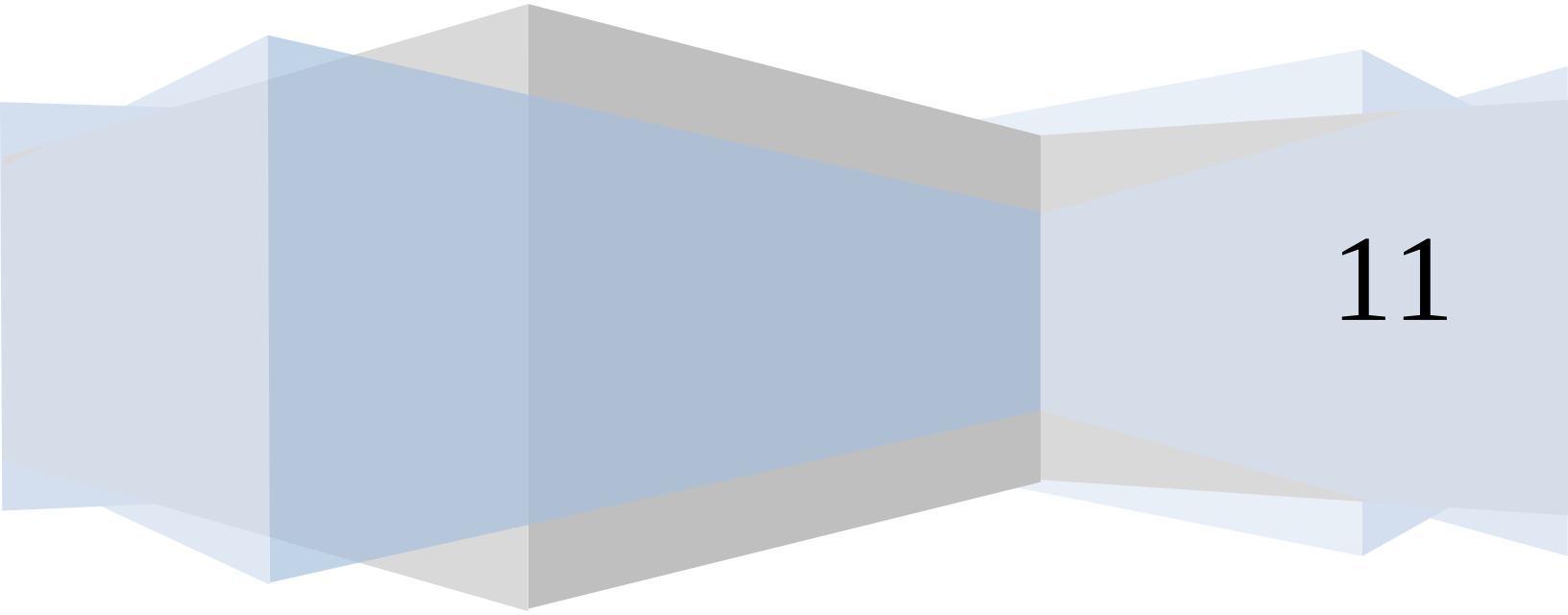
Tactics Time

Interviews w/ Chess Gurus

Isaac Martinez Interview

Tim Brennan



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Isaac Martinez Interview

Timothy Brennan: Hey everybody. This is Tim with tacticstime.com. And today, I have a very special guest, Isaac Martinez.

Isaac Martinez: Hello.

Timothy Brennan: Welcome Isaac.

Isaac Martinez: Hello.

Timothy Brennan: How are you doing today?

Isaac Martinez: Good.

Timothy Brennan: So, Isaac has been attending chess tournaments since he was two days old. He's the son of Anthea Carson Martinez who I've done a couple podcasts with. So, what it's like growing up in a chess home like that Isaac?

Isaac Martinez: Well, it's fun cause I really like chess.

Timothy Brennan: That's good.

Isaac Martinez: It's not very much of a chess home since my dad is terrible and my sister doesn't really seem like she wants.

Timothy Brennan: OK.

Isaac Martinez: Wants anything to do with anyone

[Laughter]

So.

Timothy Brennan: So, I guess what's it like having a chess mom I guess cause that's a little unusual?

Isaac Martinez: It's very different cause you always see these people like talk about I can beat my dad at chess and I can.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

01:00 **Isaac Martinez:** My dad taught me chess and my dad is number 10 in the state. I've

heard that.

Timothy Brennan: Oh OK.

Isaac Martinez: Too yeah, but then yeah so then I have the chess mom and it seems like really normal for me, but.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Isaac Martinez: Other people may like go, "Wow that's different."

Timothy Brennan: Right. Yeah that's true cause there's not a lot of women players and then I've known you since you were rated 100 and what are you rated now?

Isaac Martinez: I fluctuate between 1700 and 1800.

Timothy Brennan: OK. And how old are you?

Isaac Martinez: Fourteen.

Timothy Brennan: Fourteen OK. So, you play in both scholastic tournaments and adult tournaments. Is that correct?

Isaac Martinez: Yeah mainly adult tournaments. I'll play in a scholastic tournament every once in a while, but I usually just play in the state and sometimes if ever my whole family is going to the Lee Simmons thing, I'll go.

Timothy Brennan: Uh-huh. Which do you like playing better?

Isaac Martinez: Which one? State?

02:00 **Timothy Brennan:** Like adults or.

Isaac Martinez: Oh the adult tournament there's a.

Timothy Brennan: OK.

Isaac Martinez: I hate to say it, but there's a lot more competition there.

Timothy Brennan: OK.

Isaac Martinez: I mean, I mean just on a higher level and usually the people at scholastic tournaments have been just recently rated.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Isaac Martinez: Especially if when it's local, all of those scholastic players are from Fort Collins or Denver. There are a lot here in Colorado Springs too, but you know it's just, it is better to play in adult tournaments where I mean the games are a lot harder and the players are much more experienced.

Timothy Brennan: Right. So, what are your favorite things about chess?

Isaac Martinez: I just really find it something that I really, really a lot enjoy doing and even when I say like, "Oh, I don't want to do chess anymore."

[Laughter]

It's never really what's going to happen maybe like an hour or so, I'll be studying my chess games or looking at it like some sort of a game from one of the top players.

03:09 **Timothy Brennan:** How would you describe your playing style?

Isaac Martinez: That would be a hard one. I try to play tactical, but lately I've been playing more positionally. I used to like like I didn't use to focus on pawn structure, but I'm really focusing on it cause I realized you could just completely immobilize people, your opponent with your pawn structure so.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Isaac Martinez: I really love doing that cause then it'll give my pieces a lot of piece play.

Timothy Brennan: I know you're doing some studying with Paul Covington. What are some of the things you've picked up from him?

Isaac Martinez: He showed me this opening called the cheesecake. It was very drawish.

Timothy Brennan: Yeah.

Isaac Martinez: So, it's good. It was solid, but it was very drawish. And it felt kind of drawish to me and I decided to start playing a different opening.

04:04 But I learned a lot from him and he would show me these lessons on chess.com and one person who I really learned a lot from chess.com, his name is I am Danny Wrench.

Timothy Brennan: OK.

Isaac Martinez: And I learned a lot from him and that was really cool.

Timothy Brennan: What's an example of something you learned?

Isaac Martinez: Well, for example shutting off your opponent's piece play.

Timothy Brennan: OK.

Isaac Martinez: He showed me a way, a really good way to do that and out of the queen's gambit.

Timothy Brennan: OK.

Isaac Martinez: Yeah. It was really awesome. In fact, I played it the other day in a tournament.

Timothy Brennan: In Fort Collins.

Isaac Martinez: In Fort Collins yeah.

Timothy Brennan: OK. So, do you have any particular goals in chess right now? I mean do you just play it for fun or are you trying to get to a certain rating?

Isaac Martinez: Right now, I'm actually just trying to get to 1900, just 100 points at a time is my goal.

Timothy Brennan: Right. For the past couple of years, your rating's really gone up rapidly. What would you accredit that to?

05:00 **Isaac Martinez:** Study.

Timothy Brennan: Studying.

Isaac Martinez: Yeah, just the lessons and studying. I've learned a whole, whole lot more. I've gained a lot of knowledge, I always have knowledge and I certainly have a patience to learn.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Isaac Martinez: But.

Timothy Brennan: So, do you have a favorite chess book or one you'd recommend to somebody who's maybe stuck in the 1300-1400 range and wants to get up to the 1700-1800 range?

Isaac Martinez: I just do tactics books and one thing that's important to study is endgames so, I do know that and endgames are you know they're pretty boring I mean.

Timothy Brennan: Yeah. Your tactics are really awesome in the games we've played. And I was sitting next to you when you're playing Sergey Kudrin in the simul in

Wyoming and that was a pretty crazy game.

Isaac Martinez: That was a really fun game.

Timothy Brennan: Yeah. You want to talk about that game for a minute?

Isaac Martinez: Yeah. In that game actually, the cheesecake I realized that if I play it right especially in a simul against the grandmaster, I would or against, you know maybe someone around 2000-1900, I would probably get in a very drawish position.

06:11 **Timothy Brennan:** Right.

Isaac Martinez: And plus I'm taking much more time than he is so I have that. So, all I was looking for was a draw.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Isaac Martinez: I'd recently drawn Alex Fishbein.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Isaac Martinez: In a simul that he did.

Timothy Brennan: Yeah and that was a really interesting game too actually.

Isaac Martinez: I was just looking for a draw. So, I played the cheesecake and actually ended up very drawish in the end. I think we had a fairly locked position I mean.

Timothy Brennan: Oh I thought your game against Kudrin had all kind of crazy sacrifices.

Isaac Martinez: It did. I had a whole bunch of crazy sacrifices in it and then it ended up just like completely draw in the endgame.

Timothy Brennan: OK.

Isaac Martinez: I think he had like a rook to my bishop or something like that. That was it. That was the material we had left or I think I had like a bishop and a pawn against his rook or something.

Timothy Brennan: In your game against Fishbein, you had a clever repetition as I recall where he couldn't.

07:00 Do you want to talk about that if you remember?

Isaac Martinez: Yeah it was like an endless repetition. He had like eight moves and

every move but one would result in some sort of exchange loss or piece loss. So, that was pretty cool getting that position.

Timothy Brennan: Yeah that was an interesting tactic. I love tactics actually that force a draw you know cause there's not a lot of them and you know I really thought that was a clever tactic that you did there to get a draw. So you had, both of us, you and I had two draws in a month against two different grandmasters and that was a lot of fun. So, did you watch that Queen to Play movie actually?

Isaac Martinez: No.

Timothy Brennan: OK.

Isaac Martinez: I have a hard time paying attention to movies where I have to read the screen.

[Laughter]

Timothy Brennan: That's fair enough. I know you came over and you watched the Bobby Fischer movie.

Isaac Martinez: That I liked that. That was a good movie. Yeah.

08:00 **Timothy Brennan:** Yeah. What did you like about that movie?

Isaac Martinez: I thought it really showed, I mean I didn't know much about Bobby Fischer from his 20-year-old age to like when he was on his deathbed. So, I learned a lot more about what he did. I thought it was really interesting thing.

Timothy Brennan: So, you're planning on playing again in the scholastic this year coming up?

Isaac Martinez: Yeah. OK of course. Yeah.

Timothy Brennan: So, it sounds like that's a pretty exciting tournament.

Isaac Martinez: Yeah. It's exciting. I mean I was kind of just freak out and hang pieces.

[Laughter]

For no reason.

Timothy Brennan: So, I'm not very familiar with the scholastic world. Is it do you play against people in your own age or grade or how does that work?

Isaac Martinez: I've heard they're changing it up this year. I'm not sure if it's true or not,

but before they did it K through three, fourth grade through sixth grade, seventh grade through ninth grade and 10th grade through 12th grade.

09:03 **Timothy Brennan:** OK.

Isaac Martinez: But they might be switching it up to ninth grade through 12th grade and K through three and K through eight this year.

Timothy Brennan: OK. So, three sections instead of four.

Isaac Martinez: Yeah.

Timothy Brennan: So, do you play in the highest section I guess.

Isaac Martinez: Well I'm in ninth grade now so I'll be playing in whatever section ninth grade would be put in.

Timothy Brennan: Oh OK.

Isaac Martinez: I wouldn't really want to play up or anything. I just..

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Isaac Martinez: Play wherever I was put at.

Timothy Brennan: OK. I got you. So, I heard they have like a big screen there and there's a lot of parents and spectators. It's kind of big deal.

Isaac Martinez: Yeah.

Timothy Brennan: So, you're also taking some lesson with Lee Simmons, is that right?

Isaac Martinez: Yes. Yes I do.

Timothy Brennan: So, how's that going?

Isaac Martinez: Oh yeah it's going really well. I really enjoyed the lessons. He always uses these you know little words that he just kind of that kind of stay in your head, that are grammatically incorrect I guess, but they're fun to say so.

10:00 **Timothy Brennan:** Like little mnemonics to help you remember things?

Isaac Martinez: Yeah little mnemonics to help you remember. So that was so when you're playing, they'll pop up in your head and then it will actually help you a lot.

Timothy Brennan: Do you have an example of one you could think of off the top of

your head?

Isaac Martinez: Yeah. He has this thing where if you want to get a pawn duo, there are three pawn duos you can get in the center. And he has names for them and one of them is cousin DC from Texas and that's the C and D pawns. Then, one of them is cousin Ed. And it's the E and D pawns.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Isaac Martinez: Both center pawns. And one of them is F and E. And I think he calls it FE.

Timothy Brennan: Oh OK. All right. Well thanks Isaac. And it's been great seeing your rating go up so much the last couple of years and hope that you have a lot of continued success. Anything else you want to add before we wrap this up?

Isaac Martinez: No.

Timothy Brennan: OK.

11:00 All right well thanks for joining me and this is Tim for tacticstime.com.

I hope you enjoyed this interview with Isaac!

Your Friend,

Tim B

P. S. If you want to learn everything you need to know about raising chess your rating, you need to check out my **101 Tactical Tips** and **Tactics Time** programs. You can learn all about them below:

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