

## HISTORY - POOL GAMES AND THE BIRTH OF SNOOKER

Snooker was first played in 1875, during a period of heavy rain in the town of Jubbulpore, India, when British officers from the Devonshire Regiment spent many hours around a pool table.

Fun was the order of the day, to entertain and keep the morale of the military high!

Looking for new motivations, and using already known modalities, the English officer Sir Neville Francis Fitzgerald Chamberlain began experimenting with variations on the use of the 15 red balls and one white ball from the game "Pyramids", mixing them with the coloured balls from "Life Pool", and then adding others, to the delight of the players.

### **That's how the new game, called Snooker, was born.**

The spread of the new rule to other continents had greater repercussions through John Roberts, then a great billiards player, who travelled to India in 1885 and was introduced to Chamberlain, learning about and adopting the new game, Snooker.

In 1907, English billiards champion Charles Dawson won the first professional snooker championship. In 1927, Englishman Joe Davis won the first Snooker World Championship in England, with a prize of £6.10, thus beginning the era of big prizes in this sport. The same Joe Davis won the first 15 World Snooker Championships. In 1986 Joe Johnson won £70,000 in prize money in a single championship. Today the prizes in world championships reach £3,000,000.00.

In 1990, at just 21 years old, Scotsman Stephen Hendry set a new record recognised by the Guinness Book of Records as the youngest Snooker world champion. In 1999 he achieved yet another record in snooker's recent history, winning his 7th world championship.

Snooker has evolved, practised by the elite in some countries and becoming popular in others.

Anyone who believes that popular Brazilian snooker is a "commoner's game" is mistaken. In England, where Snooker is a popular game, sharing the limelight with football and other top sports, and major championships are held in specialised stadiums and gyms, two publications specialising in sports have reported that the "*Iron Lady*" Margaret Thatcher and Prince Charles are Snooker players, which gave rise to our Sinuca.

Long before that, historical figures played or mentioned billiards in their works, such as Shakespeare, Mozart, Heitor Villa-Lobos and many others.

A detailed history of the sport can be found in the book "Snooker: tudo sobre a sinuca", L&PM, published in 2005 and reissued in 2007, by Sergio Faraco (<http://pessoal.portoweb.com.br/sergiofaraco/>) and Paulo Dirceu Dias: <http://www.snookerclube.com.br/pddias/livro.htm>.

## SUMMARY OF LANDMARK HISTORICAL EVENTS IN BILLIARDS

**589 BC.** - The philosopher Anaxarsis describes a similar game he saw in Athens.

**1461/1483** - The story goes that Louis XI was a billiards player.

**1480** - Engravings show the game of croquet, with "hammers" or "mallets" propelling balls against hoops on a grassy field, which some point to as the origin of the game later played on tables.

**1587** - Mary Stuart is said to have referred to "*her billiard table*".

**1646/1715** - Louis XIV is said to have played billiards "after meals".

**1694** - The Duchess of Burgundy is depicted playing.

**1789** - In France, the nobility practised billiards and, considering it to be a practice of the elite, "... no one could set up a public billiard without special authorisation from the Crown",

**1807** - Frenchman Mingaud creates the tapered bat, with a "sole" at the tip.

**1825** - The first billiards championship takes place in England.

**1835** - In a book with mathematical formulas and scientific applications, French mathematician Gaspard Gustave Coriólis describes the cues and effects of the game of Billiards.

**1835** - The tables are made of natural rubber, with circulating hot water pipes.

**1836** - The wooden table top is replaced by slate stone.

**1840** - In Spain, Casa Escardibul specialised in gambling equipment.

**1844** - Vulcanised rubber is used in table tops, eliminating the hot water that circulated through pipes.

**1845** - The Brunswick table factory is born in the USA.

**1859** - The first American billiards tournament takes place in Detroit, USA.

**1874** - Frenchman Maurice Vignaux goes to the USA and defeats all the professionals of the time.

**1875** - In India, English officer Sir Neville Francis Fitzgerald Chamberlain created snooker.

**1907** - The first professional snooker championship takes place in England.

**1927** - Englishman Joe Davis wins the first World Snooker Championship in England.

**1930** - The Brunswick table factory is set up in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

**1931** - Brunswick publishes the collection "*Brunswick o ABC do Bilhar*" in Brazil.

**1940** - Tujague, the first Brazilian factory, sets up in Rio de Janeiro. Soon afterwards, the Taco de Ouro factory is founded in São Paulo.

**1940** - While still a child, the Sergipe native Walfrido Rodrigues dos Santos began to play Snooker, using the international rule, with 15 red balls, later becoming a Snooker myth in Brazil, known as "*Carne Frita*" (*Fried Meat*), a nickname he acquired while still a child.

**1944** - The Metropolitan Billiards Association was founded in Rio de Janeiro, becoming affiliated with the National Sports Council (CND), which revoked the affiliation in 1956 "*due to lack of interest*" on the part of the organisation's directors.

**1958** - The Paulista Interclub collective event takes place in São Paulo, the first organised championship known in Brazil. It is still held every year.

**1960** - The Tacolândia factory appeared in São Paulo, and at this time, with events publicised on TV, the golden age of snooker halls began, such as the Maravilhoso, Taco de Ouro, Bandeirantes and others in São Paulo, and in Rio de Janeiro the Palácio, Indígena, Império, Copacabana and others. Taco de Ouro in Porto Alegre, RS, and several others in other states also made a name for themselves.

**1973** - The Rio de Janeiro State Snooker and Billiards Federation is founded, pioneering the organisation of the sport in Brazil.

**1978** - The first Brazilian Snooker Championship is held at the São Cristóvão Palace in Rio de Janeiro.

**1979** - The second Brazilian Snooker Championship is held in Brasília, DF.

**1979** - The São Paulo Snooker and Billiards Federation is founded in São Paulo.

**1980** - The third Brazilian Snooker Championship is held in São Paulo.

**1986** - The Federal District Snooker Federation is founded in Brasilia.

**1986** - The three existing federations, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Brasília, found the Brazilian Confederation of Billiards and Snooker - CBBS, in Brasília, DF.

**1988** - The leaders of the federations meet in the city of Ubatuba, SP, and, in minutes identified as the "Ubatuba Charter", approve the first official manifestation of the Snooker Rules as national standards, codifying precepts that until then had only been used by "convention" and disseminated solely by "word of mouth".

**1988** - Snooker is recognised as an official sport in Brazil by a decree signed by Manoel Tubino, then president of the National Sports Council (CND).

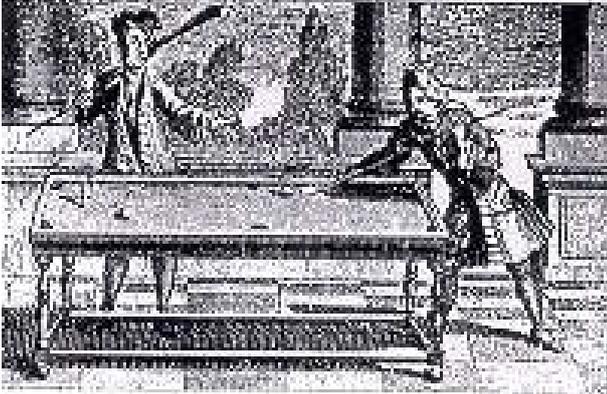
## IMAGES INVOLVING POOL GAMES



**1480** - "**Croquet**" used a "sledgehammer"-like rod, identified as a "batter", to propel balls under hoops on the pitch. grass. In a debatable theory, some historians point to this game as the origin of billiards, when it was transferred to the table, with the cloth retaining the green colour of the grass of the original field



**1604 - Croquet**, now being practised on a table, still with the "massa", and retaining the obstacles of its grass predecessor.



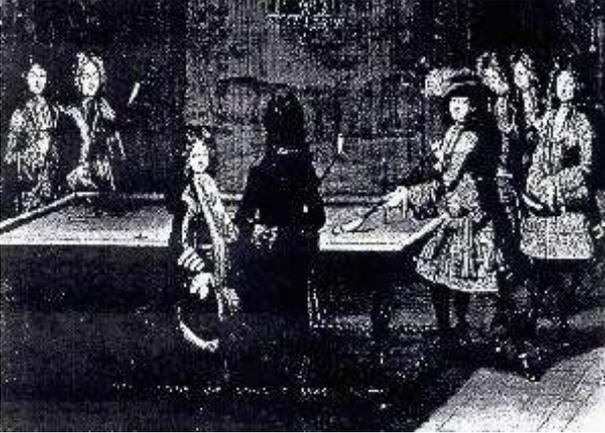
**1704** - The game still with the "dough" and obstacles, but already showing the "holes", which eventually became the current "pockets".



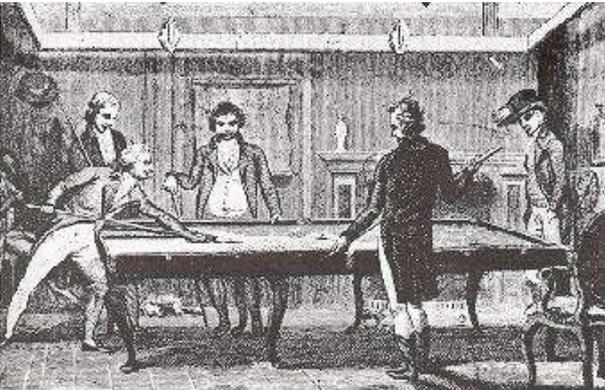
**1701** - The engraving "School of recreation" shows the game in a learning centre.



Old table, unmarked.



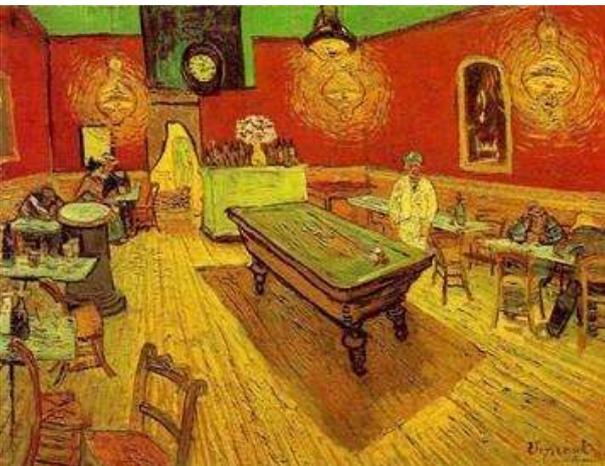
Unidentified date: still wearing the "pasta", on a table apparently without the "holes".



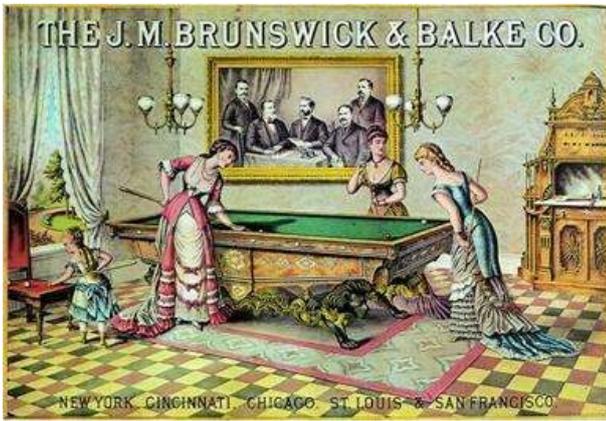
Unidentified date: this image already shows the use of pockets, on a table very close to the current one, and the new cues, traditional to this day.



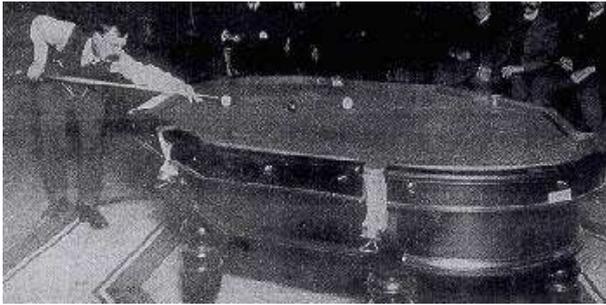
**1839** - A "billiard parlour", much in the style of today, with a table apparently in the size now used as the international standard.



**1869** - Van Gogh's painting "Café at night", showing a billiard table.



1880 - Table by Brunswick, table manufacturer.



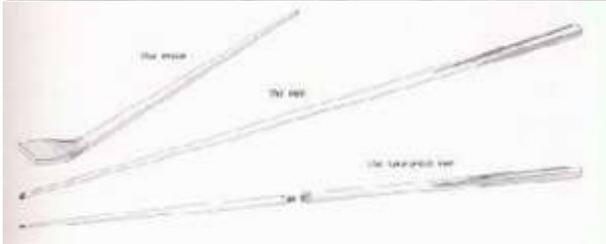
"Innovating" in the table format, in 1905 and...



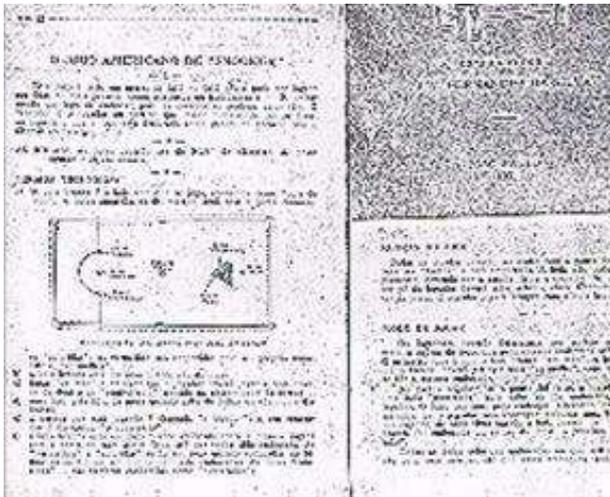
in 1907.



1910 - Probably a championship or exhibition.

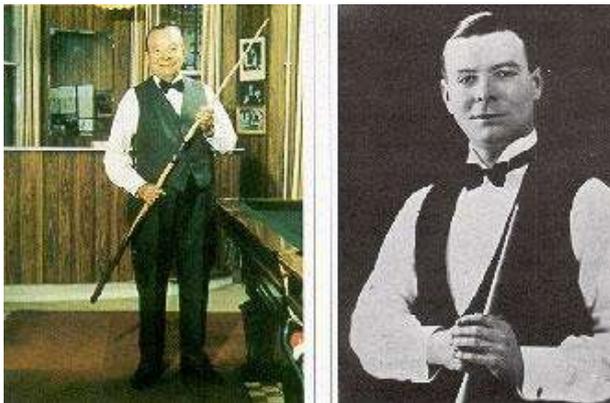


**The evolution of clubs.** The "massa", a shaft with a "spatula" shaped pointer. The cue  
The traditional cue, created in 1807 by Mingot, a French infantry captain, already had a leather "sole" on the pointer. And, most recently, the articulated cue.



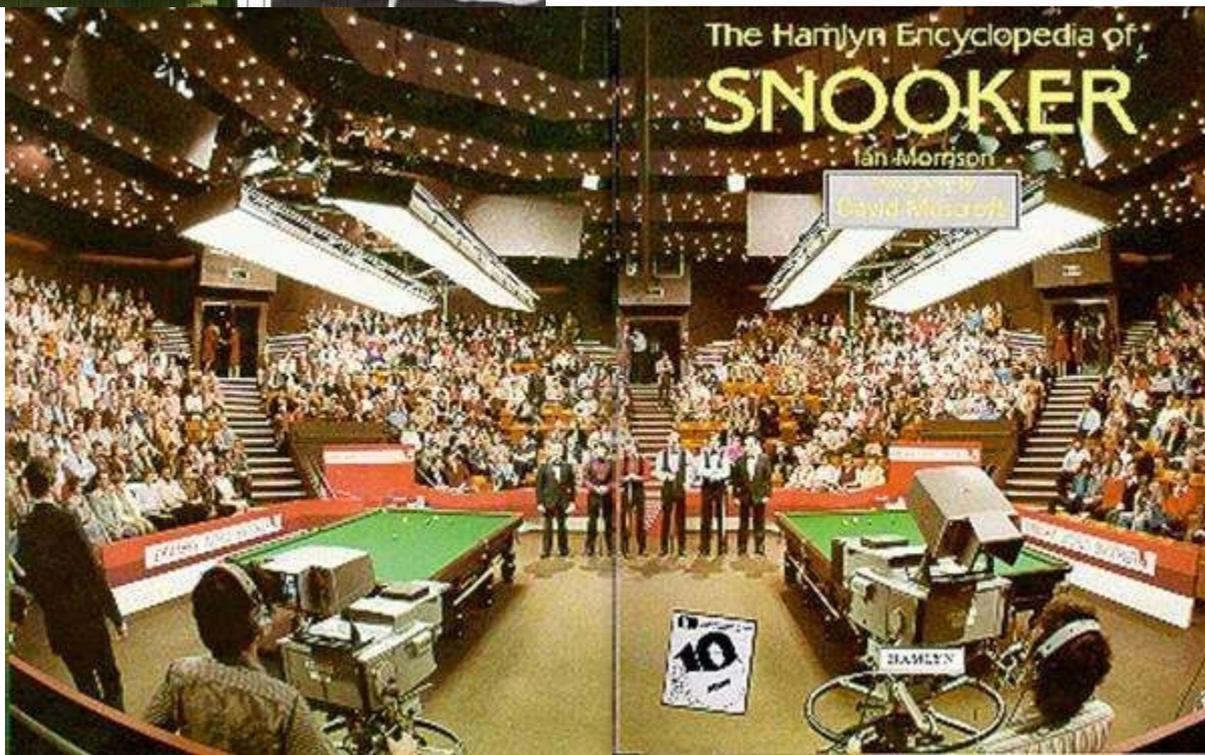
"Brunswick A.B.C of Billiards" - 1931 edition.

A collection of rules published in São Paulo by Brunswick, already with the international rules, English by birth, using the 15 red balls, and mistakenly called the "American Rule". The superimposed image in the top right corner tries to show the date of the cover.



The legendary Englishman Joe Davis.

They were the first world champions in 1927 and won the title for 15 consecutive years until 1946. There were no world championships from 1941 until 1945, due to the Second World War.



1984, in England. Image of two pages from the book "The Hamlyn Encyclopedia of Snooker", in a photo from the "Benson & Hedges" championship at the Wembley Conference and Exhibition Centre.

Held annually at the Wembley Conference and Exhibition Centre in London, England, now renamed the "888.com World Grand Prix", the former "Benson & Hedges" was and is a Masters championship in professional snooker, held uninterruptedly since 1975 with the

participation of the 16 best-placed players in the World Ranking for the respective sporting year. Renowned worldwide, it is considered the second largest official international snooker event, second only to the annual World Snooker Championship.

**Images and historical summaries taken from:**

- **Book "Snooker: everything about snooker"** - 2005 Edition - By Sergio Faraco and Paulo Dirceu Dias;
- **Book "The Hamlyn Encyclopedia of Snooker"** - Edition of 1985 and 1986 by Ian Morrison with photos by David Muscroft - England;
- **"Brunswick A.B.C do Bilhar"** - 1931 edition - São Paulo; and,
- **Single copies of an imported edition**, undated and unidentified.

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