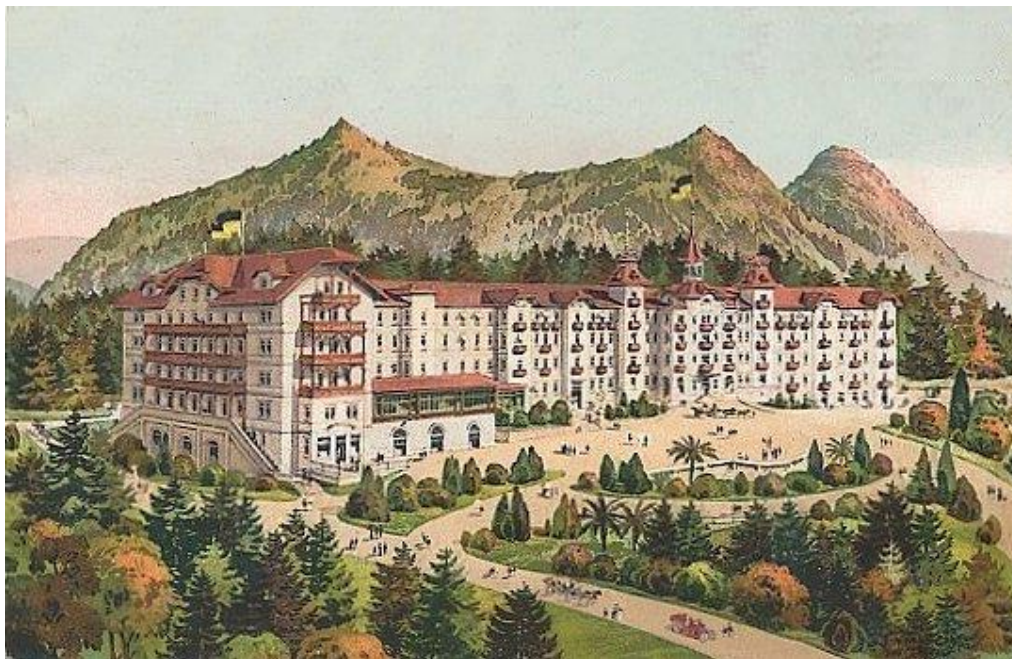


HEALTH RESORTS: Semmering 1926 & 1937

Extract and extended reprint of the great original by Jan van Reek, www.endgame.nl

SEMMERING 1926

The southern road from Wien leads to the Semmering Pass. The **Grand Hotel Panhans** was built at the Semmering in 1888. This facility was used for a tournament of eighteen masters from 7 until 29 iii 1926. Spielmann's name stood not on the first list of Bernstein! Later he was invited. Nimzowitsch and Tartakower led at first. Spielmann and Alekhine competed for the first prize then. Finally, **Rudolf Spielman** surprisingly won, ahead of Alekhine on second place. Vidmar sr. was sole third, followed by Nimzowitsch and Tartakower as fourth, Rubinstein and Tarrasch as sixth, in total 18 players contested: <http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chesscollection?cid=1013596> (Chessgames)



Grand Hotel Panhans at the Semmering



Casino of Baden bei Wien in modern times

SEMMERING / BADEN bei Wien 1937

Casinos had to spend a part of their income on cultural aims. And a chess tournament is relatively cheap and deluxe promotion. That was the base for many chess events in casinos. When Austrian casinos organised a grandmaster contest in 1937, chaos ruled. Some men got phony invitations at first. Only Capablanca was treated with respect. Matters were sorted out, before the tournament was played from 8 until 27 ix 1937.

Eight excellent masters carried out double rounds. World champion Euwe was chief arbiter. When he left, Spielmann replaced him. The first four rounds were conducted at the **Grand Hotel Panhans** in Semmering, and then moved to the **Hotel Grüner Baum** in Baden bei Wien, Austria for the duration of the tournament.

Reigning World Chess Champion **Max Euwe** served as chief arbiter for the first half of the games and then was relieved by Austrian **Rudolf Spielmann** for the second half. All games: <http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chess.pl?tid=79625> (Chessgames)

Young **Paul Keres** won the tournament, one point ahead of unbeaten Reuben Fine.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1 Keres	**	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	10	$\frac{1}{2}1$	10	$\frac{1}{2}1$	11	9
2 Fine	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	**	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	8
3-4 Capablanca	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	**	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}0$	$\frac{1}{2}1$	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
3-4 Reshevsky	01	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	**	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	11	$\frac{1}{2}0$	10	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
5 Flohr	$\frac{1}{2}0$	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	**	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	7
6-7 Eliskases	01	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}1$	00	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	**	$\frac{1}{2}1$	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	6
6-7 Ragozin	$\frac{1}{2}0$	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}0$	$\frac{1}{2}1$	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}0$	**	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	6
8 Petrovs	00	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}$	01	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	**	5

In the 1930s, Semmering organised frequently friendly matches of high calibre:

Match in Semmering 1931 (Twelve games):

Sultan Khan vs. Tartakower 6.5-5.5

https://www.365chess.com/tournaments/Semmering_m_1931/28110

Match in Semmering 1932 (Ten games):

Spielman vs. Bogoljubow 5.5-4.5

https://www.365chess.com/tournaments/Semmering_m_1931/28110

Match in Semmering 1936 (Ten games):

Eliskases vs. Spielman 5.5-4.5

https://www.365chess.com/tournaments/Semmering_m_1936/28413

Match in Semmering 1937 (Ten games):

Eliskases vs. Spielman 6.0-4.0

https://www.365chess.com/tournaments/Semmering_m_1937/28456

There have also been some simuls in Semmering, eg. in 1933 with Alexander Alekhine.

And not to forget, **Vera Menchik beat Sonja Graf in 1937** for another title defense:

World Women Chess Championship [Semmering match] 1937

After their [1934 match](#) (won +3 =0 -1 by Menchik), reigning [Women's World Chess Champion Vera Menchik](#) and [Sonja Graf](#) played a second championship match in [Semmering](#) in 1937.

This time the match consisted of 16 games. Menchik was again the favourite and once again left no doubt about who was the strongest female player in the world at the time, clinching the match by a convincing nine wins, five draws, and two losses (11½–4½).

Like the 1934 match, this match was arranged by the two players themselves (much like the open title at the time), but approved and recognized by [FIDE](#).

Note: This 16-game match between Vera Menchik and Sonja Graf-Stevenson in Semmering is *not to be confused* with [Game Collection: World \(women\) chess champ \(Stockholm tournament\)](#) in the same year! *Wikipedia article: Women's World Chess Championship 1937 (Menchik-Graf)*



Photo: <http://georgiachessnews.com/2016/11/01/review-vera-menchik-a-biography-of-the-first-womens-world-chess-champion-with-350-games-by-robert-b-tanner/#!prettyPhoto>

Vera Menchik (16 February 1906 – 27 June 1944) was a British-Czech chess player who gained renown as the world's first women's chess champion.

Menchik held her **Women's World Champion** title for 17 years, the longest ever of any woman.

She also competed in chess tournaments with some of the world's leading male chess masters, defeating many of them, including future World Champion Max Euwe twice, but lost multiple times against Capablanca (9-0-0), and Alekhine (8-0-0), Menchik also played Lasker, Botvinnik or young Keres (no win and no draw at all).

In 1944, during one of the last German air attacks on London, the 38-year-old Vera, who was widowed the previous year, still holding the title of women's world champion, her sister Olga, and their mother were **killed in a V-1 flying bomb attack** which destroyed their home in the Clapham area of South London. (Source: Wikipedia)

Source: <https://archive.is/f9IZ>, Archive page from www.endgame.nl, Jan van Reek (1945-2015)
Reprinted and extended in 2018: <http://www.chessdiagonals.ch/>