberto Cruz (2353) - Florin Voiculescu (2304) [D00]

(Analysis by Mr. Cruz. Comments in **bold** by Dennis Doren.)

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 d5 3.e3 e6 4.Nd2 Be7 [4...c5 has shown more success for Black]

5.Bd3 0-0 6.c3 [6.f4 immediately is more common]

6...Nbd7 7.f4 c5 8.Ngf3 Qb6 [8...b6 or an immediate 8...h6 is more common]

9.Rb1 h6 10.Bh4 Qa5 11.a4 Kh8 [?!] 12.Ne5 Qc7 [While each move was understandable in its own right, the process of moving 8...Qb6, 10...Qa5 and then 12...Qc7 seems to have gained Black nothing while giving White time for his development, making the Q maneuvers questionable.]

13.0-0 Ng8 [13...b6 seems better, developing new piece instead of retracting already developed one. Black seems to be wasting precious time.]

14.Bg3 [14.Qh5 immediately was possible though not clearly better.]

14...a6 15.Qh5 Nxe5 16.fxe5 [White's pieces are now poised for a K-side attack, while Black is behind in his Q-side counterattack.]



Position after 16.fxe5

16...g6 17.Qh3 Bd7 18.e4 [18.Ra1 Qb6 19.Ra2 Bxa4 20.Rxa4 Qxb2 21.Nf3 Qxc3 22.Bb1 Qxe3+ 23.Bf2 Qb3 24.Ra2; 18.Bc2 b5 19.Bf4 (19.axb5 axb5 20.Bf4) 19...Kg7]

18...Bg5 [18...Bxa4 19.exd5; 18...c4]

19.Nf3 Be3+ 20.Kh1 [20.Bf2 Bxf2+ 21.Rxf2] [White would give up some of his edge by allowing this trade of pieces]

20...cxd4 21.cxd4 [21.exd5 dxc3 (21...exd5) 22.Rbe1 c2 23.d6 Qc5 24.Bxc2 Qxc2 25.Rxe3]

21...dxe4 [21...Bc6 22.exd5 Bxd5 23.Rbe1 Bxf3 24.Rxe3]

22.Bxe4 h5 [22...Bc6 23.Bxc6 Qxc6 24.Rbe1]

23.Rbe1 [Bringing in another attacker, with tempo.]

23...Bh6 24.Bh4 [White's pieces are poised for the final attack. Black's pieces are doing little beyond attacking White's a-pawn, one of the few non-players among White's pieces]

24...Bc6 [To try to trade White's attack down, ridding of White's centralized B. Grabbing the pawn with 24...Bxa4 would likely lose to 25.g4.]

25.g4 [White does not slow down. More and more is coming at Black's K-side.]

25...Bxe4 26.Rxe4 Qc6 27.Rfe1 b5 [? It seems hard to believe that Black can survive with

moves involving pawns on the Q-side; 27...Qd5 or 27...Rac8 seem like better tries though Black is still in trouble.]



Position after 27...b5

28.Bf6+ [28.gxh5 g5; 28.a5; 28.Bg5]

28...Nxf6 29.exf6 Rfd8 30.gxh5 [30.Ne5 Qb7 31.gxh5 g5]

30...g5 31.Ne5 Qb7 32.Qe3 [32.a5 Rac8 33.Ng6+ Kh7 34.Qd3][!!!]

32...Kh7 33.a5 [33.Kg1]

33...Rac8 34.Kg1 Rc7 35.Qd3 Kh8 36.Ng6+ Kg8 37.h4 [37.Rg4]

37...Rcd7 [Relatively speaking, an awful move. On the other hand, 37...gh4 just prolongs the agony after 38.Rg4]

38.hxg5 [38.Rg4 was also good] Bxg5 39.Ne7+ Kh8 [39...Rxe7 40.Rg4]

40.Rg4 [If 40...Bxf6 41. Qd2 is crushing.] **1-0**



The "FRIENDLY MATCH ELITE

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

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

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

So who are the current Friendly Match Elite? Congrats to those 33 players on the ICCF-US current list:

Brent Askvig; Juraj Beres; Mark Capron; Ken Edwards; Gordon Everitt; Robert Fass; Eric Fischvogt; Stephen Grout; Russ Haag; Michael G. Hayes; Kenneth Holroyd, IM; David Huff; Stanley Jarosz; Richard Jenkins; Charles Knouse; Steven Ledford; Andrew Leonard; William Lindberg; Jean L. Moeckel; Lazaro Munoz; Cesar Musitani, IM; Donald Randolph; Russell Rice; Fred Sharpell; Carl L. Siefring, SIM; George Stone; Dana Sylvander; Bryan Towery; Wesley Underwood; Harry Van Buren; Brian Villarreal; Scott Young; & William C. Young, III

Even beyond are the 35 people on the **ICCF-US FM Honor Roll** (those people who achieved Elite status, received their reduced fees for 3 matches, and of course, continue to demonstrate both ongoing interest and integrity in playing FMs):

Richard Aiken; David Ballard; John Ballow, IM; Edward Barr; Kyle Biedermann; Thomas Biedermann, SIM; Michael Brooks; Maurice Carter; Chris Cendrowski; Steven Chilson; Gregory W. Cross; Gary Deskin; Dennis Doren; James R. Ellis; Leonid Gleyzer; Dr. Michael Hailparn; Harry Ingersol; Joseph Korman; Jon S. Leisner; Edward Lupiensi; Roger Martindale; Edwin Meiners; William Merrell; Charles Mellow; Chris O'Connell; Larry Parsons; Michael Quirk; Alex Relyea; Mark Robledo, Sr.; Patrick J. Ryan; Corky Schakel, IM; Gerald K. Thomas; Lester Weiss; David V. White; & Viktor Zenkov

Are you next? All you need to do is play in 7 Friendly Matches without ever committing a silent withdrawal. You need not complete play from your 7th FM to become FM Elite and have reduced fees for 3 of your next FMs - just start play in your 7th FM, be up-to-date in your fee payments, and continue to avoid defaulting a game.

You Can Play on the USA Team in a Friendly Match!

You, too, can play in a Friendly Match, no matter the degree to which you have played in an ICCF-US event of any kind previously. Each match consists of two **rated** games (one white, one black) against the same opponent who is very close in rating to yours. The total fee is \$6 for your participation per match (unless you are FM Elite as described above, when the fee is \$4 for your next 3 FMs).

Just contact Dennis Doren, the ICCF-US Friendly Match Organizer, at dmdoren@yahoo.com and 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 all arrangements have been finalized. Dennis will tell you when that is.

“A computer once beat me at chess, but it was no match for me at kick boxing.”