

MANY CUE EXPERTS ON TRAIL OF HOPPE

Sweeping Challenges of World's Billiard Champion Bring Flock of Replies.

It was only a short time ago that Willie Hoppe issued a series of challenges from St. Louis to the professional billiard players of the country. Apparently he has brought forth enough acceptances of his offers to keep him busy for the rest of the Winter. Morningstar and Yamada were the first to take him up on the proposition of playing two shots to his one, and now Maurice Daly, who has not competed in a tournament in years, is willing to pair up with Leonard Howison on this proposition, even to the extent of putting up \$5,000 or more.

During the last week three billiardists wired their acceptance of Hoppe's conditions, but, as yet, Willie has not vouchsafed a reply. On the part of some there is the belief that he is a bit repentant of some of his apparently rash outgivings, and would be glad to evade the responsibility of living up to them. De Oro says he is willing to play Hoppe at three cushions for \$1,000 a side. John Daly, another former three-cushion champion, has a backing of \$5,000 for a match with Hoppe, and George Moore, who until two days ago held the three-cushion championship, is also ready to play Hoppe.

It had been reported from St. Louis that Hoppe would break with the Brunswick Balke Collender Company as soon as his contract expired, and the impression was gained that the contract had only a short time to run. It develops, however, that Hoppe is under contract to the billiard company for more than two years.

Morris D. Brown, former holder of the national amateur Class A billiard championship, has built up a new theory to account for the fact that averages and runs in such tournaments fall below the practice marks. It is his contention that in the tournament a player is handicapped by conditions with which he is not familiar. In other words, he contends that the situation with regard to actual play is abnormal and has proposed to those of the Boston Athletic Association, who will have charge of the tournament which starts there on Feb. 26, that the conditions be made as near as possible the counterpart of what a player usually enjoys.

For instance, he advocates that the lights over the table be no stronger than those in use in the average billiard room. When more powerful lights are used for the championship match he says the glare is terrific and that the player unused to such light cannot play as well as if the lights were more nearly normal. It is the same with everything else, he says. The cloth is stretched tighter by far than on the ordinary table, the cushions are faster, and the balls are new. It is to the new balls that Mr. Brown attributes much of the difficulty which faces Class A billiardists in a championship match. He does not deny that the ivories are true, that they are of the finest quality, but he believes they are brittle on the outside surface. The ball which has been in use, according to his interpretation, or the one that has been turned for some time, has a softened surface which permits of better action on the draw.

What he would like to see would be a tournament conducted under conditions which prevail in general, rather than have the tournament managers set up conditions which are not duplicated except once during the year. If this were the case, he believes the averages would show greater consistency in tournament games. He holds no brief for the amateurs in this respect, maintaining that the same holds true for the professionals, as is evidenced by the fact that their practice averages always exceed those made under tournament conditions. The Boston men were interested listeners to his views last week, and it may be that his ideas will be incorporated in the Boston tournament.

Philadelphia is planning to hold a professional pocket billiard tournament some time in March. Practically all of the leaders at the pocket game are expected to enter. The event is being promoted by the Billiard Association of Philadelphia.

A remarkable run at pocket billiards comes to light from Spokane. Roy Reinhart, an amateur, clustered a count of 57 in a tournament which was held in Spokane some time ago.

In spite of the fact that the rules of the National Association of Amateur Billiard Players prevent one who has not resided a year in this country from playing for any of the championship emblems, there is an attempt being made to provide for the entry of Robert Mortier in the Class A championship at Boston. It has been suggested by some members of the association that a mail vote be taken to secure the permission for Mortier's entry. Mortier is a capable Class A player. His brother, Alfred Mortier, is the French amateur champion. Jacob Klinger, the Austrian contender in the Class A championship a year ago, is expected to enter the event in Boston. Nothing definite has been learned of the entry for the tournament. The names of all those who wish to compete must be in the hands of the billiard association by the middle of this week.