



The Friendly Post

News from ICCF-US Friendly Matches from around the world - Issue 16, June 2016

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, just as these newsletters have been doing for nearly four (4) years!

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 \$5 per match.

Brief Note

If you wish to contact me, please use my new email address starting immediately: dmdorenchess@gmail.com; not my old yahoo address.

[The quotes in this issue are all about pawns; the good, the bad, and the ugly...]

An isolated Pawn spreads gloom all over the chessboard. - Tartakover



Friendly Matches Now Being Organized

The following Friendly Matches are in process of being organized. If you have a special desire to play in one or more of these matches, please let me know:

- (1) **Brazil - scheduled** to be organized in August or September, with an official start date in September
- (2) **Bulgaria - scheduled** to be organized in November, with an official start date in December
- (3) Greece (invitation sent 23 May) - No response as yet, suggesting to me that this match is not likely to happen.
- (4) A proposed match against the combination of the 5 smallest countries from Zone 2 [Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, & Panama] (invitation sent 23 May) - So far, three of these countries have yet to be heard from, and one other has declined, so it is not clear this proposed match will happen.
- (5) Argentina (invitation sent 14 June) - Too soon to know if or when this will happen.

The older I grow, the more I value Pawns. - Paul Keres



The Pawns are the soul of the game. - Philidor

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!

It is almost an axiom that most games have been lost and won through hastily grabbing those innocent pawns. - Alfred Kreyborg

In a gambit you give up a Pawn for the sake of getting a lost game. - Boden

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 6/14/2016) are as follows:

	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Server/Email/Postal</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Result (USA v. other)</u>
1.	Canada	Server & Post	1/17/14	55.0 - 39.0 (6 postal games ongoing)
2.	Slovakia	Server	11/18/14	53.5 - 46.5 (8 games still ongoing)
3.	Venezuela (rematch)	Server	12/8/14	17.5 - 21.5 (1 game still ongoing)
4.	Latvia	Server	2/13/15	46.5 - 30.5 (3 games still ongoing)
5.	Ukraine	Server	3/14/15	29.5 - 31.5 (3 games still ongoing)
6.	Poland	Server	5/1/15	33.5 - 38.5 (8 games still ongoing)
7.	Croatia	Server	6/25/15	18.0 - 24.0 (4 games still ongoing)
8.	Turkey	Server	6/30/15	33.0 - 26.0 (15 games still ongoing)
(Turkey A: 11.5 - 10.5 with 6 ongoing games; Turkey B: 21.5 - 15.5 with 9 ongoing games)				
9.	Lithuania	Server	8/1/15	13.5 - 13.5 (15 games still ongoing)
10.	Slovenia	Server	8/1/15	23.5 - 20.5 (20 games still ongoing)
11.	Cuba (rematch)	Server	9/1/15	17.5 - 21.5 (13 games still ongoing)
12.	Panama (rematch)	Server	10/15/15	18.5 - 25.5 (16 games still ongoing)
13.	Belgium	Server	10/20/15	19.0 - 18.0 (15 games still ongoing)
14.	Scotland	Server	1/14/16	13.5 - 18.5 (18 games still ongoing)
15.	Australia	Server	3/1/16	10.0 - 9.0 (61 games still ongoing)
16.	Wales	Server	4/19/16	1.0 - 1.0 (52 games still ongoing)
17.	British CCA	Server	4/24/16	3.0 - 2.0 (37 games still ongoing)

18.	Estonia	Server	4/24/16	0.0 - 0.0 (20 games still ongoing)
19.	Belarus	Server	4/25/16	3.0 - 3.0 (74 games still ongoing)

TOTAL USA RESULTS since 1/1/07: 1847.0 - 1907.0 (49.2%)

(That's an average of 33.2 games completed per month, or over 1 per day for nearly 9.5 years!)

Highlights and Interesting Tidbits:

(1) We already had won our match versus Latvia, but our team continues to do astoundingly well in that match. Our lead has climbed such that we currently have scored over 60% of possible points!

(2) We have also all but won our match versus Slovakia. This past 3 months saw our lead continue to increase, such that the USA is now 7 points up within only 8 games remaining.

Unfortunately, there is some not so happy news as well:

(3) Our huge match with Germany finally ended (162 boards, after 2.25 years of play), with the USA only scoring 40.6% of possible points.

(4) Our match versus Austria also ended with the already registered USA loss.

(5) The USA lost the match versus Croatia. We played evenly with them during this past quarter year, with a 4-4 score, but that closed out our opportunity to catch up from our earlier deficit. With 4 remaining games, the USA is behind by 6 points.

(6) The back and forth match with Switzerland came down to the last two remaining games. The USA needed two wins from those games to tie the match, but those wins were not to be. The USA lost that match 56.0 to 58.0. So close...

(7) Poland showed a major surge in scoring points against us this past 3 months. Although Poland was only ahead by 1 point last time we looked, Poland is now ahead by 5. With only 8 games still ongoing, the USA needs to respond in kind or this match will go to the Poles.

(8) Scotland showed a major surge as well. From 6.5 - 4.5 a quarter year ago, the score is now 13.5 - 18.5. With 18 games still ongoing, however, recovering from this 5 point deficit is certainly still well within the realm of possible.

(9) There are a number of other very close matches:

(a) versus Ukraine: our chances are slipping away: they are ahead by 2, with 3 games to go

(b) versus Lithuania: the score remains tied, as it was 3 months ago; except now there are only 15 (instead of 21) games to go

(c) versus Belgium: the USA has also maintained its 1 point lead from 3 months ago, again with 15 games to go in this match

(d) versus Slovenia: We have again maintained our small lead, moving from 2 points up to 3 points up. With 20 ongoing games, however, this lead will take work to maintain.

(10) Finally, let's talk Turkey. (Bad pun. I know.) The USA continues to lead in both Section A and Section B, and therefore of course overall. Section B is looking like a clear win for the USA, with the USA currently up by 6 with only 10 games to go. Section A is a lot closer, 1 point in favor of the USA with 6 remaining games. You may recall that Section A involves the highest average rating possibly ever for a USA (and maybe any ICCF) Friendly Match, with the top 6 boards looking very much like an Olympiad final. Interesting, all completed games on those 6 board have been draws, so it could seem like the team that wins Section A will be the team whose "lower" boards score better. However, the "lower" boards have already completed all of their games, with all 6 remaining games in Section A being on 4 of the top 5 boards. So, the battle of the goliaths goes on...

It cannot be too greatly emphasized that the most important role in Pawn endings is played by the King. - Tarrasch

Nothing so easily ruins a position as Pawn moves. - Tarrasch

Match (versus game) win/loss record since 1/1/07: 22 wins, 18 losses, 1 tie (54.9%)

<u>USA Won</u>	<u>USA Lost</u>	<u>USA Tied</u>
Argentina (2010)	Austria (2014)	Norway (2013)
Australia/New Zealand (2012)	Croatia (2015)	
Canada (2014)*	Cuba (2013)	
Cape Verde (2013)	Czech Republic (2011)	
Denmark (2014)	Czech Republic (2013)	
England (2008)	France (2010)	
England (2012)	Germany (2011)	
Finland (2009)	Germany (2008 - Women's only)	

Hong Kong (2010)

India (2014)

Japan (2013)

Latvia (2015)*

Netherlands (2013)

Panama (2013)

Peru (2013)

Portugal (2013)

Romania (2008)

Romania (2013)

Scotland (2008)

Sweden (2012)

Venezuela (2013)

Wales (2013)

Germany (2014)

Iceland (2014)

Israel (2014)

Italy (2010)

Russia (2013)

Spain (2008)

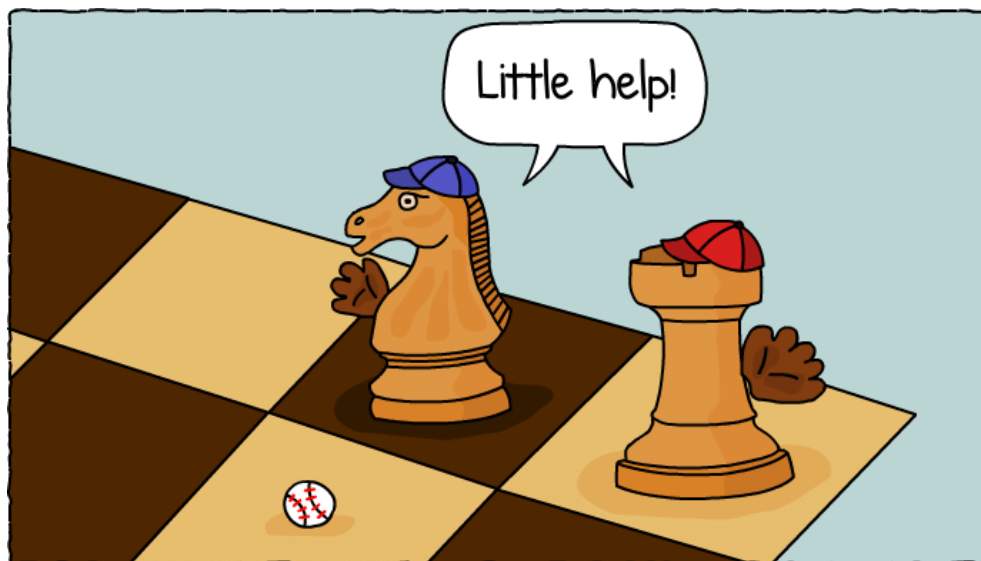
Sweden (2007)

Switzerland (2014)

Ukraine (2010)

Venezuela (2014)*

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



OUR FEATURED GAME

In this issue, we feature a game from one of our frequent Friendly Match participants, Eric Landes. This game was one of the many USA wins in that still ongoing Latvia - USA match. All annotations were written by Dennis Doren. This game was chosen as a fine example of how first solidifying one side of the board can allow you to develop your attack on the other, only to break through and win on the original side. Possibly of importance to opening theorists was White's 12th move novelty, the move that worked as the foundation for the win that followed (in this commentator's opinion). The game can be found at <https://www.iccf.com/game?id=774622>.

Eric Landes (2283) - Rolands Bondars (2280)

LAT - USA (2015) (B12) (Caro-Kann)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Nf3 e6 5.Be2 Nd7 6.O-O h6 7.c3 [Moves more common historically for both OTB and CC are 7.Nbd2 & 7.b3, with 7.Be3 more common in OTB as well. Still, 7.c3 shows the greatest degree of success for White among all those moves in both OTB and CC. The only move slightly more successful for White is also somewhat more common within ICCF play of the past decade: 7.a4.]

7...Ne7 8.Nbd2 [8.Na3 is more common with at least the same degree of success for White]

8...a5 [A rare move in this position. By transposition after Black's next move, there were only 5 other CC games and no OTB games found. However, a chess engine did not rate this move much differently from various other more common moves.]

9.a4 Bg6 10.b4 Nf5 [Again, the lesser common move compared to 10...ab5, but again a chess engine did not see a significant difference between the two.]

11.bxa5 Qxa5 12.Bb2 [A novelty, and as we shall see, a key move in this game despite its quiet defensive nature. In the only other game found through Black's move 11, White played 12.c4 in an ICCF game between two 2300-players that was drawn after move 39. Both moves, along with 12.Nc3 are all seen of merit in machine analysis.]

12...Be7 13.g4 [Essentially the point of White's 12.Bb2. The other 12th moves for White would have opened things up on the Q-side, and looked to create weaknesses on that side in the Black camp. White's actual move instead solidified his Q-side and kept it closed for now, so White would be more free to attack on the K-side. It seems unusual that one can facilitate an attack on one side of the board by moving a piece away from that side.]

13...Nh4 14.Nxh4 Bxh4 15.f4



Position after 15.f4

15...O-O 16.f5 Bh7 [16...ef5 17.gf5 just helps White open more lines for his pieces; for example, with Kh1 & Rg1, besides for potentially using the d1-h5 diagonal.]

17.Nf3 Be7 18.Bd3 f6 [A chess engine may have recommended this move, but Black has begun to move onto slippery ground. He needs to play more and more exactly to maintain equality.]

19.fxe6 Bxd3 20.Qxd3 Nxe5 [Forced. If 20...Nb6, 21.Qg6 Kh8, 22.Nh4 planning Nf5; If 20...fe5, 21.ed7 e4 22.Qe2 saves the extra piece.]

21.Qf5 [21.Nxe5 fe5 22.Qg6 ed4 23.Rf7 Rxf7 24ef7+ was possible as well, but the move played keeps more of White's attacking pieces on the board.]

21...g6 [Notice how Black has not been able to make an effective move on the Q-side since White's 12.Bb2. And because of that, Black is virtually playing without his Q. For that reason, Black probably should have tried 21...Qa6 instead of what he played, with the idea of bringing his Q where it was needed with Qe2 followed by Qe4.]

22.Qb1 [This move has its advantages, as the game demonstrates, but 22.Qf4 may have been more exact - keeping White's Q on the K-side.]

22...Nxf3+ 23.Rxf3 Kg7 24.h4 f5 25.h5 [Keeping up the pressure in an attempt to ensure Black K-side cannot remain intact. Let's take a moment to assess the positional elements without reference to a chess engine's findings. In the current position, shown below, material is even, no piece is beyond its own 4th rank, B's are of the same color but Black's has more open potential, White's K is wide open but Black has no way to move into that neighborhood, and White has the only passed (and advanced) pawn, but it might seem unclear if that pawn is a

strength or a liability. So, it is not surprising that a chess engine would rate the position near equal. Now let's see what happens.]



Position after 25.h5

25...Qb6 26.a5 Qb3 27.Rf2 c5 28.Kh1 Bh4 29.Rf1 [29.Rg2 and 29.Rf3 were both also possible. Even though it gave up the attack on the f5 pawn, placing the R on the same file as Black's K with Rg2 has some merit. The advantage of 29.Rf1 over 29.Rf3 is explained after White's next move.]

29...Bf6 30.Bc1 [If White had played 29.Rf3, Black could have played 29...Qc4 preventing 30.Bc1 by threatening to become very active with 30...Qe2.]

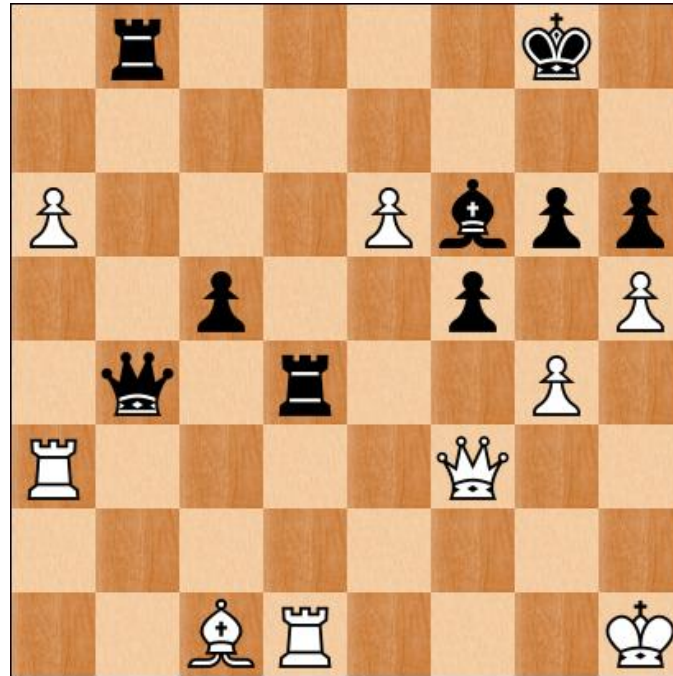
30...Qxc3 [Forced, but once White breaks through on the Q-side, the game is effectively over. If 30...Qc4, 31.Bf4 Rae8, 32.hg6 Qxc3, 33.gf5 Qh3+, 34.Bh2 Re7, 35.dc5; if 30...c4, 31.Bf4 g5 32.Qxf5 Qxc3 33.Qg6+ Kh8, 34.e7 gf4 35.Qxh6 Kg8 36.exf8/Q Rxf8 37.Qxf4; and if 30...Qxb1, 31.Rxb1 Ra7, 32.gf5 gf5 33.Rg1+ Kh7, 34.Rg6 and either 34...Bg5 35.Bxg5 or 34...Bg7 35.Ba3]

31.Qxb7+ Kg8 32.Ra3 Qb4 33.a6 Qc4 [Fascinatingly, Black now cannot help but make moves on the Q-side, but he is at least one tempo behind White in having enough pieces there for the defense. It seems that Black has been at White's command in regard to where pieces need to move ever since 12.Bb2. Material is still even after Black's move 33, but White has an overwhelming positional advantage.]

34.Re1 Qb4 [Accomplishes little, but what other idea can Black have? 34...g5 35.Bd2 fg4 36.e7 Bxe7, 37.Qxe7 Rxa6 38.Rxa6 Qxa6 39.dc5 and White has both a material advantage and a

dangerous passed pawn; 34...Rae8 35.Bxh6 Qb4 36.Qxb4 cb4 37.Ra4 Bg7 38.e7 Bxh6, 39.ef8/Q+ Rxf8 40.gf5]

35.Rd1 Rab8 36.Qxd5 Rfd8 37.Qf3 Rxd4



Position after 37...Rxd4

38.a7 Rxd1+ 39.Qxd1 Qe4+ [39...Qb7+ 40.Qf3 Qxf3+ just transposes to the game; 39...Ra8 40.Qf3 Qe4 41.hg6 does not help Black.]

40.Qf3 Qxf3+ 41.Rxf3 Ra8 42.hxg6 [42...Rxa7, 43.gf5 gives White an easy endgame, two pawns up with 3 connected passed pawns.] 1-0



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 essential disadvantage of the isolated Pawn...lies not in the Pawn itself,
but in the square in front of the Pawn. - Richard Reti**

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 Carl Sieftring, 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

International Master Anthony Kain, Technical Advisor

International Arbiter Franklin Campbell, Tournament Organizer

Yours truly,

Dennis Doren, Friendly Matches Organizer (dmdorenchess@gmail.com)

**A passed Pawn increases in strength as the number of pieces on the board
diminishes. - Capablanca**

REDUCED PARTICIPATION FEE!!

In case you did not catch the news from the last two issues, the old fee of \$6 per match has been reduced to \$5 per match: a 16.7% reduction!! We hope you enjoy your games all the more!

The FRIENDLY MATCH ELITE

The Elite program is being phased out in keeping with the reduced participation fee for everyone. If you already earned Elite status, your reduced fee for up to 3 remaining matches will still be honored. There will be no new members of the Elite program starting 1/1/2016.

A Pawn ahead is worth a little trouble. - Wilhelm Steinitz

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 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.