

HOPPE ORIGINAL BOY WONDER OF BILLIARD GAME

Has Been an Outstanding
Star for 35 Years.

[This is the ninth of a series of sketches on the entrants in the world's three cushion championship billiards tournament, opening Monday at Bensinger's, 131 South Wabash avenue, and continuing thru April 4.]

MAR 8 - 1940 F3

Jack Dempsey in boxing, Bill Tilden in tennis, Walter Hagen in golf, Babe Ruth in baseball



Willie Hoppe.

— these names and sports are synonymous and to them can be added the two names of Willie Hoppe

Willie, the original boy wonder of the game, has been connected with the game for 35 years, although his record extends far beyond that, if you want to start from the beginning. That would be when

William was a ripe 6 years and needed a soap box to reach the table, a position which developed the sidearm stroke he still employs, in contrast to the standard pendulum motion of most of his rivals.

Hoppe was born in Cornwall, N. Y., 52 years ago, and has made New York City his home since childhood. He was an American prodigy by the time he was in his early teens, but did not gain world recognition until he was 18, when he traveled to Paris and there defeated the famed Maurice Vignaux for the world's 18.2 balkline championship. Balkline was the reigning style in billiards and continued so thru 1925. Thru that entire span, Hoppe was practically invincible.

At that time, the trend shifted to the three cushion variety and Hoppe decided to switch to that from balkline. He tied for second in his debut in 1928 and was runnerup the following year. He came back in 1934 to finish fourth, and in 1935 he finished runnerup to Walker Cochran. In the same year, he challenged Cochran and won the championship with a 300 to 246 score.

In addition to the numerous world records he holds in balkline competition, the genial Willie is also the holder of the world's mark for three cushion exhibition play, dashing off 25 billiards in a match against Charlie Peterson in 1920.