

## The World Championships Free Game

The history of the World Championships Free Game goes far back to the beginnings of billiard sport.

From June 23 to 30, 1873, the first so-called World Championship Free Game took place in New York. The title went to Albert Garnier (FR). With a distance of 300 points and six participants, the Frenchman reached an average of 9,32 (best game of 12,00 and a best series of 113). Numerous challenges and tournaments followed, often dubbed the World Championship, although there was no federation, binding rules for the event, or even an international invitation to compete.

In the next years, the averages "exploded" - despite the large barred zones in the corner (71 x 35.5 cm) introduced in 1879, and the professionals no longer organized tournaments and World Championships, one switched to the balkline.

The development was similar for the amateurs. In the beginning, they hardly played any role, later they rather followed the professional players and played balkline. Only in 1927, the billiards world federation, the UIFAB (Union Internationale des Fédérations d'Amateurs de Billard) decided to introduce World Championships Free Game. Incomprehensibly, barred zone in the corner of 21 x 21 cm was fixed and only in 1948 extended to 71 x 35.5 cm, which was actually already the usual measurement from 1879.

Then in 1928 the first World Championship Free Game was held in Basel, Switzerland, and in the following years such a tournament was organized annually until the outbreak of World War II.

In 1949, they started again, but gradually there were fewer championships. By the time of the last World Championship in 1969 in Linz, Austria, only five title matches had been held. The Free Game had lost its attractiveness. The performances had reached a very high level, almost every participant in the World Championship was able to complete the required 500 points in one inning, and the Rail Nurse was in the long run more tiring than interesting for the spectators.

All championships were played to the distance of 500 points over the period from 1928 to 1969. The averages achieved by the winners ranged from 29,76 to 178,42 - and the best individual averages were between 41,66 and 500,00 with maximum series of 154 to 500.

When you get right down to it, Belgian Raymond Ceulemans is still the reigning world champion with his 1969 success in Linz, as no other world tournament has taken place in the last 55 years.

The most frequent winners of the title were Edmond Soussa (EG), Juan Butrón (ES) and Jean Albert (FR), who were each successful three times.

The best tournament average was achieved in 1969 in Linz with 81.60.

It is interesting that already in 1908 there was an attempt to establish world championships in this discipline. The "Fédération Française du Billard" (FFB), which organized the first world championships in balkline, organized world championships too in the free game from May 30 to June 1, 1908 and from May 20 to 22, 1909. However, these were not recognized by the later world federation UIFAB as official world championships, unlike the balkline 45/2.

Unfortunately, only very few results and only an approximate final score are known.

#### 1908 Paris (FR) 30.05.-01.06.1908

- |                          |     |         |       |         |     |
|--------------------------|-----|---------|-------|---------|-----|
| 1. Barthélémy Maure (FR) | 6:0 | 1800/76 | 23,68 | 85,71   | 379 |
| 2. Pierre Sels (BE)      | 4:2 | 1467/?  | ?     | (19,35) | 102 |
| 3. Charles Faroux (FR)   | 2:4 | 1074/?  | ?     | ?       | ?   |
| 4. Georges Martin (FR)   | 0:6 | 1307/?  | ?     | ---     | 165 |

600 Points without equal innings. Round robin.

Tournament average: ? (5648 / ?)

	Maure	Sels	Faroux	Martin	MP	Pts.	In.	Av.	BG	HR	Pl.
<b>Maure</b> Barthélémy FR		600 32 2 18,75 123	600 7 2 85,71 379	600 37 2 16,21 151	6	1800	76	<u>23,68</u>	<u>85,71</u>	<u>379</u>	1
<b>Sels</b> Pierre BE	267 0		600 2	600 31 2 19,35 102	4	1467			<u>(19,35)</u>	102	2
<b>Faroux</b> Charles FR	17 0	457 0		600 2	2	1074					3
<b>Martin</b> Georges FR	524 0 165	249 0	534 0		0	1307				165	4

Very little is known about the second unofficial world championship either. There were only three players at the start.

### 1909 Paris (FR) 20.-22.05.1909

1. Barthélémy Maure (FR)	4:0	1200/?	?	?	?
2. Pierre Sels (BE)	2:2	?/?	?	17,64	?
3. Charles Faroux (FR)	0:4	525/?	?	---	?

600 Points without equal innings. Round robin.

Tournament average: ? (? / ?)

	Maure	Sels	Martin	MP	Pts.	In.	Av.	BG	HR	Pl.
<b>Maure</b> Barthélémy FR		600 2	600 27 2 22,22	4	1200					1
<b>Sels</b> Pierre BE	0		600 34 2 17,64	2				<u>17,64</u>		2
<b>Martin</b> Georges FR	223 0	302 0		0	525					3



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