

NATIONAL BILLIARD CHAMPIONSHIP

Canada's Leading Amateur Has Entered for the First Annual Tournament—Western Men Also Coming—Novel Event Next Month at Daly's Academy—Straight Rail Billiards Popular.

The committee of the newly organized National Amateur Billiard Association is actively engaged in preparing for the coming National championship series of matches that will be held at the Liederkrantz Club. Weekly meetings of the committee are rapidly bringing the business of the championship to a focus and making sure of the number and quality of the men who will compete for the honors and the gold cup. These meetings are held each Tuesday evening at the Liederkrantz Club. At the last meeting several changes were made in the composition of the committee, and it now includes men who have been identified with the upbuilding of amateur billiards in this country for many years. The original committee was composed of Rudolph Schaefer, Chairman; Robert C. Kaemmerer, Charles Foster, Gus Rudolph, and J. Ferdinand Poggenburg. This committee was appointed by H. B. Scharman, President of the Liederkrantz Club. The new appointments to the committee include A. F. Troescher, William Klenke, Maurice Daly, and Dr. A. L. Ranney. The latter was for many years at the head of the Amateur Athletic Union Billiard Committee, and was the manager of the National championship tournaments in Class A and B at the Knickerbocker Athletic Club.

With the prospect of pure amateur competitions before them the leading men in various sections of the country have shown a willingness to enter. The most important of these was received by the committee yesterday, and is from the foremost amateur of Canada, Arthur Marcotte of the Quebec Club. He has acquitted himself in excellent style in the tournaments that have been played across the border, and by those acquainted with his play he is regarded as being the best acquisition to the entry list, as he is the equal of Gardner and Foss.

Arthur Townsend, Edward H. Gardner, and Wilson P. Foss, the winners and holders of the trophy since it was first offered three years ago, have all entered. De Munn Smith of St. Louis has sent on his entry, as has Charles Conklin, the nery and aggressive amateur of Chicago. Every effort is being made to secure the entry of Charles Norris, also of Chicago, who at one time was a resident of this city and won several of the minor championship tournaments at the Knickerbocker Athletic Club. The entry of De Munn Smith is regarded as important, as he was the old playing partner of Wyman McCreary, who was one of the great trio that played in the first of the Amateur Athletic Union's tournaments with Foss and Mullen. Smith has a style that is very like that of the late Frank Ives in the brilliancy of its execution, and he has improved greatly since he was seen in tournament play here several years ago. Conklin has been doing some remarkably fine playing in one of the Chicago tournaments, and during the past week made a run of 112 and an average of 12 for the match.

The tournament at the Liederkrantz Club is scheduled to begin on the night of Monday, Feb. 4. The matches will be played in the large music room of the club, which will be arranged so as to seat nearly 300 spectators, the seats being built in tiers, so that all may see the table easily. The games will be 300 points duration at the fourteen-inch balk-line game, with two counts allowed in balk. Following the opening contest, matches will be played both afternoon and evening.

It seems that the old style of straight rail billiards is again coming into vogue. A tournament was recently played in Chicago in that style, and the papers were brought to the realization that the rail game is in reality the most difficult game on the table, and is possessed of wondrous complications that bewilder the brain of even the expert player at balk line. So general has been the interest in the rail game that the trammels of the chalk lines are being done away with by many of the players who were formerly exponents of the balk line method of play. There has been some controversy as to who was the inventor of the balk line and its origin, and the reason of the chalk square upon the table. Some have claimed that it was done to limit the counting of Jacob Schaefer, and that it was first aimed to control his playing of the famous rail nurse. In speaking of the matter Benjamin Garno, the veteran billiardist, said:

"Schaefer was not known as a player, outside of Leavenworth, Kan., when the balk line was first brought to public notice. When its rules were framed, there was no thought of him at all. When they were appropriated in Chicago in 1883, as a mere matter of form, there was again no reference to Schaefer, save that, to favor him, one or two rules were changed. The others can all be found copyrighted in 1880. It was under that code, word for word as it stands at the present day, that Schaefer won the championship from Sexton in the Winter of 1879-80. It was under it, also, that Slosson beat Schaefer whenever they played for that championship, or three times altogether, besides beating him in Chicago in two matches out of three.

"Balkline was not devised to stop 'straight-railing.' There was then no 'straight-rail,' no 'anchor,' no 'Schaefer.' Six-inch balkline was to have been played in the Philadelphia Centennial Tournament of 1876, but Sexton prevented. Balkline was to have been played in the New York tourney of 1879, but was prevented. Spotting at 50 or 100 was discussed, but dismissed as unfair, even as among Sexton, Slosson, and Schaefer. Another kind of play was devised.

"There was no need for any new game in 1883 as a bar to nursing. In the thirty-two contests for the championship at the game of 1879, as many as 200 were run but twice—312 by Schaefer, and 236 by Slosson. Bringing balkline forward in 1883, with nursery boxes in the corners to favor Schaefer and 'railing,' was not meant to curtail nursing. Its purpose was to curtail Luke C. Newhall, who certainly needed abridgment. But it is a thing that in doing this in 1883 the Chicagoans (and New Yorkers, among whom that Winter was Schaefer) should have subverted the principle of balkline by inserting the short lines. Until then 'anchor' had been impossible at balkline."

A joint tournament at balk line and cushion carroms, in which a number of the leading metropolitan amateurs will compete, will begin at Maurice Daly's academy on the night of Jan. 4. In the balk line section will be Fredericks, Dr. Mial, Gershel, Canada, and Townsend. They will play the eighteen-inch game with two counts allowed in balk and the contests will be of 300 points duration. Three of these men will probably play in the national amateur championship tournament. It is thought that the play at the eighteen-inch line game will make their game at the fourteen-inch line, which they will play in the tournament, more solid, and stiffen them on the problems of keeping the ivory balls well together. Eight players have entered for the cushion carrom tournament in which the games will be 100 points. The competitors are Pash, Parsony Roeder, Bennett, Loewenbergh, Wefers, Hill, and De Young.

The question of admitting women every evening to the coming matches at the Liederkrantz Club has provoked some argument among the members, the majority of whom seem to favor keeping open house to women who wish to witness the playing of the amateurs at the game. One of the members who favors the admission of women as spectators said last night:

"Many people have their own private billiard rooms at their homes, and these give the women of the household and their friends a chance to indulge in the invigorating sport. In France a gentleman is not

ashamed to take his wife to see a professional billiard game. French women are good billiard players, and like to see all the fancy shots made by professionals as soon as they begin to attract attention. There are many expert women billiard players in the large cities of the United States, but they are never seen at the professional matches, and seldom at the amateur contests."

Leading professional billiard players of England, including Champion Dawson, are in revolt against the Billiard Association, the governing organization of the game in Great Britain. The trouble has become so serious that the players are planning to form a new association, which will be restricted to professionals.

The players seem to have been dissatisfied ever since the first legislation was enacted by the association, but the determination to secede was not decided upon until the association passed a rule which not alone empowered it to make all the arrangements for championship matches among professionals, but which arrogated to the association the right to provide the table, name the maker, and restrict the size of the balls.

Champion Dawson alleges that the revenue of the Billiard Association is almost wholly obtained from professional members, and that the players were being deprived of their right of selecting tables for championship contests. The association's answer to this is that the professionals practically pay nothing and get all the plums, and needy players are frequently assisted with monetary payments.

Billiards at Press Club.

C. Richards, the English professional who was King Edward's tutor in billiards, gave an interesting exhibition yesterday afternoon at the New York Press Club. At the American game he made an average of 8, beating E. W. Gardner, the amateur expert, by a simple point in a game of 100. At the continuous pool, 50 balls, Richards defeated J. M. Heatherton, champion of the Crescent Athletic Club, by 50 to 32. In an exhibition of the English game on an American pool table the visitor ran 150 without any effort. Col. Adams, the billiard champion of the Press Club, showed some interesting tricks in finger billiards, and Mr. Richards did some fancy shots with a half dozen cues, fifteen balls, and a silk hat.

Wright Wins at Billiards by Default.

The last game in the 142 tournament at the Broadway Billiard Academy was to have been played last night between T. Cooper (115) and F. Wright, (100.) The former failed to appear, and the game was awarded to Mr. Wright. To-morrow night J. Donaldson (115) and F. Alry (125) will play off their tie for second prize.

The record of the tournament follows:

	W.	L.		W.	L.
G. H. Moore.....	5	1	T. Cooper	2	4
F. Alry	4	2	F. Wright	2	4
J. Donaldson	4	2	H. Hall	1	5
H. Gardiner	3	3			