

Hoppe's King of the Cue, but Cochran Is Good, Too

New York, Jan. 27 (AP).—The announcer introduced "Willie Hoppe, the champion of champions, and Welker Cochran, an outstanding billiard artist," and you realized what the fellow meant when he wrote "Me and My Shadow."

It's one of those little gags you run into every now and then in sports, where one has hit a



Welker Cochran (left) and Willie Hoppe as they appeared 20 years ago.

ball just as far as another, or call hogs just as loud, or tie his shoelaces just as tight, yet the other guy gets all the headlines and the publicity pats on the back.

Ruth had it over Gehrig, you remember. But the shadow the Babe threw over Lou was only the kind you cast on a rainy day compared to the headlines Hoppe has grabbed from Cochran in the 30 years the two boy wonders of 47 and 56 have been tangling on that green felt in sport's most ancient rivalry.

Cochran Refers Interviewers to His Pal, Willie.

The next time you're leaning against the mahogany dipping into

an ice cream soda, for instance, just turn to the fellow on your right and mention billiards. It's 1 to 50 he'll say, "Yeah, that Hoppe guy is hot."

Yet, ever since he first rode the caboose of a cattle train out of Manson, Ia., and started doing tricks with a cue, Welker has done just about everything Willie has—and a few stunts Hoppe couldn't match. Cochran holds more world billiard records than Hoppe ever hopes to. He captured the world three-cushion championship three times over one 15-year period, while Willie was trying—and missing. Yet Willie is the fair-haired boy—and Welker can't figure out what Hoppe has that he hasn't.

A Kindly School Principal Aids Young Welker.

It has been 30 years since they first met, and they've been close pals ever since. That is, they're chums until the lights go on over that green felt and the shooting starts.

Welker has been a billiard expert so long he thinks he may have used a cue ball for a teething ring. He tells you about his kid days in school, when a Chicago newspaper gave him a big publicity spread.

His school teacher didn't like the idea much and used to ask him all the tough questions. When he couldn't answer them, he was sent to the principal for a bawling out. Only the teacher didn't know the principal was a billiard nut. So instead of being chastised, Welker sat for an hour diagraming angle shots for him.