

## Information about the section USA



**Year of establishment / accession to the ISPA World:** 12/04/1977

**Number of Members:** 61 (as of 2013)

**Events:** 1 World Cup 1979 in Anna Home, 10 World Cup 1996 Clearwater Beach

**President:** Bill Thompson

Our ISPA Section USA was founded in Anaheim, California. Only four months later, our U.S. national team was traveling around Europe and played in the new section ISPA Belgium, France, Austria and Germany. On this trip, and on numerous other trips, there have been many highlights for our American players.

We participated in the first "three-nation tournament," between U.S.A., Belgium and Germany, the "Skat Express" from Stuttgart to Villingen and back, the first rule of Congress in Aachen and much more.

Our opportunity to host the first Skat WM took place on 4 November 1978 in Anaheim. Dozens of volunteers and nearly 600 competitors made the first Skat WM a great success. We were once again proud hosts of the 10<sup>th</sup> WM in Clearwater Beach, Florida in 1996. Since 1978 the United States has been represented 12 times at the WM by a national team.

Our American players tend to cluster in regions many hundreds of kilometers apart. Along the U.S. west coast there are active clubs in San Diego, Santa Monica, Anaheim, San Francisco, Portland, Las Vegas and Seattle who conduct regional tournaments annually and who gather for the annual ISPA tournament in Las Vegas in January. This is always our most popular event, drawing players from all over the USA, Canada and even a few German players.

Texas has had a proud Skat tradition since the 1800's due to a heavy concentration of German immigrants around New Braunfels, TX area. Fans of the game there conduct an annual ISPA tournament every February, our second most popular event. They also conduct numerous state and regional events around Texas throughout the year.

Once a hotbed of Skat players, the American Midwest grew more silent in the Skat world as the older Tournee Skat game, once played extensively there in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, grew more out of favor with the adoption of ISO (International Skat Order). Recently, a resurgence of players has occurred in Cleveland, Ohio and an annual ISPA event there has been a welcome addition to the tournament calendar. The Cleveland Club is growing and currently provides IPISA USA with many new members who enjoy travelling to play their new-found passion, Skat. Our club in Omaha also hosts a popular ISPA event that draws a loyal group of American and Canadian players to the heart of the continent.

Our East Coast players compete in clubs located in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Delaware. A contingent from these clubs makes always the annual trip to Montreal for the Canadian Championship. They also have a long time team tournament tradition, and they gather every June in the Catskill Mountains of New York to enjoy competition and fellowship over a good game of Skat.

Our ISPA USA section is at a crossroads. No longer can we rely on German immigrants and their descendants to swell our ranks with players. We must cultivate new players from among the many serious American card players, most of whom are completely unaware of the existence of Skat. Those American card players who take the time to learn the Skat game, and who are patiently instructed in its many subtleties, tend to enjoy it immensely. We in ISPA USA are reaching out to a new generation of players through online play and social media, We are actively promoting Skat in its rightful place, as author Joe Wergin once referred to it—the King of Card Games!

ISPA World members travelling in North America should refer to our North American tournament calendar and our ISPA USA page to find tournaments or clubs that may be near their travel destinations. See <http://www.skatcanada.ca/usa/>