



The Friendly Post

News from ICCF-US Friendly Matches from around the world - Issue 55, March 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 13 years (as if you could not tell)!

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!

Featured this Issue

This issue features **fantasy art** with a chess theme. Hope you enjoy!

If the pieces came alive...



How you know your game is on shaky ground...



Upcoming Friendly Matches

Recent invitations for friendly matches were sent to MANY different countries (**Chile, Croatia, Greece, Mexico, Nicaragua, South Africa**). That is besides the match with **Estonia** which is already almost fully organized (even though it was not even on the list last issue – as that is how it can work); a match with **Peru** is scheduled for July, and a match versus the combination of the **Netherlands, Belgium, and possibly Luxembourg (BeNeLux)** has been scheduled for November. That's over a fifth of the ICCF's member federations all at once!



An epic chess battle...

Places, opponents, and colors: Which appeal to you?



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). 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!



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) 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 (12): Austria, Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Portugal, Slovakia, Wales

Scheduled matches (3, with 5 countries): (1) Estonia (currently being organized), (2) Peru (scheduled to start mid-July), (3) Benelux (Belgium, Netherland but maybe without LUX – not until November)

Active invitations (6): Chile, Croatia, Greece, Mexico, Nicaragua, South Africa

Our invitation was declined by, or we received no response (8): Guatemala (too few members to compose a team), Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Panama, Romania

Countries yet to be included in WT4 (21): Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Cuba, Czech Republic (Czechia), Ecuador, England, India, Italy, Latvia, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkiye, Ukraine















Come join us as we travel the world!

During a game, being alone with your pieces...



The Current Friendly Matches...

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. Each new issue lists the friendly matches currently in progress. Previous issues of "The Friendly Post" can be found at www.iccfus.com. The current standings (through 3/11/2026) are as follows:

	<u>Opponent</u>		<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Result (USA</u>  <u>v. other)</u>
1.	Spain		12/31/2024	30.5 - 39.5 (2 ongoing games)
2.	Japan		2/16/25	12.5 - 10.5 (7 ongoing games)
3.	Austria		4/5/25	21.5 - 22.5 (18 ongoing games)
4.	Philippines		4/30/25	29.5 - 25.5 (5 ongoing games)
5.	Slovakia		5/30/25	32.5 - 32.5 (5 ongoing games)
6.	Portugal		7/6/25	19.0 - 19.0 (2 ongoing games)
7.	Indonesia		8/19/25	12.0 - 4.0 (8 ongoing games)
8.	Germany		9/17/25	112.0 - 120.0 (142 ongoing games)
9.	Australia		11/9/25	33.5 - 22.5 (44 ongoing games)
10.	Denmark		12/16/25	9.0 - 9.0 (10 ongoing games)
11.	Wales		2/23/26	0.0 - 0.0 (40 ongoing games)
12.	Finland		3/2/26	0.5 - 0.5 (43 ongoing games)
13.	France		3/8/26	0.0 - 0.0 (60 ongoing games)

TOTAL USA RESULTS

Currently (as of 3/10/26) = 386 ongoing games

Completed games since 1/1/2007** = 11531 games

Total score since 1/1/2007** = 5718.5 – 5812.5 (49.6%)

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

Chess was one of Escher's favorite pastimes.



Highlights and Interesting Tidbits:

- (1) **What a successful quarter this was!** Get a load of these results:
 - (a) As reported last issue, the match versus **Italy** was tied with only 1 remaining game. The USA won that game and therefore the match! Yeah USA!
 - (b) We were ahead of Japan by 3 points with 7 remaining games as of last quarter. Although **Japan** scored one point more than we did in the 6 completed games this quarter, the USA is now 2 points up with only 1 remaining game – meaning we held off any comeback by Japan and won the match
 - (c) The **Philippines** has been a nemesis for us, but things are looking good this time around. Despite giving up 1 point this past quarter, the USA remains 4 points up with only 5 games still in progress. Go USA!
 - (d) Speaking of comebacks, the USA was 4 points back versus **Slovakia** as of 3 months ago. Fifteen games later, we tied things up! There are still 5 ongoing games in this match, so the match is by no means over yet. Keep up the great work USA!
 - (e) Even compared to our performance versus Slovakia, the biggest numerical superiority this past quarter occurred in the match against **Australia**. From an early tied score, the USA surged to an 11-point lead in one quarter!! There is still a lot of chess to be played in this match, but that 90-day successful run was already astounding!
- (2) There are other matches that remain as close as they can be:
 - (a) With about half the games completed, the match against **Denmark** is tied.
 - (b) With only 2 remaining games, the match versus **Portugal**, tied last quarter, is still tied. The 2 remaining games are on the same board (board 1).

- (c) The USA remains 1 point back versus **Austria**. With 18 games to go, we could easily pull ahead!
- (3) Of course, not every match can go our way:
- (a) Although we were tied with **Bulgaria** 90 days ago with only 5 remaining games, those games ended with Bulgaria scoring an extra point. We therefore lost that match. Interestingly, every game in that match was a draw except for one loss for the USA. The fact that all players in this match were rated in the 2400 to mid-2500 range helps explain the high percentage of draws.
 - (b) Our long-term nemesis **Germany** is showing us its strength, again. This is the record-sized match for the USA. This last quarter saw the USA fall behind by a total of 8 points. On the other hand, while that may sound like a lot, there are still 147 ongoing games in this match, meaning it could still easily go either way. Go USA!!
- (4) Ending this enumeration of results on a high note, the USA was already leading **Indonesia** with a quick start as of last quarter. This quarter found us holding onto that early lead such that, now, we have almost already won that match. With 8 games to go, the USA is 8 points up. Even a single draw will give us the win. That will give the USA a plus score against our opponents over our three-match history!

What do the famous beer company's horses do while waiting to make a commercial?



Friendly Match (versus game) win/loss record

(Since 1/1/07) 76 wins, 68 losses, 7 ties (3–4 on tiebreaks) (= 52.6% 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)	Slovakia (2020) (USA)***
Australia (2022)	Belgium (2015)	Wales (2019) (WLS)***
Belarus (2021)	BeNeLux (2020)	Switzerland (2023) (USA)***
Belgium (2022)	Brazil (2024)	
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)	
Finland (2009)	France (2010)	
Finland (2022)	Germany (2008 – Women's only)	
France (2009)	Germany (2011)	
France (2022)	Germany (2014)	
Hong Kong (2010)	Germany (2020)	
India (2014)	Germany (2022)	
India (2019)	Hungary (2022)	
India (2023)	Iceland (2014)	
Indonesia (2016)	Iceland (2019)	
Israel (2016)	Indonesia (2021)	
Israel (2021)	Israel (2014)	
Italy (2024)	Italy (2010)	
Japan (2013)	Italy (2017)	
Japan (2017)	Mexico (2017)	
Japan (2021)	Mexico (2022)	
Japan (2025)*	Netherlands (2017)	
Latvia (2015)	Norway (2019)	
Latvia (2020)	Norway (2023)	
Latvia (2023)	Panama (2015)	
Lithuania (2015)	Panama (2016)	
Mexico (2020)	Peru (2023)	
NCA/ECU/GUA/CPV (2022)	Philippines (2021)	

Netherlands (2013)	Philippines B (2021)
Netherlands (2018)	Poland (2015)
Netherlands (2023)	Poland (2019)
New Zealand (2020)	Poland (2024)
New Zealand (2024)	Romani (2021)
Panama (2013)	Russia (2013)
Peru (2013)	Russia (v. Zone 3) (2017)
Peru (2017)	Slovenia (2019)
Portugal (2013)	Slovenia (2021)
Portugal (2018)	Spain (2008)
Romania (2008)	Spain (2021)
Romania (2013)	Spain (2024)*
Russia (2022)	Sweden (2007)
SchemingMind (2018)	Switzerland (2020)
Scotland (2008)	Turkiye (2023)
Scotland (2016)	Ukraine (2010)
Scotland (2020)	Ukraine (2015)
Scotland (2024)	Ukraine (2018)
Slovakia (2014)	Ukraine (2023)
Slovenia (2015)	Venezuela (2014)
Slovenia (2024)	Venezuela (2017)
Spain (2016)	Wales (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 151 completed matches, where pairings were made with relatively equal ratings, there have been only 7 tied results. The country in parenthesis would be the winner if tiebreak systems were used.



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. 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.

Contact Dennis Doren at 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)



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 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.

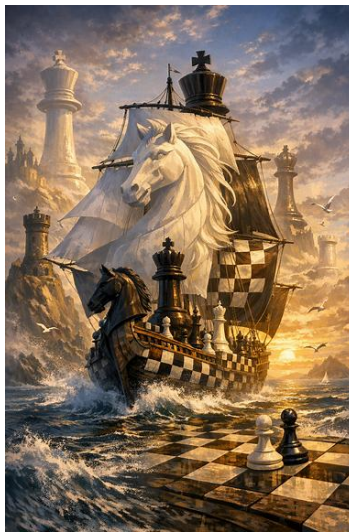
Finally, you will automatically receive your pairings, including an email from the ICCF server informing you that the match has begun and who you are paired with.

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 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.



Time to sail away, till next issue....