



# The Friendly Post

## **News from ICCF-US Friendly Matches from around the world - Issue 56, June 2026**

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 nearly 14 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 now \$4. (Years ago, the fee was \$6. Then it was \$5. The fee was again lowered in 2024!!) You are invited to participate!

**(In this issue: humorous quotes for your enjoyment)**

**“I’m terrible at chess. I lose to the computer even when it’s unplugged.”**

**– Steven Wright**

### **A public service announcement:**

I received the following from USA player SIM Hugh Whelan. He did not pay, promise or offer me anything to include the following in this newsletter. I quote it here only as information that came to me that might be found useful by ICCF-US friendly match players. The fact the following has been included here does not represent endorsement by the ICCF-US or any of its volunteers, including Dennis Doren.

Please feel free to let me know if you wish me to continue to publish these kinds of “public service” notices.

From SIM Hugh Whelan:

“For a long time I’ve managed my ICCF games using the open-source chess database program called ‘Scid’. However in the Fall of 2025 I realized there were a lot of things that I would like to add to that program that would make my life as an ICCF player easier (very quick uploading of games to Lichess’s and Chess.com’s Analysis features; quick table base endgame look-up on Lichess using a button; 2 fold and 3 fold repetition detection; easy filtering against a database of ICCF games, etc.). So I started my own fork of Scid named scidCommunity.

My free, open-source “fork” scidCommunity now has more than 2,200 users and has releases for both Windows as well as multiple Linux distributions.

If you think other ICCF “Friendly Match” players might be interested, you could just mention the effort and provide a link they can explore at their discretion/leisure (<https://github.com/whelanh/scidCommunity>).”

“They said I’d be good at chess. They also said I’d be tall.”

“I love when my opponent sacrifices their dignity.”

## Upcoming Friendly Matches

The pairings for matches versus **Mexico** and **Peru** were being completed as this newsletter was being written. New invitations for friendly matches have also been sent to **Latvia, Norway, and Switzerland**. That is besides the match with “**BeNeLux**” (the combination of the **Netherlands, Belgium, and possibly Luxembourg** which has been scheduled for November.

**When you receive an invitation to play, please respond even if you need to decline it.**

**Please do not just ignore invitations** as this causes Dennis more work and more delays in completing the organization of a match. If you need to decline, please just tell him that with a very quick reply email. You do not need to say why.

Please feel free to let us know if you have a particular interest in playing in a specific match (by writing to Dennis at [dmdorenchess@gmail.com](mailto:dmdorenchess@gmail.com)). There is no guarantee that we can find a proper place for you in any specific match, but we always try.

Matches can go from an idea to an active reality within any 90-day period – that is, between newsletters. So, if you have not already let it be known that you want to play, be sure to let us know by writing to Dennis at [dmdorenchess@gmail.com](mailto:dmdorenchess@gmail.com)!



### **The USA Friendly Match World Tour 4!!**

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, Friendly Matches bring you that opportunity. During our current World Tour (WT4), you can count on our making offers for Friendly Matches to all ICCF member federations: all 52 of them (besides us). We go from country to country around the world!

Feel free to let Dennis know ([dmdorenchess@gmail.com](mailto:dmdorenchess@gmail.com)) of any special interest of yours to play against a certain country! He will see what he can do for you.

#### *Progress to date (initiated February 2025):*

**We have at least started play (14):** Austria, Australia, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Portugal, Slovakia, Wales

**Scheduled matches (3, with 5 countries):** (1) Mexico (about to be put online), (2) Peru (scheduled to start by end of June), (3) Benelux (Belgium, Netherland but maybe without LUX – not until November)

**Active invitations (3):** Latvia, Norway, Switzerland

**Our invitation was declined by, or we received no response (12):** Chile, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Nicaragua, Panama, Romania, South Africa

**Countries yet to be included in WT4 (18):** Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Cuba, Czech Republic (Czechia), Ecuador, England, India, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkiye, Ukraine

*Come join us as we travel the world!*

“Nothing says fun like staring at a board for hours just to lose.”

## The Current Friendly Matches...

You can always find the current results from any of our Friendly Matches by visiting [www.iccf.com](http://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](http://www.iccfus.com). The current standings (through 6/13/2026) are as follows:

	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Result (USA  v. other)</u>
1.	<b>Austria</b> 	4/5/25	25.5 - 25.5 (1 ongoing game)
2.	<b>Slovakia</b> 	5/30/25	34.0 - 34.0 (2 ongoing games)
3.	<b>Indonesia</b> 	8/19/25	15.5 - 6.5 (2 ongoing games)
4.	<b>Germany</b> 	9/17/25	147.5 - 157.5 (69 ongoing games)
5.	<b>Australia</b> 	11/9/25	49.5 - 38.5 (12 ongoing games)
6.	<b>Denmark</b> 	12/16/25	11.0 - 13.0 (4 ongoing games)
7.	<b>Wales</b> 	2/23/26	9.0 - 9.0 (22 ongoing games)
8.	<b>Finland</b> 	3/2/26	12.0 - 10.0 (22 ongoing games)
9.	<b>France</b> 	3/8/26	11.5 - 10.5 (60 ongoing games)
10.	<b>Estonia</b> 	3/31/26	7.0 - 3.0 (2 ongoing games)
11.	<b>Croatia</b> 	4/17/26	6.0 - 4.0 (46 ongoing games)

## TOTAL USA RESULTS

Currently (as of 6/13/26) = 242 ongoing games

Completed games since 1/1/2007\*\* = 11749 games

Total score since 1/1/2007\*\* = 5830.5 – 5918.5 (49.6%)

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

“I play chess to relax. It doesn’t work.”

– Steven Wright

“Chess: because therapy is expensive.”

- Anonymous

## Highlights and Interesting Tidbits:

**This was a very successful second quarter in a row!** We had numerous wins and comebacks 3 months ago. Well, we did it all again!! Take a look:

- (1) The **Philippines** had been a nemesis for us, but we took an early lead and never gave it up. The match ended with the USA having a 3-point lead. This was our first win against this opponent, after 2 previous losses. Good play USA!
- (2) Quite similarly, the USA took a commending lead early on against **Indonesia**. During this past quarter, we finished it off with a win, even with 2 remaining games in the match.
- (3) The match versus **Portugal** ended as it had been going all along – as a tie. The extra good news: the USA won the match on tiebreak!
- (4) The biggest surprise was that we started and already won the match versus **Estonia**. True, it was a very small match in terms of boards (only 6 boards for a total of 12 games). Still, I cannot recall any previous friendly match starting and effectively ending within the same quarter!
- (5) The USA eliminated the 1-point deficit we had versus **Austria**!! It all comes down to the 1 remaining game (though the USA will win on tiebreak if this game ends as a draw)! Go USA!
- (6) We were as much as 4-point down against **Slovakia** at one point in the match. We tied things up 6 months ago. The match was still tied last quarter, and it remains tied this quarter. There are only 2 remaining games. (Unfortunately, we will lose the tiebreak if we stay tied – this due to a USA player who lost games through default. What a shame.) Keep up the great work USA!
- (7) The USA surged to an 11-point lead in one quarter 3 months ago versus **Australia**. We maintained that lead through this quarter. The USA now has an

11-point lead with 12 games still ongoing – meaning this match is almost already won with a dozen remaining games!!

(8) **And we had no losses this quarter!!**

Wow! What a run!!

Of course, not every match can go our way:

(9) Our long-standing nemesis **Germany** continues to grow its lead, a little at a time. The USA fell behind by a total of 8 points through last quarter. We are now 10 points back. (ETLs by our players are hurting the team.) There are still 69 ongoing games in this match, but we have significant work to do. Go USA!!

(10) We had been tied versus **Denmark**. Unfortunately, we are now 2 points behind. With only 4 ongoing games in this match, we are in trouble in this match.

“I have never played chess, but I once played checkers — and that was enough.”

– Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens)

“Chess: because regular disappointment just wasn’t enough.”

– Ambrose Bierce

### Friendly Match (versus game) win/loss record

(Since 1/1/07) 79 wins, 68 losses, 8 ties (4–4 on tiebreaks) (= **53.5% for USA**)

USA Won	USA Lost**	USA Tied
Argentina (2010)	Argentina (2024)	Argentina (2019) (ARG)***
Argentina (2016)	Aruba (2020)	Mexico (2013) (MEX)***
Australia/New Zealand (2012)	Austria (2014)	Norway (2013) (NOR)***
Australia (2016)	Austria (2021)	Peru (2021) (USA)***
Australia (2018)	Belarus (2016)	Portugal (2025) (USA)***
Australia (2022)	Belgium (2015)	Slovakia (2020) (USA)***
Belarus (2021)	BeNeLux (2020)	Wales (2019) (WLS)***
Belgium (2022)	Brazil (2024)	Switzerland (2023) (USA)***
Brazil (2016)	Bulgaria (2025)	
Brazil (2020)	Canada (2019)	
British CCA (2016)	Croatia (2015)	
Bulgaria (2016)	Croatia (2023)	
Bulgaria (2021)	Cuba (2013)	
Canada (2014)	Cuba (2015)	
Canada (2024)	Cuba (2018)	
Cape Verde (2013)	Cuba (2021)	
Cuba (2023)	Czech Republic (2011)	
Denmark (2014)	Czech Republic (2013)	

England (2008)	Czech Republic (2019)
England (2012)	Czech Republic (2024)
England (2024)	Denmark (2018)
Estonia (2016)	Denmark (2021)
Estonia (2020)	England (2020)
Estonia (2023)	Finland (2018)
Estonia (2026)*	France (2010)
Finland (2009)	Germany (2008 – Women’s only)
Finland (2022)	Germany (2011)
France (2009)	Germany (2014)
France (2022)	Germany (2020)
Hong Kong (2010)	Germany (2022)
India (2014)	Hungary (2022)
India (2019)	Iceland (2014)
India (2023)	Iceland (2019)
Indonesia (2016)	Indonesia (2021)
Indonesia (2025)*	Israel (2014)
Israel (2016)	Italy (2010)
Israel (2021)	Italy (2017)
Italy (2024)	Mexico (2017)
Japan (2013)	Mexico (2022)
Japan (2017)	Netherlands (2017)
Japan (2021)	Norway (2019)
Japan (2025)	Norway (2023)
Latvia (2015)	Panama (2015)
Latvia (2020)	Panama (2016)
Latvia (2023)	Peru (2023)
Lithuania (2015)	Philippines (2021)
Mexico (2020)	Philippines B (2021)
NCA/ECU/GUA/CPV (2022)	Poland (2015)
Netherlands (2013)	Poland (2019)
Netherlands (2018)	Poland (2024)
Netherlands (2023)	Romania (2021)
New Zealand (2020)	Russia (2013)
New Zealand (2024)	Russia (v. Zone 3) (2017)
Panama (2013)	Slovenia (2019)
Peru (2013)	Slovenia (2021)
Peru (2017)	Spain (2008)
Philippines (2025)	Spain (2021)
Portugal (2013)	Spain (2024)
Portugal (2018)	Sweden (2007)
Romania (2008)	Switzerland (2007)
Romania (2013)	Turkiye (2023)
Russia (2022)	Ukraine (2010)
SchemingMind (2018)	Ukraine (2015)
Scotland (2008)	Ukraine (2018)
Scotland (2016)	Ukraine (2023)
Scotland (2020)	Venezuela (2014)
Scotland (2024)	Venezuela (2017)
Slovakia (2014)	Wales (2016)
Slovenia (2015)	
Slovenia (2024)	
Spain (2016)	

Sweden (2016)  
Sweden (2018)  
Sweden (2023)  
Turkiye (2015)  
Venezuela (2013)  
Wales (2013)  
Wales (2022)  
Yorkshire (2018)

\* 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 155 completed matches, where pairings were made with relatively equal ratings, there have been only 8 tied results. The country in parenthesis would be the winner if usual tiebreak systems were used.

“Life is like a game of chess — but I keep forgetting how the knight moves.”  
– Søren Kierkegaard

“My pawns are like my diet plans—full of good intentions but never quite making it to the end.” – Anonymous



## FEATURED GAME

**CCM Jan Esau Manopo - 2379 (92)** 🇮🇩 - **IM Clarence Anderson - 2382 (54)** 🇺🇸  
Indonesia – USA Friendly Match 2025

ICCF Game

(All annotations by IM Dennis Doren)

This game is an example of how proper maneuvering while a game is still equal serves to prepare one's attack when the opportunity occurs. IM Clarence Anderson obtained equality early on with his Sicilian. While maintaining that equality during the middlegame, he pursued his attack by focusing his pieces on the squares near his opponent's king. When his opponent chose the wrong R to move to d1, IM Anderson wasted no time bringing his attack to fruition.

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5** (The second most common move in the position, behind the defining move of the open Sicilian: 3.d4.)

**3...e6 4.O-O Nge7** (An unusual looking move, blocking the KB's development, but in fact supported both by computer engines and ICCF player experience.)

**5.d4** (The classic move for the open Sicilian. The other most popular move is 5.Re1, with engines rating the two moves about the same.)

**5...cxd4 6.Nxd4 Ng6** [6...Qb6 is the other main move in the position. The advantage of the latter is that it coaxes White to trade for the N on c6 (typically with the N on d4) – clearing out some of White's center.]



Position after 6...Ng6

7.Be3 Be7 8.Be2 (This move's purpose shows itself with White's next move. The other common move here is 8.c3 addressing Black's threat of an attack on the dark squares starting with Bf6.)

8...O-O 9. c4 b6 (9...Nxd4 10.Qxd4 b6 is also possible.)

10.Nc3 Nxd4 11.Qxd4 Bb7 (11...Bf6 12.Qd2 Bb7 is also fine. Getting the light squared B on this long diagonal is the beginning of Black's k-side attack.)



Position after 11...Bb7

12.Rad1 Bc6 13.Qd2 Bb4 (Black can afford taking a second tempo to move this B to b4 based on White's having also spent 2 moves on his KB, the fact there is the immediate threat of Bxe4 that needs to be addressed by White, and the opening of a better square on which to place his Q – next move.)

14.f3 Qf6 15.Rc1 Rab8 16.a3 Bc5 17.f4 (Although this position is rated by engines as equal both before and after this move, I have to wonder about moving the same piece twice again. 17.Rf2 and 17.b4 were the main alternatives here.)



Position after 17.f4

17...a5 18.g3 (This was a new move within the ICCF. Up to this point, the game followed Marchisotti – Whelan 2024 which went 18.Rb1 Rfd8 19.Rbd1 Qe7 20.Rf2 f6 with an agreed draw after White's move 54. Stockfish shows the current position as equal, with alternative White moves 18.Rf2 and 18.Kh1. Still, it seems to me that opening the a8-h1 diagonal further with this move makes Black's white squared B more dangerous.)

18...Bxe3+ 19.Qxe3 Qe7 20.Kf2 Qc5 (Black negates the White Q's ability to defend its K-side.)



Position after 20...Qc5

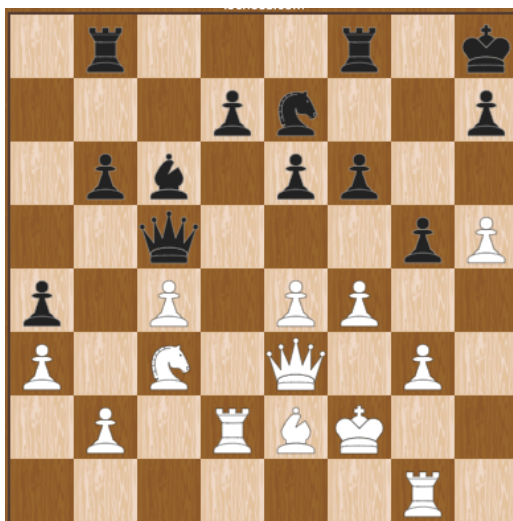
21.Rb1 a4 22.h4 f6 23.h5 Ne7 24.Rbd1 (It's often an interesting question which R should be moved to the center. In this case, should White give up protection of the b-pawn or move the R away from his K, setting up Black's 24...g5 with White's K aligned with Black's f-R? The engines rate the options as equal...)



Position after 24.Rbd1

24...g5 25.Rd2 Kg7 26.Rfd1 (Negating the earlier question, but this was not necessarily the follow-up.)

26...Kh8 27.Rg1 (An interesting option for White was 27.Rxd7 Bxd7 28.Rxd7 Nc6 29.Nxa4 with a N+2Ps for the R. The engines are not impressed, however, still finding this line as representing equality.)



Position after 27.Rg1

27...f5 28.e5 Rg8 (The purpose of 26...Kh8. With the combination of f5, g5, Rg8, the B on c6 and the Q on c5, Black has managed to focus his attack on squares near White's K.)



Position after 28...Rg8

29.Rgd1 (?? Missing/forgetting the point of Black's last move, or maybe just the result of grabbing the wrong R to go to d1. Options for continued equality included 29.Qxc5, 29.Qd4 and 29.Rdd1. Black finishes off the game using the fine, coordinated positioning of his pieces.)

29...gxf4 30.Qxc5 fxg3+ 31.Kg1 bxc5 32.Rf1 g2 33.Rb1 f4 34.Bd1 Rg3 35.Bc2 f3 36.Nxa4 Rh3 (37.Kf2 Bxa4 38.Bxa4 Nf5 39.Rg1 Nh6 40.Rxg2 fxg2 41.Kxg2 Rxh5 wins easily.) 0-1

“Why don't chess players ever get locked out? They always control the key squares.”  
- Anonymous

“In time trouble, every move is a good move if you slam the clock hard enough.”  
- Anonymous

## The Triple Block time control system – an explanation

Have you heard about the "Triple Block" time control system? The Triple Block system 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 problems.

Some of our Friendly Matches use this system. Some of our as-yet-to-be scheduled Friendly Matches will also use this 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".



### Where to Find Us

The ICCF-US home website is at [www.iccfus.com](http://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](http://www.iccf.com).

Contact Dennis Doren at [dmdorenchess@gmail.com](mailto: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

**International Arbiter & Grandmaster Tom Biedermann**, Deputy Director & Treasurer

**International Arbiter Michael Buss**, Registrations Director

**International Master Bob Rizzo**, Norms and Communications Organizer

**International Arbiter & International Master Corky Schakel**, Honorary National Director

Yours truly, **IM Dennis Doren**, Friendly Matches Organizer ([dmdorenchess@gmail.com](mailto:dmdorenchess@gmail.com))

“After I win a tournament, I feel like a genius. After I lose, I realize my opponents were just lucky.”

- Anonymous



## 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 that you are interested! Send an email to [dmdorenchess@gmail.com](mailto: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 anyone anything 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 with.

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 \$4 for your participation per match. Just contact Dennis Doren, the ICCF-US Friendly Match Organizer, at [dmdorenchess@gmail.com](mailto: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.

