**REPORT OF THE RULES DIRECTOR**

IM Dennis Doren, submitted on 22 July 2025

 Time Period Covered: August 2024 - July 2025

**The Committee Membership**

The following people served this year as members of the Rules Committee. There have been no changes in membership over the past three years.

(1) IA SIM Thomas Biedermann, Entry Commissioner, Deputy Rules Commissioner & Silver Bertl von Massow Medal;

(2) **IA SIM Michael Roy Freeman, NZL National Delegate;**

(3) IA IM Juan Alberto Martello, ARG National Delegate & Silver Bertl von Massow Medal;

(4) IA GM Josef Mrkvicka, CZE National Delegate & Gold Bertl von Massow Medal;

(5) **CCM Arthur Simplina, PHI National Delegate & Isolated Player Support Officer;**

(6) IA SIM Uwe Staroske, World Tournament Director, Manager of ICCF adjudication system & Silver Bertl von Massow Medal;

(7) IA Gian-Maria Tani, Title Tournament Commissioner, Lifetime Achievement, Honorary Member & Gold Bertl von Massow Medal;

**(8) IA SIM Laurent Tinture, Games Archivist & Gold Bertl von Massow Medal**

**Ex-officio members: IA SIM Eric Ruch, President, & IA SIM Michael Millstone, General Secretary**

**Change in Organizational Structure**

Last year, Congress voted to move the Rules Commissioner position to the Executive Board from the Management Commission. The position was accordingly retitled to Rules Director. I ran for the new position unopposed in a special election and was elected to the position by Congress. The group of consultants collectively named the Rules Commission was also changed in title to the Rules Committee. The membership remained the same, so this was a change in designation only.

**Status of Regular Rules Director Duties**

During this past year, I have addressed the following regular duties:

A. Updated all rules within the ICCF Rules based on Congress decisions or Executive Board rule clarifications. This update was submitted to and approved by the Executive Board.

B. Kept tournament directors (TDs) and tournament organizers (TOs) informed of rule and procedural developments. This was mostly accomplished through a mass mailing summarizing the rule changes from last year’s Congress. Additionally, all changes from last year’s Congress to ICCF Rules were listed at the beginning of the updated copy of ICCF Rules. Finally, I kept the TDC Chair aware of circumstances suggesting a need for TD training concerning ICCF rules or procedures when that became known to me.

C. Responded to inquiries about rules and procedures from TDs, TOs, ICCF officials, and players. This was the most frequent of my duties. When it seemed appropriate, I consulted with the Rules Committee about the inquiry before responding.

D. Participated in offering input/answers to inquiries concerning server updates.

E. Reviewed all new proposals for Congress 2025, both to ensure that any existing rule that would be affected by a proposal is mentioned in the proposal and to indicate if there appeared to be an error in how an existing rule was cited or interpreted, or a need for clarification of the intention of the proposal.

F. For the third year in a row, there were no “rule clarification” requests to the Executive Board (EB). My interpretation of this finding continues to be that the rules are now quite substantially clear in their intended meaning. This conclusion is not meant to suggest that all rules are clear all the time. There were a few occasions where the description of a rule needed to be expanded to ensure no inaccurate interpretation is made. I have regularly agreed to incorporate others’ suggestions when I update the complete set of ICCF Rules. No formal rule clarification was required on these occasions.

**New Projects**

Per usual, ideas suggested by others during the year or of my own were considered by the Rules Committee for potential Congress proposals. Nine (9) of those ideas received at least majority support and resulted in Congress proposals, this number being in our usual range. Additionally, I submitted one (1) proposal in conjunction with NED National Delegate SIM Joop Jansen after suggesting to him that we work together to find a compromise rather than opposing one another in Congress proposals for yet another year. The submitted proposal constitutes that mutually supported recommendation to Congress.

The Rules Committee sponsored topics addressed by this year’s proposals address topics related to TOs, TDs, and unassigned automated procedures.

For the record, here is a list of topics that were discussed this past year within the Rules Committee but did not receive majority support. In no special order, those topics were:

1. Manage the remaining games of a newly deceased player (as mentioned in Congress proposal 2025-050),
2. Change the timing of Congress voting,
3. Develop a system allowing the TMC to serve as mentor for IA-aspiring TDs,
4. Develop a separate division of ICCF rated offerings that does not allow the use of engines,
5. Develop a mentorship program for ICCF officer positions,
6. Develop a code of conduct rule pertaining to frequent ETLs,
7. Support a proposal to develop a track to the WCCC from new European and ROW championships,
8. Implement special leave for natural catastrophes,
9. Allow replacement players during first 4 months of individual event using triple block with no guaranteed time, and
10. Change the wording requiring an IA TD when a GM norm is possible.

**A Special Set of Investigations**

Included in my duties is rule enforcement, both when someone’s violation of rules seems clear to me and when a rule violation is reported by someone else. Typically, the subsequent investigations are completed readily, leading to a decision about the need for any subsequent action.

This year, I received a set of allegations that required a far greater amount of time and effort than any other previously received by me. There were a great many things alleged, with the original allegation being that a certain player account was fraudulent (that is, not being played by someone with the listed name). I spent months of my available time researching everything alleged and far more beyond the original set of allegations. (Thanks to ICCF Services Director Austin Lockwood for his frequent and invaluable assistance by getting me the data I requested!)

After about two (2) months, I completed my investigation. The original allegation was supported, though not by using any of the reporter’s submitted evidence which was all determined to be “meaningless from a statistical, logical, and even factual basis” (quoted from my response to the reporter). Five (5) other fraudulent accounts were discovered during the investigation (4 of which being determined solely by using data I worked to procure and analyze, with the remaining 1 determined with data obtained and efforts by Austin Lockwood). Steps were subsequently taken to discontinue these six (6) fraudulent accounts, all of which are now permanently closed. Any future ICCF activity by the people suspected of perpetrating these fraudulent accounts will be under scrutiny.

This experience led to having the Rules Committee consider the issue of fraudulent accounts. Congress proposal 2025-050 resulted from unanimous support of the Committee. Due to that Congress proposal, I will not be discussing the procedures, type of data, analyses, or any other information related to how I came to determine what I did. Presuming Congress approves that proposal, I need to remain able to uncover duplicate accounts. Advertising the details of how such discoveries are made would undermine my potential effectiveness.

**Final Comments**

I thank the ICCF Congress for giving me the honor and privilege of serving the ICCF in the role of Rules Director. I am grateful to be in a position where my efforts serve the international correspondence chess community and this great organization. Thank you for this opportunity.

 IM Dennis Doren, Rules Director