

## A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

Until the game of Around-the-World appeared on the scene after World War II, straight pool dominated Manchester's public pool halls and social clubs. Straight pool was the most popular choice in establishments such as J.B. Conner's second floor parlor on Elm Street (J.B., the proprietor, is rumored to have made a living from games with less talented customers visiting his room), Joe Baker's on Tracton Street, Eddie's (Gagnon) in Pinardville, Charlie Lessard's on Elm Street, Happy Harlan's Pool Room on Cypress Street and the Checker Club on Marion Street (the club, as well as the street, no longer exists due to urban renewal of the Flat Iron District).

In addition, games of three-cushion and carom billiards were being played in the West Side's Turner Hall, Workmen's, [Belgium](#) and Harugari clubs. These were the only social clubs in the city with regulation-sized billiards tables and players interested in carrying on the strongly European tradition of a game in which scoring depends on the collision of two white balls and a red ball on a table with no pockets.

In 1946, under the organizational leadership of the East Side Club's (formerly known as the McGill Club) [George "Chuck" Wiggin](#), [Foisy Ebol](#), [Freddie Roy](#) and Harry Spiewak, Manchester's social clubs formed the **Licensed Social Club Straight Pool League**. Original entries into the league were the East Side, [Canadien](#), [Davignon](#), Paragon, Pulaski, Alpine and [Duvernay](#) Clubs. The [Duvernay](#) Club, captained by Curley Brown, was located on Myrtle Street but is no longer standing. Straight pool play commenced at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoons and consisted of four, 50 point games.

It is interesting to note that a similar straight pool league was running in Lewiston-Auburn, Maine during the same period with the social club winning the New Hampshire Licensed Social Club Straight Pool League championship vying with the similarly successful team from Lewiston-Auburn. The matches were held on Saturday afternoons on a "home-and-home" basis. In addition, "All Star" teams were formed from straight pool leagues in Lewiston-Auburn (the most accomplished player being trick shot artist "Lewiston Joe"), Saco, Biddeford and Manchester (Manchester was represented by [Adrien Houle](#), [Hector Gamache](#), [Freddie Ricker](#) and [Armand Chaput](#)). The well advertised Sunday afternoon matches between the All Stars from New Hampshire and Maine took place in front of large throngs of pool aficionados.

Straight Pool players Stevie Narkunas and George Kokinacis from Nashua, as well as world class player Andrew St. Jean from Lowell, Massachusetts, traveled to the [Duvernay](#) Club in Manchester to test their skills against Suncook's recently discharged WWII Navy veteran and pool whiz [Adrien Houle](#). In fact, Manchester had such a contingent of talented straight pool players willing to play for money that "sharks" Boston Blackie, Sailor Tom from Haverhill, Massachusetts, Boston Shorty and Big Jim Daley from New York City were lured to the Queen City by the smell of cash. Considerable wagering on the outcomes of these matches increased the number of spectators and heightened overall interest. It was a good show in an era when interstate highways had not yet been built, a television in every household was still a dream and long work weeks for minimal wages were the rule rather than the exception.

At the same time that the Licensed Social Club Straight Pool League was conducting it's Sunday afternoon matches (1946-1965), the **Franco-American Around-the-World Pool League** was staging Friday night competition. The Franco-American League began play in 1947 with Del Pelissiere of the Mont Royal Club serving as the first league president. The league was comprised of only four social clubs- the Laval, Alpine, Rimmon and Cercle National clubs. A year later, the Mont Royal joined the league with subsequent entries including the [Canadien](#), [Duvernay](#), [Lafayette](#) and Laurier clubs.

The two leagues were slow to accept each other and only two players from each team in the Licensed Social Club Straight Pool League were allowed onto the rosters of the Franco-American Around-the-World League. In 1965, just as the Licensed Social Club Straight Pool League was nearing the end of its 19 year existence, the [East Side Club](#) was admitted into the Franco-American League by the league's president, Herb Cornell. It was, perhaps, at this point in Manchester's pool history that straight pool was officially replaced by Around-the-World as Manchester's most popular game. Further reinforcing this condition was the fact that the Franco-American Around-the-World Pool League now provided the only source of organized pool competition in the city.

## **THE QUEEN CITY POOL LEAGUE**

*The Queen City Pool League was formed by social clubs in the Manchester, New Hampshire area to promote associations and friendships among their members through competitive participation in, and enjoyment of, the pocket billiards game of Around-the-World.*

**-FROM By-Laws, Queen City Pool League**

Due to the inclusion of the new Around-the-World League teams with no association with French language or culture (Sahara, Winona, TTK, Paragon, Casimir, Russian-American, Press, Deerhead, Jutras Post and Sweeney Post clubs) and after 24 years of existence dating back to 1947, the Franco-American League officially changed its name to the Queen City Pool League on August 25, 1971. The league, under the leadership of President Ray Barry of the Alpine Club, continued to flourish with numerous pictures, standings and articles about league activities being published throughout the winter months in the local newspaper, the Manchester Union Leader.

In 1997, the Queen City Pool League boasted 375 active members and has been described by people familiar with the game of pool at the national level, as the best organized, largest and longest running pool league anywhere in the country.

## PRESIDENTS 1947-PRESENT

The success of any organization is dependent upon the quality of its leadership. In its 50+ year history, the Queen City Pool League has been fortunate to have had the following presidents. Their dedication has ensured the continuance of the Queen City Pool League for years to come.

AUDET, Al	1949, 1950
BARRY, Ray	1965, 1966
BEAUDOIN, George	1990
BOUCHARD, R.	unknown
CLARK, John	unknown
CORNELL, Herb	1961
DIONNE, Arthur	1963
DOUCET, Paul	1968
DUBE, Armand	1964
DUCHESNE, Al	1958
FORCIER, Roland	1956
FORTIN, W. Rosario	1955
FURGAL, B.	unknown
GELINAS, M.	1952
LAVERRIERE, Tom	1975-1985
LAWLOR, Michele	1990-1997
LANOIE, Mike	unknown
LEMAY, Romeo	1960
LEMIRE, Oliver	1954
MABIE, Rick	unknown
McCABE, Mickey	1997-Present
McCARTHY, John	1957
MILNE, Ken	1967
MORIN, Pete	1953
MOISSON, Henry Sr.	1962
NOEL, Wilfred	1948
PELISSIERE, Del	1947
PICHETTE, Paul	unknown
RICHER, Hector	1959
ROBERTS, Bill	1989
SANBORN, Nelson	1969
SIMARD, Dick	unknown
SMITH, Jim	unknown
SMITH, John	1971
SMITH, R.	unknown
STORM, Art	1951
<u>WIGGIN, George</u>	1970