

The World Championships in 3-cushion

Already the first known 3-cushion tournament ever, from the year 1878, was called a world championship in the early literature. The professionals of the time and their sponsors tended to call every major competition a world championship. However, it is now believed that it was not until 1907 in St. Louis (USA), with the introduction of the "Lambert Trophy", that a kind of world championships for professionals in 3-cushion began. As was usual in this period, there were numerous challenges and the new title holder was relatively rarely determined in the form of a tournament. This changed from 1919, when the game of 3-cushion had grown enormously in popularity. Now, until 1934, world championships for professional players were held almost annually in the USA, even if it is often difficult to distinguish them from the "National Tournament".

However, it must be considered that world championships actually require an international billiards federation or union of several national federations, and for these early professional championships there was no international federation yet.

In 1923 in Paris, the first World Billiards Federation was founded. And in 1928 the time had come, together with the Free Game and the Balkline 45/1 the "Union International des Fédérations d'Amateurs de Billard" (UIFAB) established in addition to the already firmly played Balkline 45/2 the 3-cushion for world title fights.

The high attraction of this discipline among spectators as well as players led to an abundance of world championships, which cannot be found in other disciplines.

It began in 1928 in Reims, and until 1938 this tournament was held every year. After the interruption caused by the war as well as its aftermath and first "revival attempts" in 1948, 1952 and 1953, there were world title matches almost continuously from 1958 on. Only in four seasons (1962/63, 1991/92, 1992/93 and 1994/95) no world champion was determined, in the 90's certainly also a consequence of the disputes between UMB (Union Mondial de Billard) and BWA (Billiards World Cup Association).

From 1988 to 1991, the overall rankings of the World Cup tournaments created by the BWA counted also as World Championships. In addition, the differences between the BWA and the UMB had a clear impact on the title fights of the years 1987 and 1994 to 1996. Numerous mutual player bans ensured that the best three-cushion players in the world were not always eligible to participate. Only in 1997, an agreement was reached again - at least with regard to the World Championships.

The most successful billiard player of all times - Raymond Ceulemans from Belgium - was of course the dominating player at the World 3-Cushion Championships. His 21 titles will probably remain unrivaled for an incalculable period of time. In 1963, he conquered the title for the first time at his second participation. Eleven times in a row he relegated the other players to their places, until this series was interrupted in 1974 in Antwerp by Nobuaki Kobayashi from Japan. The man from the Far East won the decisive match by one point. The following year, Raymond Ceulemans resumed his usual ranking, and another six victories without interruption followed. Before the introduction of the set system, he won almost all tournaments at will. Between 1961 and 1986, he only failed to stand on the podium as a winner four times, and twice he was unable to take part in the tournament. His phenomenal performance becomes even clearer when you consider that the second best player in the World Championships, Sweden's Torbjörn Blomdahl, made it six titles so far.

In 1913, the FFB (Fédération Française du Billard) organized a first world championship 3-cushion. No further one should follow, the 1st World War prevented a continuation. As with the Free Game, this early world championship was not recognized by the World Federation (FIAB/UIFAB), which was founded in 1923.

Some incomplete results are known, with the innings missing throughout. They were not documented at that time, they did not play a role for the organizers or the audience in this times of the 3-cushion.

1913 Paris (FR) 05.-14.02.1913

1. Charles Faroux (FR)	14:0	280/?	?	?	?
2. ... Soleil (FR)	10:4	264/?	?	?	?
3. Louis Naves (FR)	8:6	255/?	?	?	?
4. ... Philippe (FR)	8:6	244/?	?	?	?
5. Pierre Janssaud (FR)	8:6	247/?	?	?	?
6. Georges Leclerc (FR)	4:10	198/?	?	?	?
7. Alexandre Poteau (FR)	2:12	226/?	?	?	?
8. ... Coubé (FR)	2:12	208/?	?	?	?

40 Points without equal innings. Round robin.

Tournament average: ? (1922 / ?)

	Faroux	Soleil	Naves	Philippe	Janssaud	Leclerc	Poteau	Coubé	MP	Pts.	In.	Av.	BG	HR	Pl.
Faroux Charles FR		40 2	40 2	40 2	40 2	40 2	40 2	40 2	14	280					1
Soleil ... FR	32 0		40 2	32 0	40 2	40 2	40 2	40 2	10	264					2
Naves Louis FR	24 0	37 0		40 2	34 0	40 2	40 2	40 2	8	255					3
Philippe ... FR	30 0	40 2	29 0		40 2	25 0	40 2	40 2	8	244					4
Janssaud Pierre FR	25 0	36 0	40 2	26 0		40 2	40 2	40 2	8	247					5
Leclerc Georges FR	30 0	27 0	28 0	40 2	20 0		13 0	40 2	4	198					6
Poteau A. FR	32 0	31 0	31 0	39 0	20 0	40 2		33 0	2	226					7
Coubé ... FR	32 0	23 0	29 0	34 0	23 0	27 0	40 2		2	208					8

