



The first championship three cushion in the world played 1878

In 1878, an official three cushion tournament took place for the first time. In St. Louis (USA), from 14 to 31 January, professionals and amateurs together determined the first title holder in this discipline. The tournament was played in the billiard room "C.E. Mussey's Room" with six players in the mode "robin round" on 50 points without equal innings. (The billiards were larger than today's match billiards, measuring 3.050 x 1.525 metres).

At this first three cushion tournament there was also prize money, which was common at most of all tournaments of that time. The prize money was mostly raised through high entry fees, wagers and entrance fees. The first three cushion title holder, Leon Magnus in St. Louis in 1878, received \$75, a paltry amount compared to the victory bonuses in the Free Game or the Champions Game competitions, that could be as much \$1000.

At that time, three cushion was still almost completely unknown. It was more or less a result of the attempts to replace the Free Game, which had become monotonous due to the great series. There were attempts with one cushion and also three cushion before balkline established itself as a popular and successful discipline. One cushion was only played sporadically, but three cushion continued to exist - even relatively rarely - mostly in the form of challenge matches. It was not until the introduction of the Lambert Trophy in 1907, a challenge cup competition with binding rules and high prize money, that a fairly regular tournament format for three cushion became established.

Until now, no details were known of this world's first three cushion tournament except for the rankings. Up to now, the averages were always incomplete and wrongly stated in the billiard literature.

Now, through new research (mainly in American newspapers from 1878), it has been possible to produce a reliable final tableau. Three Best Games are still missing, but all other values are available and secured.

St. Louis (Miss./U.S.A.) - 14.-31.1.1878

1. Leon L. Magnus	8:2	228	505	0,451	?	4
2. Eugene Carter	6:4	242	521	0,464	0,625	4
3. Thomas Gallagher	6:4	231	506	0,456	0,666	6
4. John Randolph Heiser	6:4	230	533	0,431	?	4
5. Wayman C. McCreery	4:6	231	591	0,390	?	4
6. Thomas Potts	0:10	182	597	0,304	---	5
	mp	points-innings		av.	best game	highrun

distance: 50 points, without equal innings.

size of the table: 1,525 x 3,050 m

tournament average: 1344 : 3253 = 0,413

Leon L. Magnus

* 25.5.1851 - + 1932

Like the other participants Magnus played all disciplines in billiards. According to the newspapers he was a feared opponent in balk-line, without being of the same rank as celebrities like Jacob Schaefer, Frank Ives etc.

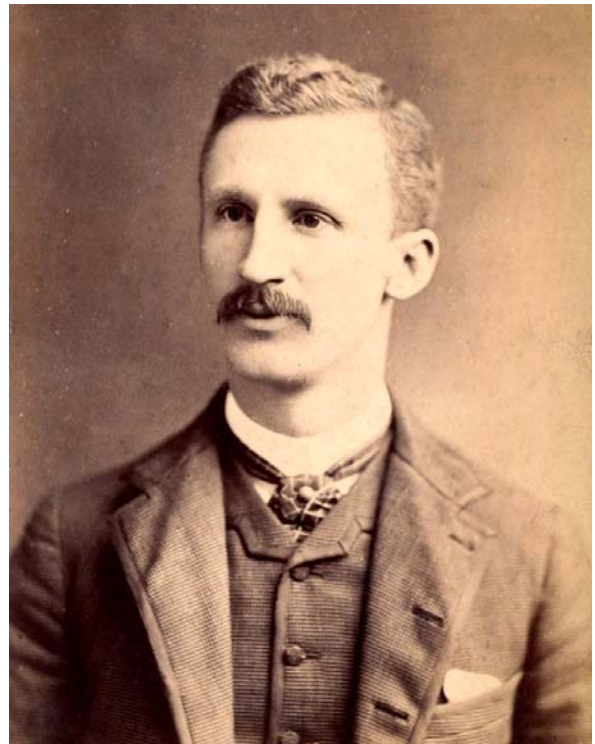
After 1890 3-cushion became his favorite occupation. Again he was behind the stars like DeOro, Schaefer, Hoppe and Layton. Yet his career was a quite impressive one, he played for more than 60 years in important tournaments.



Eugene Carter

* 1853 - + 29.12.1901

His first love was 1-cushion, with a 4,82 personal best. Like Magnus he exceeded also in other disciplines. He was most successful in 3-cushion. He was second in 1898 behind William H. Catton and he won the US-Championships in Chicago in 1900, one year before he died.



Thomas Gallagher

* 185? - + ?

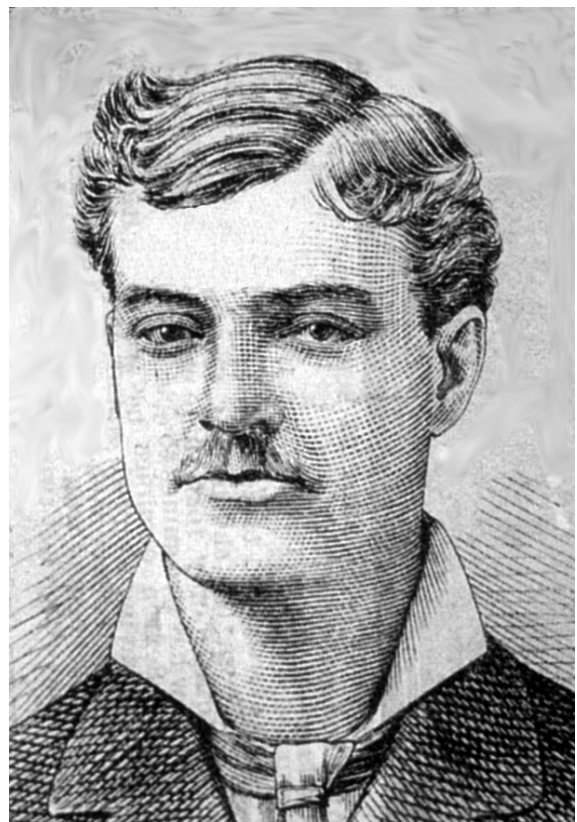
Like Carter he was a good 1-cushion player (av. about 3/4), and less skilled in balk-line and 3-cushion. He wrote for newspapers and magazines and published a book about the world championships (professionals) in balkline with full details in 1923.



John Randolph Heiser

* ? - + 27.10.1895

He preferred free game and balkline (since 1880) to 3-cushion. Heiser was a hot-tempered man and played a lot of challenge-matches.



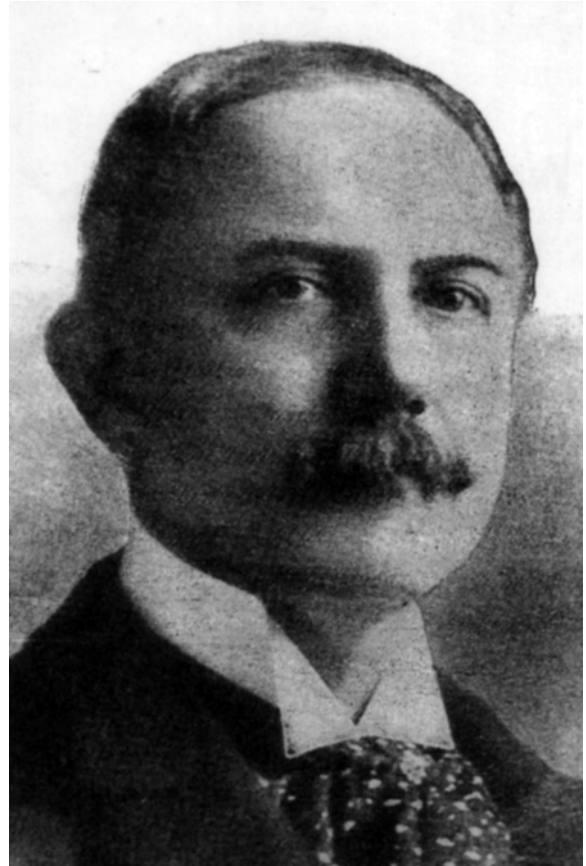
Wayman C. McCreery

* 14.6.1851 - + 1901

He was the 3-cushion-mastermind and some call him even inventor of the game. McCreery was very popular also a baseball-player and even a composer of operas.

In 1892 he played 50 points in 53 innings, a benchmark for 10 years.

In 1890 he had already shown his skills in free game: 102,82 average with a highrun of 717 (race to 3000 points).



Thomas Potts

Nothing is known about Thomas Potts. There were no informations in the newspapers and billiard magazines.

His name is nearly forgotten.

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