

# **BILLIARDS PERSONALITIES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

**Spencer Hamilton (Spen) WILSON**

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**A brief collection of the Billiards life of Spencer H. Wilson**

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Born Norwood, South Australia 1883  
Residence Mannum - Victor Harbour – Kent Town, South Australia  
Died Adelaide 22 June 1945 age 61  
Buried Victor Harbour Cemetery

South Australia Amateur Billiards Champion

1914 S.H. Wilson, 1000 defeated A. Demodena, 871

1915 S.H. Wilson, 1000 defeated A. Demodena, 963

1916 S.H. Wilson, 1000 defeated Kilmartin 636

1925 S.H. Wilson, 1500 A.H. Hearnden 1376

1925 Highest break, 121

Runner up

1922 W.H. Buchanan 1500 S.H. Wilson 1214

1927 W.H. Buchanan 1500 S.H. Wilson 1201

Note – the 1914-15-16-22 titles were known as Challenge Finals

The winner of preliminary matches played the previous year's champion

Represented South Australia at the Australian Billiards titles 1914 & 1925

Note- the Australian titles were not played 1915 to 1919 incl.

Father of Bruce Spencer Wilson who was State Billiards Champion 1976

Runner up 1974-75

State Snooker Champion 1958 & 1960

Runner up 1959-64-69

The first game in connection with the S.A. Amateur Billiard Association Championship tournament last Wednesday was between S. P. Wilson, of Mannum, and R. P. Wicksteed. The former by splendid all-round billiards won by nearly half the game. He showed a great liking for winning hazards, which he played with great accuracy and fine strength. Wicksteed played brilliant at times, but was erratic. The final scores were: Wilson 650, Wicksteed 351. Wilson's best breaks were 24, 25, 29, 37, 40, 59; Wicksteed's best, 20, 20, 23.

The Advertiser (Adelaide) Wednesday 29 July 1914, page 17

## BILLARDS.

### AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP.

S. Wilson, the Mannum player, in cavalier fashion, defeated R. M. Buchanan in the second round of the championship at the Palace Billiard Halls on Tuesday evening. There was a large attendance, and all who witnessed the game agreed that Wilson would put up a great fight with Angelo Demodena, the holder of the title, when in the final contest. Wilson played with remarkable consistency. He did not rely on any particular mode of scoring, but played an all-round game, and, despite the fact that there was a natural tendency on his part to slacken speed when he had a lead of 200, he reached the somewhat remarkable average for an amateur—of 9.4. Wilson plays a pretty game from a spectacular point of view. He quickly forged to the front, and won without being extended. Scores:—Wilson, 650; Buchanan, 437. The chief breaks were:—Wilson, 24, 25, 24, 21, 19, 19, 26, 26, 53, 62, 44, 24, 19, 21, 24, 19 and 41; and Buchanan, 17, 37, 15, 18, 18, and 20. Wilson's 62 is the highest yet reached in the amateur championship this year. This evening N. K. Birkw will play J. Brennan.

## AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI-FINAL

S. P. Wilson further demonstrated his superiority in the semi-final of the amateur championship, at the Palace Billiard Halls, when he met and defeated P. J. Flannagan by 244 in a game of 650 up. Wilson had not played on the table for nearly a week, and in the first 250 it was obvious that he was out of touch. Up to that stage his average was very low, but the 300-mark left behind he improved out of all knowledge. He rarely visited the table without a break of more than 20, with the result that he brought his average up to the excellent tally of 9.5. Wilson reached 300 with his opponent at 213, but in the next few sticks Flannagan picked up his points well, and got within 50 of the Mannum player. Henceforth Wilson scored rapidly, and with breaks of 54 (mostly off the red), 27, 36, and several others over a score, he forged further ahead, and at 600 was 230 to the good. He scored his other 50 in three sticks. His cush cannons, winning hazards and losers, and all-round-the-table cannons were wonderfully clever, and the large audience enjoyed the exhibition of his skill to the full, and he was given a warm reception when 650 was called. Flannagan played well at times, as his list of breaks shows, and perhaps the open game he was responsible for gave Wilson openings that a more cautious opponent would not have left. He was responsible for a good uphill fight, and, although the finals make it appear that the game was somewhat one-sided, Flannagan missed few opportunities, and played good billiards all through. The final scores were:--Wilson, 650; Flannagan, 406.

The chief breaks were:--Wilson, 22, 29, 33, 21, 30, 30, 25, 54, 27, 36, 24, 25, and 24; and Flannagan 22, 24, 41, 30, and 30.

**AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL.**

S. P. Wilson, the Mannum player, defeated Angelo Demodena for the title of amateur champion of the State in a finely contested game at the Palace Billiard Halls on Tuesday evening. There was a large attendance, and great enthusiasm prevailed. Wilson scored with remarkable consistency during the afternoon session, and Demodena found it difficult to get into play. As a matter of fact, he did not shape in his old style, and it transpired that he had only a few days ago recovered from indisposition, which had kept him from the table for some weeks. Wilson reached his sessional points of 500 in the afternoon, while Demodena remained at 307. Wilson's unfinished break gave him an advantage of 200 so soon as play commenced in the evening, and for a while the game looked a one-sided affair. Wilson halted for some considerable time in the seven hundreds, and at 731 Demodena was only 60 in the rear. He had played excellent billiards to pick up his points in this manner, and some splendid breaks were placed to his credit. Wilson got into touch at 850, however, and, scoring rapidly, he placed the issue beyond doubt by gaining an advantage of 180, which was only reduced to 129 at the close. The final scores were:—

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Wilson .. .. .   | 1,000 |
| Demodena .. .. .   | 871   |
| The chief breaks were:—Wilson—31, 22, 42, 55, 29, 24, 30, 21, 28, 42, 38, 26, 20, 25, 22, 42, 26, and 20. Demodena—22, 20, 24, 25, 30, 23, 24, 28, and 21. |       |

## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CONTEST

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### WILSON WINS CHAMPIONSHIP

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(From Our Special Correspondent.)

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ADELAIDE, August 10.

The Amateur Billiard Championship of this State was decided during the week, when F. M. Wilson easily defeated Angelo Demodena, the previous holder of the title. Wilson, who is a young player with plenty of promise, comes from the country, and has learned his billiards under difficulties. At Mannum, where he lives, there are no first class players, and the district does not even contain a standard table; so that he has been practising at a disadvantage. On top of this, whenever he came to Adelaide to play championship games, he had to motor 40 miles over a road that is not too perfect, and the shaking about would not assist him. On this occasion Wilson started badly, his average in the first half of the game being poor, but when he settled down to work, breaks of 20, 30, and 40 were frequent. Wilson has a good idea of the top of the table game; his losing hazards are remarkably well executed, and his knowledge of position is better than the average run of first rank amateurs. Further, he is calm and confident. The practice and general experience he has gained in these matches should help Wilson considerably.

## PROSPECTIVE CHAMPION

Wilson, who is a Riverton-bred boy, is one of the most consistent amateurs we have seen here. He has a wide range of strokes, and gets out of trouble with surprising ease and accuracy. To give an idea of his confidence in tournament games — for confidence is half the battle with amateurs—I recently saw him make a remarkable recovery in a Tattersall's Club tournament game. He had been handicapped 150 behind scratch in 250 up. When his opponent needed only 56 to go out Wilson required almost 200. Subsequently he made a 50 break, followed by others of 40 and 30, and got to 223. He missed a difficult shot and lost the match, much to the chagrin of his supporters. It is proposed to match the amateur champion with the professional champion, J. Steer, in an exhibition game on Wednesday night, which should provide a great deal of interest.

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ADELAIDE, July 12

The annual contest for the amateur championship of South Australia has resulted in favor of S. P. Wilson, the previous holder.

ELIMINATION ROUND

There were eight entries for the elimination tourney. In the first round W. Bennett forfeited to Angelo Demodena, who has already represented South Australia twice in interstate championships; W. Buchanan defeated P. Hennessy by 700 to 664, Kilmartin beat Brennan by 700 to 580, and P. J. Flannagan beat A. W. Cooper by 700 to 664. The semi-finals provided interesting and close games. Demodena's form was by no means up to standard, but he managed to scramble home ahead of Buchanan, with an advantage of 76. Kilmartin found Flannagan at his best, and the latter, with a number of breaks over the half century, won by 55 from this new entrant into championship contests. Demodena showed vastly superior form in the final compared with his semi-final game, and, with Flannagan out of sorts, soon rattled up the seven hundred, winning by 233. Thus Demodena was entitled to challenge the holder of the title, S. P. Wilson.

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

It was decided that the championship should be 1000 up, played in two sessions of 500 each. Victory rested with the holder, and his success was well earned. In the afternoon he could not get the touch of the table at all, and the Italian looked like making a runaway affair of it. He reached 300, with Wilson only 180; but from that onwards Wilson gradually asserted his superiority. He reached 500 with Demodena at 466, and his average for the first session was  $7\frac{1}{2}$ . In the evening Wilson drew away with a lead of 100; but Demodena converted an apparent safety miss into a break of 55, following this up almost immediately with a 51 and then a 34. Scores were called "950 all." The excitement was intense. At 953 Wilson secured possession, and, getting tip top position, went out with 48 unfinished. His average was 9. Wilson thus becomes entitled to again represent the State in the Australian amateur championship. If the contest does take place—and South Australians are hopeful that it will—Wilson is sure to put up a good fight for this State. A year ago he drew Hooper in the first round, and that champion beat all before him in cavalier style.





**S. P. WILSON,**  
Winner of S.A. Amateur Championship Billiards, who will content the Interstate Championship.



Standing with arms folded, Mr. P. J. Brady (professional champion) playing, Mr. S. H. Wilson (who retained the championship), Mr. H. Gully (boy champion), Mr. C. Kilmartin (runner-up).

Standing with arms folded, Mr. P.J. Brady (professional champion) - playing Mr. S.H. Wilson who retained the championship, Mr. H. Gully (boy champion), Mr. C. Kilmartin runner-up



**SPEN WILSON,**  
The Amateur Billiard Champion of South Australia, who retained the title in the recent tournament.

## Australian Amateur Billiards 1914

The Sun (Sydney) Sun 9 Aug 1914 Page 7

The Australasian amateur championship will be commenced in Helron and Smith's Hall, at Billiards, Ltd., to-morrow afternoon, at 3 o'clock, when J. R. Hooper (N.S.W.) will play S. H. Wilson, the South Australian representative. The game is 1200 up in two sessions of 600 each, finishing in the evening. On Tuesday afternoon and evening L. L. Beauchamp (Vic.) will meet C. Arthy (Q.), and the winners of these two heats will play 2000 up in four sessions of 500 each on Wednesday and Thursday. The visitors will be entertained at the Sports Club to-morrow, at 1.30 p.m., when members and friends are invited.

Referee (Sydney) Wed 12 Aug 1914 Page 14

The meeting of J. R. Hooper and S. H. Wilson (South Australia) on Monday afternoon attracted considerable attention, not that the experts were of opinion that the Southern representative would have much chance of defeating his brilliant opponent. Their curiosity was aroused as to how Wilson would show under such adverse conditions.

The visitor's opening visit gave every promise of success, as from Hooper's safe miss he ran up 19, and had 30 on the board before the N.S.W. champion came in with 20, 63, and 60, reaching 238 a trifle later on, to Wilson's 133. Then came a superb exhibition of high-class billiards by Hooper, who worked the balls in faultless fashion until he broke down after running up a break of 176, which he supplemented a few sticks afterwards by 122. Two such breaks almost on top of each other would have unnerved most players, but Wilson, in gritty style and clean shot play, battled on with breaks of 30, 31, 33, 29, and 38. Shortly after, Hooper reached his points with 601 to Wilson's 316.

Starting the evening session, Wilson appeared to be helplessly out of the game, but to the surprise of everyone, he scored 620 to Hooper's 500, his supreme effort being a break of 99, a third of which came from the red. His other breaks were 33, 34, and a number of 20's. Although Hooper played so well in the afternoon, he was not enjoying the best of health, and was considerably off-color during the evening session which, in a measure counts for his poorer showing, even though Wilson played consistently and well. The final scores were :

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| HOOPER . . . . . | 1200 |
| WILSON . . . . . | 936  |

Monday afternoon, August 10.

Hooper, scored 601. Breaks: 20, 63, 64, 36, 38, 176, 122, 15 (unfn.); average, 23.7—601.

Wilson, scored 316. Breaks: 30, 31, 22, 29, 26, 28; average, 11.8—316.

Evening.

Hooper, scored 599. Breaks: 39, 24, 33, 44, 33, 20, 39, 22, 20, 60; average, 9.52—1200.

Wilson, scored 614. Breaks: 26, 21, 33, 25, 23, 24, 34, 23, 26, 99, 23, 22; average, 9.56—930.

|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| J. R. Hooper ..... | 1200 |
| S. H. Wilson ..... | 930  |

The Mail (Adelaide) Thu 20 Aug 1914 Page 5

Part article

All these accomplishments are Hooper's. Hence it was no stain on the skill of a youngster like Wilson that he should have been put out of the contest by such a brilliant cueist. The South Australian showed exceptionally good billiards, and is as full of promise as he is of confidence. Right from the very jump he plugged along after Hooper, and although his total at the end of the first session was just a trifle more than half of Hooper's he was not in the least bit disheartened, and went after his man with such determination in the evening as to actually score 15 points more than the record breaker. Seeing that Wilson is stowed away in one of the bends of the Murray, 50 miles from nowhere, rarely has the sight of a table, and that he was two nights out of bed prior to starting the game, his performance in getting within 270 of Hooper in 1,200 is highly promising and next year if he can only float a table down to Mannum he should shake up the championship. He is a natural player, who only requires development, and should be very well satisfied with his first showing under high-class conditions.

## **Amateur Billiards.**

The contest for the Australian amateur championship will be played this season in Melbourne under the control of the Amateur Billiards Association, beginning on September 1. The games will be played at the Amateur Sports Club, Swanston street. The preliminary games are 1,000 up and the final game 2,000 up. The following States have nominated players:—New South Wales (G. B. Shailer), Queensland (R. E. Ziegler), South Australia (S. H. Wilson), Victoria (C. G. Coleman). The draw is as follows:—September 1—C. G. Coleman (Victoria) v. S. H. Wilson (South Australia); September 2—G. B. Shailer (New South Wales) v. R. E. Ziegler (Queensland), and September 3 and 4—Final game.

Mr. James Davies has been appointed president of the Amateur Billiards Association. Members' tickets for the unexpired portion of the season will be issued at 5/ each.

# BILLIARDS

## INTERSTATE CHAMPIONSHIP.

### COLEMAN DEFEATS WILSON.

The preliminary games for the amateur interstate championship were begun at the Amateur Sports Club on September 1, when C. Coleman (V.) defeated S. H. Wilson (S.A.).

Wilson was the first to get off the mark with 35, Coleman in the meantime having made a number of small breaks. The Victorian representative reached the century mark first, with the scores 100 to 41 in his favour. Wilson encountered misfortune, which he failed to overcome. He had the worst of the "leaves" almost always. With fortune relentlessly against him, it is not to be wondered at that he began to "wilt," and so it happened that when things did come his way he was unable to take advantage of the situation. Coleman, on the other hand, was playing well, and had all the luck that any player could desire. He made two particularly good shots during the session—a long screw along the side cushion into the right bottom pocket, and a red run-through down the table into the left bottom pocket, when the ball was jammed against the cushion. His average was 10.5. His principal breaks were:—76, 39, 23, 33 (red), 34; Wilson made 35, 32, 33. The sessional scores were:—

|               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| COLEMAN ..... | 509 |
| WILSON .....  | 223 |

In the evening session Coleman played still better. His jennies and long losers were especially good. Coleman drew away steadily all through the session, but, like an experienced tournament player, he never took any chances. His average was 13.5. His breaks were:—30, 25, 39, 50, 42, 48 (red), 32, 43; and Wilson's were 29, 22, 27, 51, 30. The final scores were:—

|               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| COLEMAN ..... | 1,009 |
| WILSON .....  | 525   |

**Spencer Hamilton (Spen) Wilson**

News (Adelaide) Tue 23 Oct 1945 Page 4

**WILSON.**—On October 22, at Adelaide, Spencer Hamilton, beloved husband of the late Mabel Wilson, late of 34 Dequetteville terrace, Kent Town, and loving father of Joyce, Bruce, and Brian (A.I.F.). Aged 61 years.

The Advertiser (Adelaide) Thu 25 Oct 1945 Page 10

**WILSON, Spencer Hamilton.**—Beloved son of late James and Elizabeth, River-ton, loved brother of Howard (Edgar, Campbell, Melvyn, deceased), Victor, and Ethel.

Victor Harbour Times Fri 2 Nov 1945 Page 2

The death occurred in Adelaide on 22nd October of Mr. Spencer Hamilton Wilson, formerly of Victor Harbour, at the age of 61 years. Formerly amateur billiards champion of the State, the deceased was for some years proprietor of the local billiards saloon. A widower, he is survived by three children, Joyce, Bruce, and Brian (A.I.F.). The funeral took place at the Victor Harbour Cemetery on Thursday of last week, the Rev. A. Clifford Jones officiating at the graveside.