

# Skittle Quadrille • Nine-Pins Quadrille • Kögel Quadrille

From THE ROYAL BALL-ROOM GUIDE by Rudolph Radestock, London, 1877

Discovered and reconstructed by Richard Powers

This is an especially interesting ninepin quadrille, more complex than the American and German versions. Radestock said that it was introduced to London by Germans as the Kögel Quadrille or Skittle Quadrille. Compare this version to the German Kegalquadrille (Ninepin Quadrille) described by Louis Casorti in 1826.

Most 19th century Nine-Pin Quadrilles were American, and were short patterns that involved a set of four couples plus an extra gent (the ninth pin) in the center. Each version of the dance had a different way for the extra person to get into the quadrille of couples, discarding another gent into the center. Radestock's version is longer and more complex than most of the American Nine-Pins. It's also the only Nine-Pin Quadrille to include figures in canon.

The names Nine-Pin, Skittle and Kegel all refer to the game of bowling. The various ancient versions of bowling used between 3 and 17 pins, then the number was standardized at 9 pins in the 16th century. Nine-pin bowling remained the standard for centuries, until American states began banning nine-pin bowling in the 1840s to stop gambling, causing ten-pin bowling to be invented to avoid the ban. However nine-pin bowling was still well known in the 19th century, enough to lend the name to the Nine-Pin Quadrille. Perhaps the name had an additional allure in America due to the ban of the game.

Skittle (skittles) was the British name for an indoor version of nine-pin bowling, often as a pub game. The bowling pins were called skittles. Kögel (kegel, kegeln) was a German bowling game that also used nine pins, played in an indoor bowling alley, the Kegelbahn. You can see below that the 9th pin is in the center.

## 12.—THE NINE-PINS QUADRILLE.

This is considered the most comical dance on the list, and was introduced from the Germans, who dance it under the name of Kögel (or Skittle) Quadrille. It is danced by nine persons, generally five gentlemen and four ladies. Four couples arrange themselves according to quadrille positions, and No. 1 and No. 2 couples commence to chasseur galop, by counting four, towards each other; whilst retiring, No. 3 and No. 4 couples do the same, No. 3 and No. 4 retiring; at the same time No. 1 and No. 2 galop to opposite sides, No. 3 and No. 4 doing the same; No. 1 and No. 2 repeat the first movement, likewise No. 3 and No. 4; all four couples return to places as before; ladies' chain across, balance and turn partners; whilst doing so, No. 5 gentleman places himself in the centre, and turning Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 ladies round, the gentlemen forming a circle round No. 5 gentleman, who, clapping hands, stops the music; all five gentlemen try to obtain a lady partner; the one left without partner takes the place of No. 5 gentleman. Should there be more than one quadrille dancing (say three or four), you must appoint only one out of the number to clap his hands for the music to stop, so as to cause no confusion or dissatisfaction.



Formation: 4-couple quadrille. The extra gent is standing off to the side, not yet in the center.

bars **Part 1**

- 2 Head couples 1 & 2 galop chassé 4 slides to the center. Sides wait for 4 counts.
- 2 Heads galop backing to place, as Sides galop to the center.
- 2 Sides galop back to place, as Heads galop to cross over. Cross over quickly with 4 slides. <sup>1</sup>
- 2 Sides galop to cross over, as Heads turn CCW in place with two galop chassé steps. <sup>2</sup>
- 8 Repeat all of this, to original places, with sides beginning by turning CCW in place.

**Part 2**

- 2 Head couples Ladies Chain, walking steps, as Sides turn CCW in place, to face in as a couple. <sup>3</sup>
- 6 Sides begin the Ladies Chain, as everyone continues the full Ladies Chain in canon. Sides don't turn by the L hand at the end. Instead side ladies approach partners to balance from the center.
- 8 All balance and turn partners by 2 hands as the Nine-Pin gent enters the center of the set.

**Part 3**

- 16 The Nine-Pin gent turns head ladies 1 & 2, then sides 3 & 4 by two hands, 8 counts for each lady. Note: Some similar quadrille figures allow the gent to turn the 4 ladies in any order, at his whim.

**Part 4**

Four gents circle hands-4 around the Nine-Pin. He claps to stop the music<sup>4</sup> and all five gents try to find a partner. If there are several quadrilles, only one set is assigned to have the gent clap to stop the music. Recommence the dance, with the new Nine-Pin standing off to the side of the quadrille set.

### Notes about the reconstruction

The first half of Radestock's description (reproduced on page 1) is fairly detailed, then the second half is only a brief sketch, leaving much open to interpretation.

<sup>1</sup> Some galop quadrilles cross over with two 4-slide galops, turning CW halfway over. That won't work here because the crossing couple will then be placed in front of their side couple as the moment the side couple needs to galop toward the center. A galop that completely crosses over in 4 slides avoids this.

<sup>2</sup> Radestock didn't describe how to turn around after crossing over. One possibility is to turn in place CCW with two galop chassé (smooth polka) steps, as in the above reconstruction. An alternate possibility is to stay in place after crossing over, then commence the re-crossing "over the elbows." A third possibility is to change places with partners with an allemande underarm turn, with the lady turning CCW under the gent's L arm, but "inside turns" were fairly uncommon in the 19th century.

<sup>3</sup> The opening Galop is clearly in canon. As a result, side couples are not back in place, facing in, at the beginning of the Ladies Chain. Therefore one interpretation is that the Ladies Chain is also in canon, since the canon was clearly established before Radestock changed to only briefly sketching the remainder of the description. An alternate interpretation might be that only head couples do the Ladies Chain.

<sup>4</sup> This version of the dance stops the music to scramble for a partner. Other Nine-Pin Quadrilles continued the music when partners were found. If the music continues, then each set can have their own timing for the clap. One description said that the Nine-Pin could be a lady, but most specified a gent. Notice that Radestock wrote, "It is danced by nine persons, *generally* five gentlemen and four ladies." The specification of "generally" means that there are sometimes exceptions. The exception could be a lady Nine Pin.

Most description spelled this formation Nine-Pin or Ninepin. Radestock used the plural Nine-Pins.