

 **Browne, Walter Shawn** (born 21.01.1949. He died suddenly in Las Vegas, Nevada on June 24, 2015, having just tied for 9th-15th in the National Open)



Grandmaster 1970, IM 1969, journalist and commentator. Browne was born in [Sydney](#), Australia, to an American father and an Australian mother. He came to the US as a three years old child when when his family moved to the New York area, spent 1968-1973 back in Australia and then settled in the US. Browne moved to [California](#) in 1973 when he was 24.

Winning the U.S. Junior Championship at the age of seventeen, and at twenty the Australian Championship (for a time he represented both countries). In 1969, he represented Australia at the Asian Zonal tournament in Singapore, earning the International Master title – which earned him the same year an invitation to an international grandmaster tournament in San Juan, Puerto Rico. There, he gained the grandmaster title (awarded in 1970) by tying for second through fourth places, with Bruno Parma and Arthur Bisguier, behind reigning World Champion Boris Spassky.

At Rovinj / Zagreb in 1970, Walter Browne played and drew Bobby Fischer in a very entertaining game. Browne had Fischer on the ropes here but Bobby survived in a very entertaining game which was drawn after 94 moves. This game turned out to be their only one, because Fischer stopped playing after becoming World Chess Champion in 1972.

Browne was a **dominant presence** in American chess in the 1970s and 1980s:

Australian Champion 1969. Six-time U.S. Champion 1974, 1975, 1977, 1980 (three-way tie), 1981 (two-way split), and 1983 (three-way tie), U.S. Senior Champion 2005, and U.S. Junior Champion 1966.

Winnipeg 1974 (Pan American Championship), **Mannheim 1975** (Internat. FRG Championship)

Won or equal first in **Venice 1971** outright, **Wijk aan Zee 1974** outright, **Lone Pine (Open) 1974** as clear first, **Reykjavik 1978** (then a closed GM tournament, ahead of 2./3. Larsen and Miles, followed by 4./5. Hort, Lombardy, 6./7. Polugaevsky, F. Olafsson, 8. Kuzmin, 9. Smejkal, etc.), **Santiago de Chile 1981** outright, again **Wijk aan Zee (joint with Seirawan) 1980**,

1st Lady's Cup, Solo (aka Surakarta) / Denpasar, Indonesia 1982: Walter Browne taking the championship trophy, edging out IM Ron Henley on the better SB. This Mammoth Tournament saw 26 participants competing (amongst others Miles, Keene, Hort, Ribli, Csom, Gheorghiu, Kurajica, Matanovic, Hulak, Radulov, Sosonko, Christiansen, Suttles, Bellon Lopez, and then IM Chandler), it is **the biggest round robin chess gm tournament after World War II !!**

Should a player score a GM norm in this tournament he wouldn't need another norm elsewhere since the tournament had 25 rounds. According to the then FIDE regulation, to obtain a GM title a player needed to score GM norms in 24 rounds, normally in two tournaments. The tournament belonged to category IX. It required 70% achievement to score a GM norm. Looks easy? 70% of 25 rounds means 17.5 VP. A whopping +10 was required! *Co-winner IM Ron Henley, who had already one GM norm in his pocket, then made the GM title, achieving exactly the needed 17.5 / 25 points.*

<http://indonesiabase.com/1st-first-ladys-cup-solo-denpasar-1982/>

New York (Open) 1983 (shared with Alburt, Miles, Shirazi, Kudrin), **Gjovik, Norway 1983** (alongside with Adorjan and Nunn, ahead of Miles, Agdestein, Spassky, Ftacnik, and others), **Nimzowitsch Memorial 50th anniversary of his death in Naestved, Denmark 1985** (alongside with Larsen and Vaganjan, ahead of Short, Nikolic, Tal, Nikolic, Nunn, Andersson, Ftacnik, and others), **Canadian Open (at Windsor) 1991** as clear first.

Aside from the above results, Walter Browne won sole or shared the **National Open (Las Vegas)** eleven times, the **American Open** seven times, the **World Open** three times, and the traditional **U.S. Open Chess Championship** twice (1971 alone and 1972 together with Larry Evans).

A participant in the Olympiads in 1970 & 1972 for Australia; 1974, 1978, 1982, 1984 for the USA.

Three-times participant in Interzonals, although Browne never made it to the Candidates.

Winner of many **chess brilliancy prizes**. Founder of the World Blitz Chess Association (WBCA, existing from 1988 to 2004). Regular contributor as chess journalist and commentator. Browne was introduced to the **US Chess Hall of Fame in 2003**.

In 2012, Browne published an autobiography and collection of his best games, *The Stress of Chess ... and its Infinite Finesse*.

Best ELO: 2585 in 1976. Best ranking: 14= (Jan 1976), second best ranking: 18 (Jan 1984).

Browne has been also a professional and successful poker player since the early 1970s.

An anecdote - do you remember the < **1st Lady's Cup** >, an international invitation tournament played at Solo (aka Surakarta) / Denpasar, Indonesia in 1982?

This competition saw a field of < **26 players in an all-play-all** >!!

Amongst others Miles, Keene, Hort, Ribli, Csom, Gheorghiu, Kurajica, Matanovic, Hulak, Radulov, Sosonko, Christiansen, Suttles, Bellon Lopez, and (then) IM Chandler; as pointed out, it was the biggest international invitation round robin chess tournament after World War II.

Should a player score a GM norm in that tournament, he wouldn't need another norm elsewhere since the tournament had 25 rounds. According to the then FIDE regulation, to obtain a GM title a player needed to score GM norms in 24 rounds. In concreto, a whopping +10 was required! IM Ron Henley, who had already one GM norm in his pocket, took the opportunity and made the GM title on the spot.

Walter Browne was winning and taking home the championship trophy of this unique Mammoth event, edging out compatriot and co-winner Ron Henley on the better SB tie-break.

Btw.:

There was a < **2nd Lady's Cup** > a year later, but the **number of participants was reduced to 22**, well, today there are tournaments in a single round robin shape with 6 players..., Jan Timman won that Indonesian event ahead of Lajos Portisch, held at Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Denpasar in 1983.

Sources:

<http://indonesiabase.com/1st-first-ladys-cup-solo-denpasar-1982/>

<http://indonesiabase.com/2nd-first-ladys-cup-jakarta-yogyakarta-denpasar-1983/>

Walter Browne dies in his sleep at 66

by Frederic Friedel

6/25/2015 – GM Walter Browne, born in Australia, was a six-time US Champion and eleven time winner of the National Open. He won the American Open seven times, the World Open three times, and the US Open Championship twice. On Wednesday night, after a tournament, a simul and a poker session in Las Vegas, Browne passed away suddenly. The chess world is shocked and saddened by this loss.



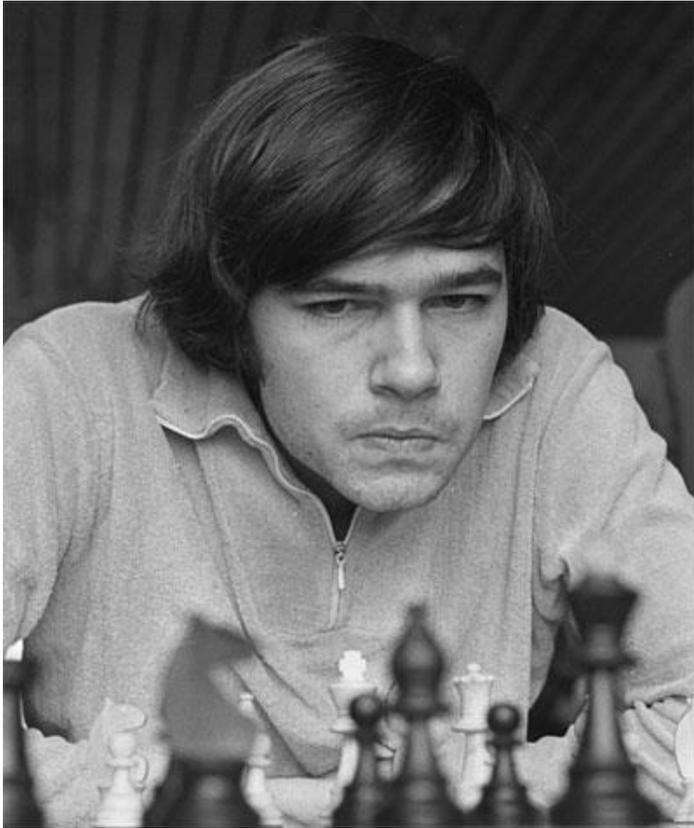
GRAND MASTER WALTER SHAWN BROWNE HAS QUIETLY AND SUDDENLY PASSED AWAY IN LAS VEGAS NEVADA.

The Las Vegas International Chess Festival [news page reports](#):

GM Browne had just finished playing in our 50th Anniversary National Open. He tied for 9th-15th. He played a 25 board simultaneous exhibition here at the Las Vegas International Chess Festival. He also taught at our chess camp and gave a lecture series. After the Chess Festival, Browne stayed the night at the home of his life-long friend, Ron Gross, who reported to us that Walter died suddenly in his sleep. We are shocked and saddened by this sudden loss.

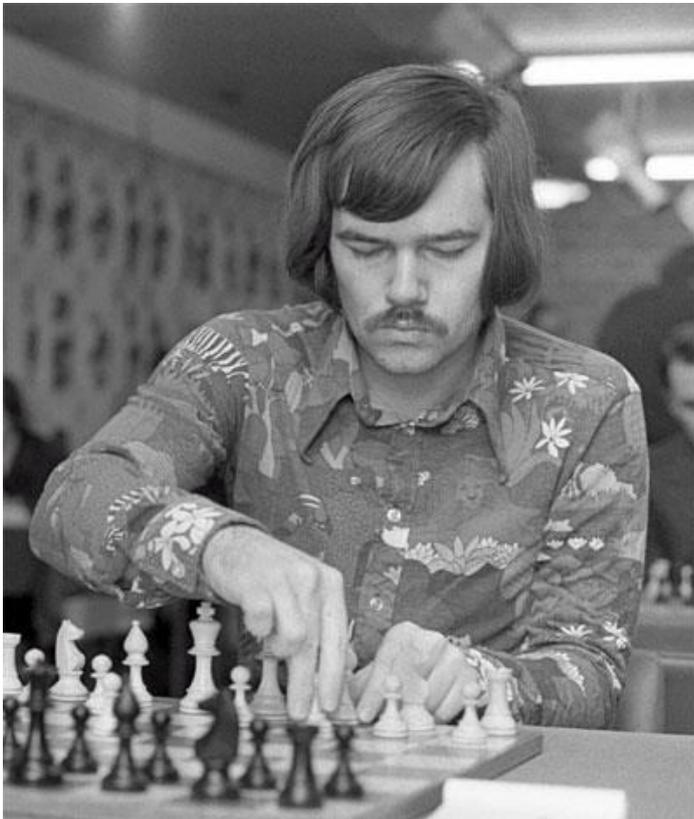
Walter was a good man, a great friend, and a mentor to generations of players. He will be sorely missed, yet his games, his brilliance, his generosity, and his explorations of the games, as well as his presence will live on. Farewell Walter. We will remember you. Rest in Peace.

Walter Shawn Browne was born in Sydney, Australia, on January 10, 1949 of a US American father and an Australian mother. The family moved to New York when he was three, and Walter moved to California when he was 24. At the age of seventeen he won the U.S. Junior Championship, and at twenty the Australian Championship (for a time he represented both countries). That year, 1969, he represented Australia at the Asian Zonal tournament in Singapore, earning the International Master title – which earned him an invitation to an international grandmaster tournament in San Juan, Puerto Rico. There, he gained the grandmaster title by tying for second through fourth places, with Bruno Parma and Arthur Bisguier, behind reigning World Champion Boris Spassky.



Walter Browne playing for Australia in 1972

Walter Browne played first board for Australia at the 1970 and 1972 Chess Olympiads, before switching to representing the United States in 1974.



After his switch to the USCF in 1974

U.S. Championships, Interzonals, Olympiads

Browne won the U.S. Chess Championship six times. His victories were at Chicago 1974 (with 9½/13), Oberlin 1975 (8½/13), Mentor 1977 (9/13), Greenville 1980 (7½/12), South Bend 1981 (9/14) and 1983 (9/13). He qualified for three Interzonal tournaments, but never came close to qualification for the Candidates. At the Manila Interzonal 1976, Browne scored 8½/19 for 15th place. At the Las Palmas Interzonal 1982, he placed last of 14 contestants with 3/13. Finally, at the Taxco Interzonal 1985, he scored 6½/15 for a tied 9–13th place.

In six appearances Browne performed well at the Chess Olympiads. He represented Australia twice and the United States four times, winning a total of five medals, all bronze. He scored 55½/86 (+40 -15 =31), for 64.5 percent:

Siegen 1970	Australia board 1	14/19 (+10 -1 =8)	
Skopje 1972	Australia board 1	17½/22 (+15 -2 =5)	board bronze
Nice 1974	United States board 3	10½/17 (+7 -3 =7)	team bronze
Buenos Aires 1978	United States board 2	4½/9 (+3 -3 =3)	team bronze
Lucerne 1982	United States board 1	5½/10 (+4 -3 =3)	team bronze
Thessaloniki 1984	United States board 4	3½/9 (+1 -3 =5)	team bronze

Other tournaments (recapitulation)

Browne was a dominant presence in American chess in the 1970s and 1980s. Aside from the above results he won the National Open eleven times, the American Open seven times, the World Open three times, and the U.S. Open Chess Championship twice (1971 and 1972).

Browne also enjoyed many international successes from the early 1970s into the mid-1980s. His international firsts include **Venice 1971**, **Wijk aan Zee 1974**, Winnipeg 1974 (Pan American Championship), **Lone Pine 1974**, Mannheim (International FRG Championship) 1975, **Reykjavík 1978**, **Wijk aan Zee 1980**, Santiago de Chile 1981, **Indonesia 1982** (shared with Ron Henley in a 26-player round-robin tournament), the **1983 New York Open**, Gjovik 1983, and **Naestved 1985**.

Browne was inducted into the U.S. Chess Hall of Fame in 2003. He won the U.S. Senior Open in June 2005. In 2012 he published an autobiography and collection of his best games, *The Stress of Chess ... and its Infinite Finesse*.

Playing style

Browne tended to spend a lot of his allotted time during the opening moves and early middlegame; consequently he often wound up in time trouble. This sometimes led to mistakes, even though Browne played reasonably well in time trouble; and good play during this phase could unsettle his opponents. A world-class speed chess player, Browne in 1988 formed the World Blitz Chess Association, but it ended in 2004 after encountering financial troubles.

Information and pictures from [Wikipedia](#)



[Frederic Friedel](#) Editor-in-Chief of the ChessBase News Page. Studied Philosophy and Linguistics at the University of Hamburg and Oxford, graduating with a thesis on speech act theory and moral language. He started a university career but switched to science journalism, producing documentaries for German TV. In 1986 he co-founded ChessBase.

<http://en.chessbase.com/post/walter-browne-dies-in-his-sleep-at-66>