



NEW JERSEY STATE HORSESHOE PITCHERS ASSOCIATION (NJSHPA)

www.njshpa.org

NATIONAL HORSESHOE PITCHERS ASSOCIATION (NHPA)

www.horseshoepitching.com

Horseshoe Pitching

WHY PITCH HORSESHOES?

A family sport—Horseshoe pitching boasts of being one of the few sports that has a national championship for men, women, boys and girls and can still be played in your backyard or at a picnic. The game is enjoyed by youngsters as well as by seniors.

Physical fitness--- In this day of weight watching what better way is there to exercise with walking, bending and stretching.

Competition--- Players have the opportunity to participate in good clean head to head competition no matter what your age, sex and physical stature. If you are competitive, leagues offer more than backyard pitching but tournaments offer the ultimate competition.

Social Aspects:

Horseshoe tournaments are generally thought of as a highly competitive event, but for many participants a tournament is viewed as a social event interrupted by horseshoe pitching.

ORIGIN

It's claimed that the origin of the sport goes back to the days of the Roman Empire. Roman soldiers pitched horseshoes discarded from the horses used to pull the chariots. Also during the American Revolutionary War it's said that for recreation the soldiers pitched horseshoes on the Boston Common.

FACTS and FIGURES

Scoring:

Scoring is usually done on a cancellation method (if both pitchers throw a ringer they cancel each other out). Only one pitcher can score in an inning. A ringer counts as 3 points, a close shoe counts one point provided it is within 6 inches of the stake. There is no special consideration given to a leaner.

Dimensions:

A horseshoe court is made up of 2 – 1-inch diameter cold rolled steel stakes 14 to 15 inches high, 40 feet apart. The foul line is 3 ft in front of the stake, for short distance (30ft) pitchers the foul line is 10 ft ahead of the standard foul line. The normal pit substance is moist clay in a putty-like condition but sand, stone dust or dirt can be considered an acceptable pit substance.

Men age 18 & over pitch from 40 feet, women and juniors under 18 can pitch from 30 feet.

Men age 70 and over have the option to pitch from 30 ft.

Tournament Play:

New Jersey has 30+ tournaments yearly at 4 sites in Edison, Middlesex, Vineland and Washington.

The most common format used at tournaments is Singles Round-Robin Play with contestants seeded into classes based on their ringer percentage or at the discretion of the tournament director a class may be handicapped if the gap in ringer % is too large. Contestants will play every other pitcher in their class, usually a 6 player round-robin is used resulting in 5 games of competition.

Games can be played to varied endings i.e. 35 points, the first pitcher to score 35 points wins or shoe limit games of 40 shoes wherein the higher score after 40 shoes wins the game.

Tournament class champions are determined by games won, ties for 1st place are broken by playoff games and ties for other positions can be broken by "who beat who" or by ringer percentage attained in the tournament.

What does it COST?

Combined annual dues for NJ State and National associations are \$38 for adults and \$5 for juniors.

A **NEW** 1st time ever adult member pays dues of only \$25 in the 1st year!!

In the event that one enjoys pitching horseshoes and thinks they might want to try pitching in a tournament there is a provision that allows a 1st time ever Trial member to pitch one time in a sanctioned tournament by paying only the tournament entry fee. If they desire they can later upgrade to a full membership. Dues include a subscription for a NJ Horseshoe Pitchers newsletter (Jersey Jargon). Payment of the annual dues allows a member to play in tournaments in any other state.

Tournament entry fees are usually \$20.00.

What can you WIN?

Don't expect to get rich pitching horseshoes! You participate because of a love for the game, the excitement of competition and the many new friends you will meet.

Tournament prize money comes only from entry fees. Prizes are usually cash . Cash prizes for winning a class might be \$40 - \$60 depending on your class size.

The award for the winner of the annual New Jersey State Championship is ~\$250 plus a trophy.

The men & ladies Championship Class winners of the premier horseshoe tournament in North America (World Horseshoe Tournament) received a prize of \$4,500 each.

SKILLS

In bowling the players' skill is determined by their average game score, in horseshoes the skill level is measured by your ability to score ringers. At tournaments keeping score includes recording the number of shoes pitched and the number of ringers scored, at the end of each game and tournament the player knows their percentage of ringers thrown.

My guess is that the overall average ringer percentage of all the sanctioned pitchers in the USA is ~25%. In North America there is a group of approx.50 pitchers (<1%) that average around 70% and 6 that average ~80%.

ORGANIZATION

National: www.horseshoepitching.com

Since 1921 the ruling body for horseshoe pitching has been the National Horseshoe Pitchers Association (NHPA) with 52 charters in the US. There are approx.8,500 members, ~500 sanctioned court locations with a total of ~6,000 courts.

Since 1909 the NHPA has conducted the World Championship Tournament, which is the most prestigious horseshoe event in North America.

New Jersey: www.njshpa.org

The ~100 member New Jersey State Horseshoe Pitchers Association (NJSHPA) that was founded in 1934 has 38 tournaments scheduled this year at 4 sites, Edison, Middlesex, Vineland and Washington.

Sanctioned clubs compete in Middlesex and Edison.

Non-sanctioned pitching competition on sand or dirt courts can be found in leagues primarily at Elks clubs and Moose lodges throughout NJ.

HOW TO GET STARTED

1. Call the listed Tournament Director and sign up for a tournament.
2. Show up at least an hour early so you can throw 100 shoes to establish an average.
3. Fill out an application, pay your NJ and NHPA dues.
4. Pay you entry fee for that day's tournament.
5. You are now ready to pitch that day!