

2025-09-28

St. Sebastian 1911 – Capablanca's triumphant entry into Europe



Frank Hoffmeister and Georges Bertola

On Saturday 6 September, the first presentation was given by Georges Bertola on the 1911 San Sebastian tournament. This was Capablanca's first tournament in Europe, and he made a big impression.

Georges is a Capablanca specialist, and I also refer you to the first volume of the biography of the brilliant Cuban player:

[Capablanca, the prodigious ascent \(1888-1920\) - by Georges Bertola](#)

Georges Bertola: St. Sebastian 1911 – Capablanca's triumphant entry into Europe

Capablanca's first visit to Europe San Sebastián 1911

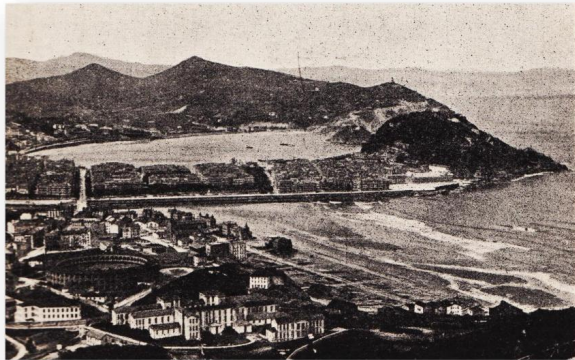


The liner Lusitania leaving
the port of New York



Recruitment poster
following the torpedoing of
the Lusitania in 1915.

San Sebastian 1911

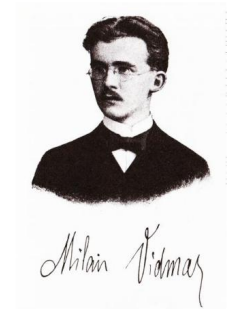
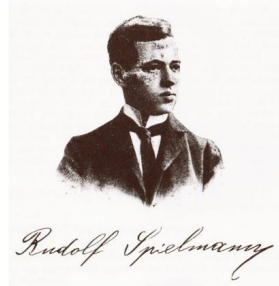


General view – photo from the magazine
Tidskrift för schack in 1911

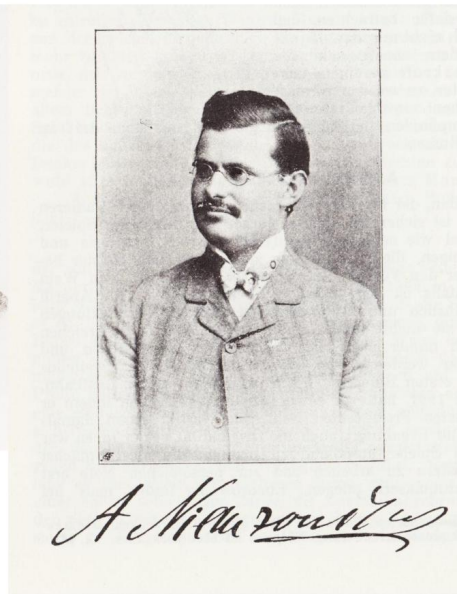


San Sebastian Casino

The players of the Austro-Hungarian Empire



Players of the Russian Empire



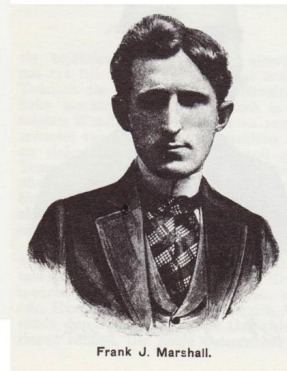
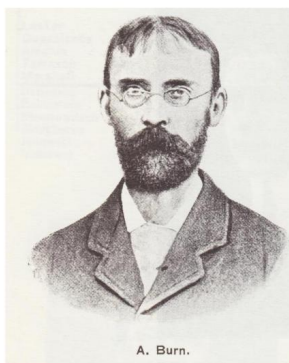
Players of the German Reich



Paul Saladin Leonhardt



Players from the rest of the world



The great absentee



Lasker held in check by Schlechter in 1910



Henry Ernest Atkins, the English champion, had declined the invitation.

Participants at San Sebastian 1911

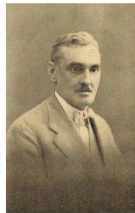


Tournament tables

MAITRES	Capablanca	Rubinstein	Vidmar	Marshall	Niemzowitch	Schlechter	Tarrasch	Bernstein	Spielmann	Teichmann	Janowski	Maroczy	Burn	Duras	Leonhardt	TOTAL	POINTS	PLACES	NOTES
Capablanca . . . 1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Rubinstein . . . 2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Vidmar . . . 3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Marshall . . . 4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Niemzowitch . . . 5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Schlechter . . . 6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tarrasch . . . 7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bernstein . . . 8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Spielmann . . . 9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Teichmann . . . 10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Janowski . . . 11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maroczy . . . 12	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Burn . . . 13	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Duras . . . 14	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Leonhardt . . . 15	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	4 1/2	5	5 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	7	7	7 1/2	8	8	9	9	10	10	10	105	49	49	112



German Master Jacques Mieses, tournament director.



	Rodriguez	Dr. Puig	Steinweg	Gomez	Hallgarten	Conde	Rubio	Ostolaza	Castaneda	Matilla	Cortez	Juncosa	Gewinn-zähler
Rodriguez	—	1	1	1 1/2	1 1/2	1	1 1/2	1	1	1	1	1	9 1/2 I. Preis
Dr. Puig	0	—	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9 II. III. Preis geteilt
Steinweg	0	0	—	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9 II. III. Preis geteilt
Gomez	1 1/2	0	0	—	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8 1/2 IV. Preis
Hallgarten	1 1/2	1	0	0	—	1	1	1 1/2	1	1	1	1	8 V. Preis
Conde	0	0	0	0	0	—	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Rubio	1 1/2	0	0	0	0	0	—	1	1	1	1	1	5 1/2
Ostolaza	0	0	0	0	1 1/2	0	0	—	1	1	1	1	4 1/2
Castaneda	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	—	0	1	1	2
Matilla	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	—	1	0	2
Cortez	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	—	1	1
Juncosa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	—	2

The amateur tournament was won by Luis Rodriguez Santamaria from Madrid. Eight Spaniards and two Germans took part.

Dr Esteve Puig i Puig, champion of Catalonia in 1921.

The patrons



Golmayo facing King Alfonso XIII

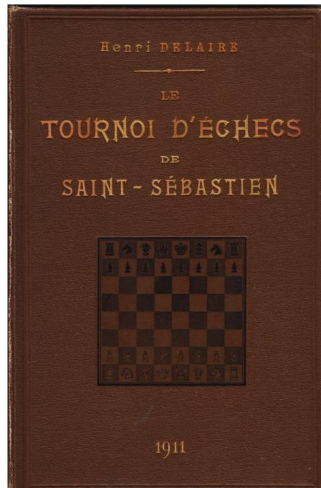


Baron Albert von Rothschild, president of the Vienna club, had offered the beauty prize.

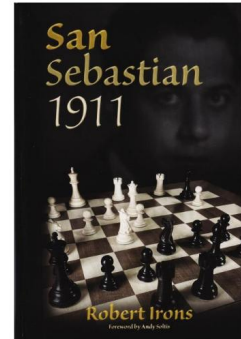
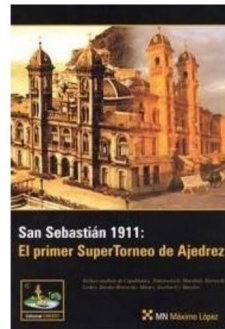
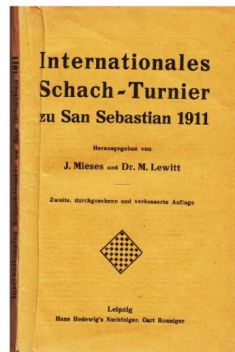


Manuel Márquez Sterling, ambassador and chess player.

Tournament books



The tournament book published in 1911 by the editor of *La Stratégie* magazine.



Still relevant, version published in 2024

The winner José Raúl Capablanca

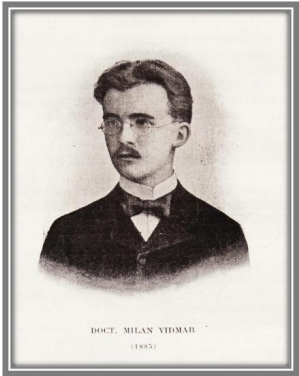


Capablanca – first prize 5,000 gold francs + 500 for the beauty prize

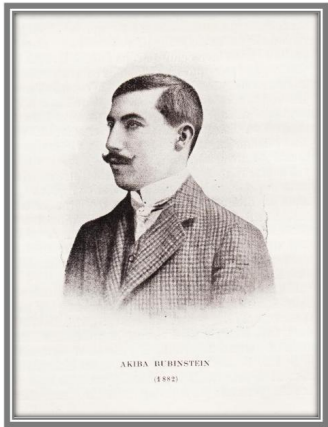


Closing ceremony

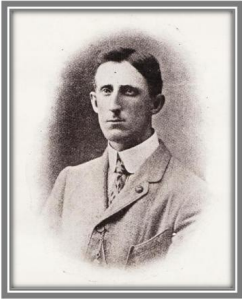
The three other award-winning players



Vidmar 3rd
2,500 gold francs



Rubinstein 2nd
2,500 gold francs



Marshall 4th
1,500 gold francs

— 161 —

Situation respective des Vainqueurs*

	Marshall	Rubinstein	Tarrasch	Capablanca	Schlechter	Vidmar	Nimzowitch	TORNA
Marshall		$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	1	$\frac{1}{2}$	$3\frac{1}{2}$
Rubinstein	$\frac{1}{2}$		$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$3\frac{1}{2}$
Tarrasch	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$		$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	1	$\frac{1}{2}$	$3\frac{1}{2}$
Capablanca	$\frac{1}{2}$	0	$\frac{1}{2}$		$\frac{1}{2}$	1	3	
Schlechter	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$		$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$3\frac{1}{2}$
Vidmar	0	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$		$\frac{1}{2}$	$3\frac{1}{2}$
Nimzowitch	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	0	0	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$		$3\frac{1}{2}$

1-H III
IV V
VI
VII

International press report – too many draws.

In places of honor

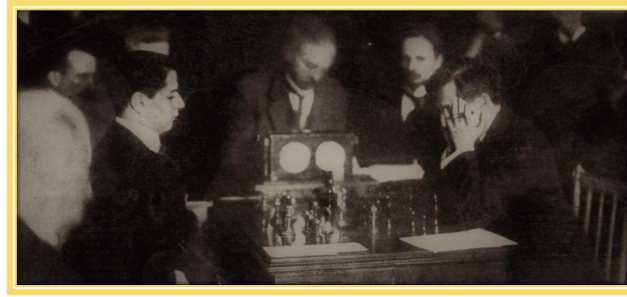


Nimzovitch



Schlechter vs Tarrasch

Players were reimbursed for their travel expenses and received 80 francs per win and 40 francs per draw.



« In any case, another contender for the world championship has now emerged, that coveted crown for which we can expect to see a fierce battle unfold in the near future. »
Mises

It would still take 10 years for this to happen!

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[The presentation as PDF file:](#)

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[St. Sebastian 1911 – Capablanca's triumphant entry into Europe - Georges Bertola \(4.0 MiB\)](#)