



IMRE BARLAY
1929 - 2019

The Life of Senior Master Imre Barlay

August 8, 1929 - October 13, 2019

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One of the most familiar faces at Colorado Springs chess tournaments in the last twenty years was that of Imre Barlay. He played a strong game even in his advanced years, but few of his opponents knew they were sitting across from one of the most accomplished and interesting chess players in Colorado history.

The United States Chess Federation awarded Imre the title of Senior Master (rated at least 2400) in 1981 when he resided in California, and his FIDE rating reached a high of 2285 then as well. Seventeen years later, he moved to Colorado Springs with his son, Peter. Imre's rating remained over 2200 until 2003, and was above 2000 as late as 2014. He won the first annual California Intercollegiate title in 1959, with a perfect 5-0 score, and at the time was well-known in Southern California chess. As a youth, he was a friend and college chess teammate of Grandmaster Pal Benko in their homeland of Hungary.

In Imre's latter years, I was his most frequent and last opponent, playing eleven four-game chess matches with him from 2015 to 2018 at G/90; +30. During that point in his life, we were similar in ability, good competition for each other, and developed a close friendship. He also played matches with Sam Bridle, Brian Rountree, Larry Wutt, Aleksandr Bozhenov, and Alex Freeman around the same time frame.

Biography

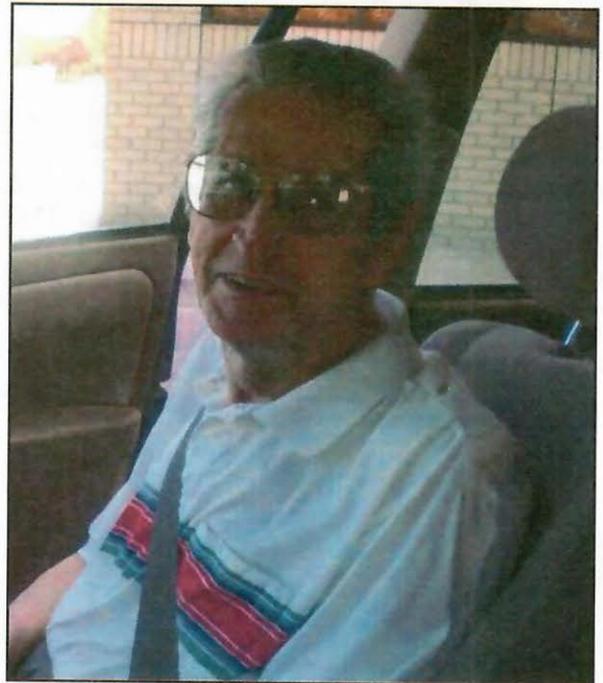
Imre Braun was born in Budapest, Hungary the youngest of four children, to Ferdinand and Anna (Szekely) Braun. During the Russian occupation of World War II, he changed his last name to Barlai to avoid being mistaken as Jewish, since it was a particularly hostile environment for Jews. He thought his new name was safer.

When Imre was sixteen years old, his father died, a casualty of the war. Imre told the story of his own escape to Austria after being detained near the border by unfriendly Russians. They released him when by chance a press vehicle drove up. He immigrated to the United States in 1956 and was granted citizenship in 1962, when he Americanized his name to Barlay. Some of his games and results can be found online under the previous spelling.

Imre graduated from San Diego State College in 1961 with a bachelors degree in mathematics, and in 1982 he earned a masters degree in psychology from Pepperdine University. He told of being accepted to the Harvard psychology masters program but he decided against it for family reasons. Imre spoke five languages including English, Hungarian, Spanish, German and French, which explains his credentials to work as a court

and diplomatic interpreter. He also had a career as a therapist and counselor, giving sessions in stress management, relaxation, self-esteem, family issues, and drug/alcohol dependence. In addition to Imre's love of chess, he played tennis, and enjoyed listening to a variety of music including jazz, classical, and early R & B. He told me that he may have been better at tennis than chess.

A tournament was held at *Club Chess!!* in 2017 celebrating Imre's 88th birthday (August 8th). He leaves behind five children: Claire, Monica, Stephen, Gregory, and Peter, as well as seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren. He will be missed and remembered dearly by his family and the Colorado chess community.

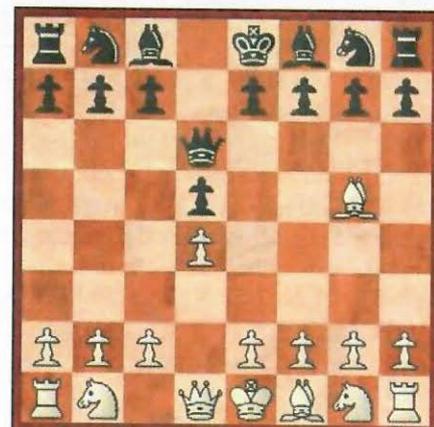


Imre Barlay (1800)
DuWayne Langseth (1906)

Match 9, Game 1

January 20, 2018 / Imre's Apartment

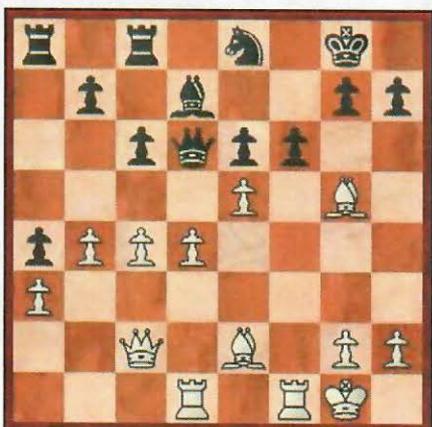
1.d4 d5 2.Bg5 Qd6



(I devised this response to the Trompowsky Attack and beat Brian Wall with it. I wonder if Imre had studied that, as the result is much different here. He sometimes prepared for our games.) 3.Qd2 Nf6 4.Nc3 Ne4 5.Nxe4 dxe4 6.e3 e6 7.Ne2 Nd7 8.Nc3 Qb6 9.Be2 Bb4 10.Bf4 O-O 11.a3 Bxc3 12.Qxc3 c6 13.b4 a6 14.O-O Nf6 15.Qb3 Bd7 16.c4



(White's pawn storm is somewhat overwhelming. I feel like the Imre of old was playing on this day.) 16...Rfc8 17.f3 a5 18.Rab1 a4 19.Qc2 exf3 20.Bxf3 Qd8 21.Bg5 Qf8 22.Be2 Ne8 23.e4 Qd6 24.Rbd1 f6 25.e5!

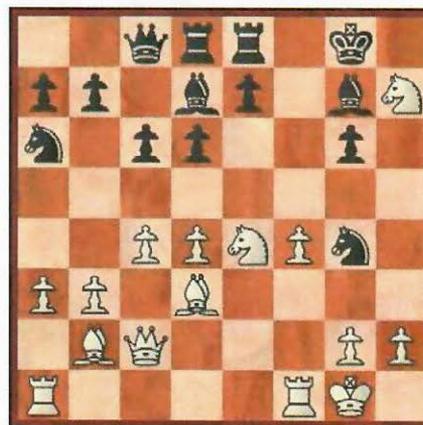


(Black is tossed around like a rag doll with no control of the position.) 25...Qe7 26.Bh4 Qf7 27.Bd3? (Finally I get some room to breathe. After 27.exf6 the Black king would have been wide open.) 27...f5 28.Kh1 b5 29.c5 Qh5 30.Bf2 Nc7 31.Be2 Qg5 32.Bf3 Be8 33.Qe2 Rd8 34.Be3 Qh4 35.Qd2 h6 36.g3 Qe7 37.Rg1 Nd5 38.g4 Nxe3 39.Qxe3 Kh8 40.g5 hgx5 41.Rxg5 g6 42.Qf4 (Both 42.Rdg1! and 42.Bh5! were crushing.) 42...Rac8 43.Rg3 Rd7 44.Rh3+ Kg8 45.Rg1 Qg7 46.Qe3 Kf8 47.Rh4 Qg8 48.Rg3 Rh7 49.Rgh3 Rxh4 50.Rxh4 Rc7 51.Qg5 Rg7 52.Qf6+ Qf7 53.Qd8 Qd7 54.Rh8+ Rg8 55.Qxd7? (I feel like Imre was being kind here. Maybe he was tired by now. On 55.Qf6+ Qf7 56.Rh7 Qxf6 57.exf6 Black can safely resign. He completely pummeled me all game and then mercifully let me keep half a point. I breathed a sigh of relief.) 55...Bxd7 56.Rxg8+ Kxg8 57. h4 Kg7 58.Kg2 g5 59.hxg5 Kg6 60.Kg3 Kxg5 61.Be2 ½-½

Imre Barlay (1876)
DuWayne Langseth (1885)
Match 1, Game 1

November 8, 2015 / Earle Wikle's Apartment

1.d4 f5 2.e3 Nf6 3.Nf3 g6 4.Be2 Bg7 5.O-O O-O 6.b3 d6 7.Bb2 c6 8.c4 Re8 9.Qc2 Qc7 10.Nc3 Be6 11.Ng5 Bd7 12.e4 fxe4 13.Nxe4 Na6 14.a3 Rad8 15.f4 Qc8 16.Bd3 Ng4 17.Nxh7!



(I knew I would be sacking the exchange, but my pieces are aimed toward the vulnerable Black king.) 17...Ne3 (If 17...Kxh7 18.Ng5+ Kh8 19.Bxg6 and White has a very nice attack.) 18.Qf2 Nxf1 19.Qh4 Bf5 20.Nhg5 d5 21.Qh7+ Kf8 22.Rxf1 Rd6 (Imre wisely gives back the exchange to relieve the pressure on his king. If 22...dxe4? then 23.d5!!) 23.Nxd6 exd6 24.Bxf5 Qxf5 25.Qh3?



(I could no longer see an attack and decided I better exchange queens, but I underestimated the mess his rook would make on my queenside. 25.cxd5 or 25.Nf3 would have been fine for White.) 25...Qxh3 26.Nxh3 Re2 27.Bc3 Rc2 28.Rf3? (28.Ba1 was necessary.) 28...Rxc3! 29.Ng5 Rxf3 30.Nxf3 Bf6 31.cxd5 cxd5 32.Kf2 Nc7 33.a4 Ne6 34.Ke3 Nd8 35.g4 Nc6 36.Kd3 Bd8 37.h4 Ba5 38.Ng5 Ke7 39.Nf3 Kf6 40.Ng5 Nd8 41.Nf3 Ne6 42.Ke3 Bc3 43.Kd3 Bb2 44.h5 gxh5 0-1

Imre Barlay (2285)
GM Pal Benko (2540)
 New Hampshire Tournament
 1968

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6 g6 6.Nc3 Bxa6 7.g3 d6 8.Bg2 Bg7 9.Qa4+ Nbd7 10.Qh4 h6 11.f4 Rb8 12.e3 Qa5 13.Nge2 Bd3 14.Kf2 g5 15.fxg5 hxg5 16.Qa4 Qxa4 17.Nxa4



Ng4+ 18.Ke1 Nxh2 19.Nac3 Ne5 20.Kd1 Nc4 21.a4 Nxb2+ 22.Bxb2 Rxb2 23.Be4 Bxe2+ 24.Nxe2 Ng4 25.Rxh8+ Bxh8 26.Rb1 Nf2+ 27.Kc1 Rxe2 28.Rb8+ Kd7 29.Bf5+ e6 30.dxe6+ fxe6 31.Bxe6+ Kxe6 32.Rxh8 Nd3+ 0-1

Imre Barlay (1800)
Brian Rountree (1856)

8888 Birthday Celebration Tournament / Round 4
 August 6, 2017

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.O-O b5 6.Bb3 Bb7 7.c3 Be7 8.Re1 O-O 9.d4 d6 10.Nbd2 h6 11.Nf1 Re8 12.Ng3 Bf8 13.h3 Na5 14.Bc2 c5 15.d5 Bc8 16.Nh2 g5 17.Nh5 Nc4 18.Qf3 Bg7 19.a4 Nxh5 20.Qxh5 Bd7 21.b3 Nb6 22.h4 f6



23.Ng4 Bxg4 24.Qxg4 Qd7 25.Qg3 c4 26.bxc4 bxa4 27.c5 dxc5 28.Bd1 Bf8 29.Bg4 Qc7 30.Be6+ Kh8 31.Qg4 Qd6 32.Re3 Nc4 33.Rh3 Rxe6 34.dxe6 Kg8 35.Be3 Bg7 36.Rd1 Nxe3 37.Rxe3 Qb6 38.e7 Qc6 39.Red3 Re8 40.Rd6 Qb5 41.Qe6+ Kh7 42.Rd8 a3 43.Rxe8 Qxe8 44.Qd7 Qxd7 45.Rxd7 a2 46.Rd1 c4 47.e8Q g4 48.h5 a1Q 49.Rxa1 g3 50.Rd1 a5 51.Qg6+ 1-0

Imre Barlay (1874)
DuWayne Langseth (1923)
 Match 3, Game 1
 December 17, 2016

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.cxd5 exd5 6.e3 O-O 7.Bd3 b6 8.Nge2 Bb7 9.Ng3 Ne4 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.Qc2 f5 12.O-O-O Nd7 13.Rde1 c5 14.f3 exd4 15.Bxe4 dxc3 16.Bxf5 exb2+ 17.Kb1 Ne5 18.Bxh7+ Kh8 19.Bd3 Qa3 20.Rd1 Rfc8



21.Qxb2 Rc3 22.Qxa3 Rxa3 23.Bc2 Rxe3 24.Rhe1 Nc4 25.Rxe3 Nxe3 26.Rd2 Nc4 27.Re2 Ba6 28.Re7 Na3+ 29.Kb2 Nxc2 30.Kxc2 Bc4 31.a3 a5 32.Nf5 Rc8 33.Nd6 Rc6 34.Re8+ Kh7 35.Nxc4 dxc4 36.a4 c3 37.Re4 Rg6 38.g3 Rh6? 39.Rh4! Rxh4 40.gxh4 Kg6 41.Kxc3 Kh5 42.Kc4 Kxh4 43.Kb5 ... 1-0



Imre with his son Peter.

