

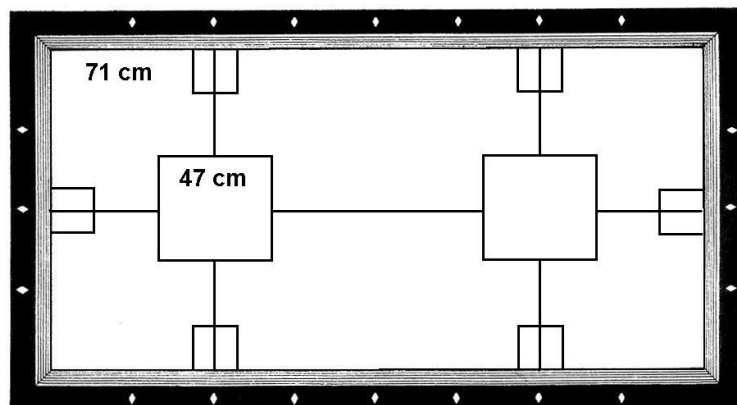
The European Championships Balkline 45/2 and 47/2

In 1925, the European Championships in the Balkline 45/2 began. A key factor in this was the dispute between the French Federation (FFAB) and the other national federations. The French insisted on the exclusive right to host World Championships, citing statutes and agreements from the early days (of 1903 and 1913), when there was still no international billiards organization. The Dutch Federation (NBB), in particular, vehemently opposed this monopoly on hosting events and ultimately succeeded - as a compromise - in establishing the European Championships. Accordingly, the first three European title tournaments were also held in the Netherlands.

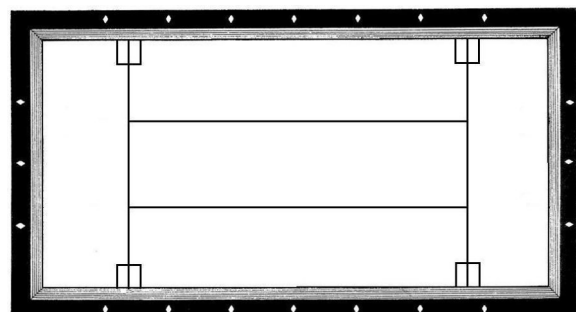
Until 1985, a tournament was held almost every season, with the exception of the period between 1936 and 1947. Starting in 1990, this regularity - coupled with the introduction of larger fields - resumed.

The only significant changes to the rules of the game occurred in 1949, when the distance of the lines was increased from 45 to 47 cm and the “open centre field” was eliminated.

In 1955, at the suggestion of the top Egyptian player Edmond Soussa, an attempt was made to replace the Balkline 47/2 and 71/2 variants with a new discipline, the Neo-Balkline. However, at the meeting of the world federation UIFAB that same year, it was decided to include this new Balkline variant not as a replacement, but as an additional event in the European Championships schedule. Specifically, a title match was planned for June 28 through July 1, 1956, in Tours (FR). However, it never took place. The reason for this was the conflicts within the UIFAB and the founding of the new FIB in 1956.



However, the basic concept of the Neo-Balkline did not disappear entirely and gained new momentum in the mid-1960s, when concerns about boredom in the Cadre 47/2 began to spread, as average scores had skyrocketed. In 1967, Jean Marty (FR) became the first player to surpass the 100-point mark in the overall average. In order to prevent, above all, the series of strikes on the short rail, a new attempt was launched in 1969 with a modified field layout. This “new” Neo-Balkline was actually intended—as it had been 10 years earlier - to replace the other Balkline



formats. However, only one European Championship was held, as the national federations refused to abandon the traditional Balkline 47/2, 47/1, and 71/2. Furthermore, there was hardly any difference in averages and high runs compared to the Balkline 47/2. This second form of the Neo-Balkline wasn't entirely new either. Rather, as is so often the case, ideas from the early days of billiards were revisited. As early as 1895, this variant (with 35 cm between the lines, but already featuring anchors) was tested in the United States. However, since Jacob Schaefer, the leading professional at the time, deemed this variant

There was only one European Championship in the Neo-Balkline, held in Belgium in 1969.

The introduction of the option to participate in European Championships in the series disciplines by paying an entry fee - at least for the qualifying rounds - also gave the Balkline 47/2 a new boost in the 1990s, at least in terms of the number of players. More than fifty entries were not uncommon.

In 2011, the CEB established a so-called "Super Cup" in the classic disciplines. It was intended to replace the European Championships every four years. However, it was held only once, in 2011 in Haarlo (Netherlands), and was therefore not classified as a European Championship.



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