

President's Message

## ***Recapping the Annual Winter Meeting***

by Stu Sipma, NPHA President

The NPHA Council held their annual winter meeting February 6-7 in Topeka, Kansas, host city of the 2015 World Horseshoe Tournament. The meeting was held at the Capital Plaza Hotel, which is attached to the Expocentre, the actual World Tournament facility.

Our time there included two full, extended days of meeting topics. Some of the main topics on the agenda included: our 2015 goals, the 2014 financial report, establishing our 2015 budget, proposed rule changes, the 2015 World Tournament, membership and sanction league reports, to name a few.

Below are the 2015 goals the Executive Council agreed to. All of these goals are very important to the Council and I hope they are just as important to all of you.

- Increase membership
- Control spending: maintain/attempt to grow the General Fund by two-three percent per year
- Promote the sport of horseshoe by continuing to incorporate recommendations by marketing research
- Support and maintain the NPHA Hall of Fame Museum memorabilia
- Secure national sponsorships
- Provide consistency and improvements throughout the charters.

Secretary/Treasurer Dave Sidles reported to the Council that the membership count has declined, making this the seventh year in a row. Adult members dropped from 10,081 in 2013 to 9,900 in 2014. Juniors also dropped from 794 in 2013 to 691 in 2014.

Many of you may ask, "So, what is the NPHA Council doing to turn this around?" First of all, I believe, yes, it is up to the Council to take the lead role in implementing ideas to grow the sport, but I feel it is "all" of our responsibility to play an active role in signing up members. Contact Tina Hawkins, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and Publicity/Promotion Director, for any materials you may need to grow your charter.

Dave Sidles, who had taken over for Dick Hansen, has been diligently reworking the financial books and getting our financials into QuickBooks. During the meeting, he gave the Council some great reports. I commend Dave for his efforts and let all of you know the financials are in good hands!

The Council agreed to raise the adult entry fee for the World Tournament from \$125 to \$130. The junior entry fee will remain the same. The majority of these additional dollars will be set aside to offset the cost of doing business for the World Tournament.

The Council also discussed the importance of the delegate meeting, coming up in July at the World Tournament in Topeka, in that critical decisions are made that affect the way we run our business and how we play horseshoes. The Executive Council urges all the charters who are sending delegates to this year's meeting to do their homework, carefully reading the proposed rule changes and understanding how these may affect their charter.

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In conclusion, I challenge each and every one of you to inspire your clubs within your charters to sign up members – not only adult members, but juniors too! If each charter would take the initiative to do this each year, can you imagine how membership would grow? Come on, everyone, do your part this spring and sign up new members. Let's see what we can do to turn this trend back the other way.

I wish everyone a very successful and safe new year. I am looking forward to a record-breaking turnout this summer at the 2015 World Tournament in Topeka. Don't forget to make your reservations ... especially the campers, as I was told the campsites are filling up fast!

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## ***Incumbents Declare Election Intentions***

Per NHPA bylaws, incumbents must announce their candidacy in writing, to be received by the President and the *Newsline* editor no later than February 1. The following incumbents have officially announced their intentions. Non-incumbent candidates for office must announce their candidacy in the same manner, no later than April 1.

### **Stu Sipma, President**

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your NHPA President this past year and I would like to announce my candidacy for re-election. I've really enjoyed the experiences this position has provided and have enjoyed working with the other NHPA officers in carrying out the responsibilities of the President as outlined in the NHPA bylaws. We still have many challenges that face our sport with the tough economic times, and I am ready for these challenges and will continue to do my best to make the decisions that are in the best interest of the NHPA and its members. My promise to you is I will continue to work hard to promote and grow the sport. It has been a pleasure serving as your President, and I would appreciate your continued support at the 2015 convention in Topeka, Kansas this July.

### **Bill Marvin, 5<sup>th</sup> Vice President**

My first term as your 5th Vice President has thus far been a great experience. Learning all the tasks performed by your Regional Directors has confirmed my conviction that they are some of the hardest working volunteers in the NHPA. I would like very much to serve another term in this office and am asking for your support and vote in Topeka. Together we can grow our membership and share our sport with others. Thank you.

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## ***The NHPA logo is ready for a facelift***

by Tina Hawkins, 2nd Vice President and Publicity/Promotion Director

We are looking for a new, exciting logo to modernize our image, increase our public appeal and take the association away from the "backyard" visions that horseshoe pitching normally invokes.

To NHPA members, our logo is very recognizable, but in a study by the University of Central Oklahoma marketing department, it was found that (unless you already know what it is) people cannot tell what the emblem depicts.

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The Executive Council feels it may be time for a change and is launching a logo design contest open to NHPA members to find a more modern, discernable logo that will help attract attention and entice prospective new members into the association.

See [rules and entry form](#) for more information. Deadline for submissions is June 30.

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## ***Prepping for a World-Class World Tournament***

*Anticipating the largest indoor tournament set-up ever*

*by Jerry LaBrosse, 4th Vice President and Charter Communications Director*

This year's World Tournament in Topeka, Kansas, is expected to be the largest in years. In anticipation of this increase, we are planning to set up all 60 portable courts of the NHPA inventory. This will include seven banks of eight courts each, and four playoff courts.

The tournament itself will be held at The Expocentre, located in the center of town, a couple of blocks from the State Capitol. The building has two arenas that will be used for pitching – the Landon Arena and the Exhibition Hall. The Landon Arena will hold 24 courts and will host our Championships. It has 360-degree, stadium seating, so bring your binoculars, as there will be no spectators on the floor.

Just a short stroll over to the Exhibition Hall and you see will the other 32 tournament courts and two more playoff courts. Fencing and bleachers will surround these four banks. ([See the proposed layout online.](#))

Terry Cuthbertson and Roger Vogel are coordinating the manufacture of additional fencing needed to complete the 60-court setup. The NHPA trailer is nearly full with the existing equipment, so this additional fencing will require planning and finesse in packing it to fit. However, we also plan to build some specially designed crates for all of the peg bases that the fence sits on. Additional tarps will also be needed.

Another exciting thing happening this year will be the expansion of our live video streaming. Due to the generosity of some members who have sponsored a camera, and due to the success of the World Tournament Experience Raffle, we will be adding cameras. We plan to have two cameras on each bank of eight courts, positioned on the sides of the courts looking in at the score monitors. We plan to position everything to provide the viewers at home maximum views of the action and scores.

Also planned are “class assignments” on paddles attached to the monitors, so video viewers will know what class is playing. Rob Hagman, NATSTATS Director, is working on the best and easiest way for anyone to tune into the world tournament action from the comfort of their home or mobile device. If anyone out there wishes to sponsor a camera, please send \$200 per camera (or whatever amount you are able) to Dave Sidles, NHPA Secretary/Treasurer with a note that it's for camera sponsorship. We will be recognizing all camera sponsors at the world tournament and in *Newsline*. Thank you to those of you who have already sponsored a camera.

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This year's setup will be the largest indoor tournament in the history of horseshoes. We have never set up the entire inventory of NHPA courts for tournament competition. Anyone who is willing and able to be a part of the actual court organization is welcome to show up at the arena at 7 a.m. on July 8, when we'll get started on this record-setting setup. It'll also be the BEST!

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***You Could Win a 2016 World Tourney Experience!***

*Anticipating the largest indoor tournament set-up ever*

by Chris Callihan Sr., Raffle Committee Chair

Now that football season is over, we begin another season that is near and dear to our hearts: horseshoe pitching season! And with the kickoff of this season, I'm pleased to announce the World Tournament Experience Raffle (WTER) of 2015. Ticket sales have begun!

Just one ticket is all it takes, but increase your odds and buy more! You could win a ticket package that includes your 2016 World Tournament entry in Montgomery, Alabama, hotel stay and other associated prizes. Four runner-up prizes of tournament entries will also be awarded. Tickets are just \$5 each or five for \$20.

Ticket sellers around the nation are in place. Tickets will also be available at the NHPF booth at this year's World Tournament and by U.S. Mail. (See below for further details.)

The drawing will be held on Saturday October 3 at the NHPA Hall of Fame facility in Wentzville, Missouri, during the National Sanctioned League Tournament. You need not be present to win.

The WTER began as a way to raise funds for improvements to and expansion of the NHPA's electronic scoring equipment capabilities. Most recently, the raffle moneys contributed to the webcams that were introduced at last year's World Tournament in Buffalo, New York. Proceeds are split equally between the NHPA and the NHPF.

Contact the World Tournament Experience Raffle representative closest to you to purchase tickets.

California  
Casey Sluys

Larry Collette  
Melvin Jeardoe

Minnesota  
Jerry LaBrosse

Florida  
Ron Deckard

Maine  
Cathy Newman Cyr

New Hampshire  
Lonna Green

Georgia  
Ronnie Miller

Maryland  
Diana Ratliff

New Mexico  
Charles Knotts

Idaho  
Brian Poole

Massachusetts  
Debby Michaud

Ohio  
Cindy Rose

Illinois  
Bill Marvin

Missouri  
Dee McIntire  
Dee & Gary Null

Oklahoma  
David Montgomery

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Oregon <u>Bob Hummell</u>	Tennessee <u>JoAnn Stanford</u>	<u>Pat Snelgrove</u>
Pennsylvania <u>Ron Weiss</u>	Texas/Oklahoma <u>Chris Callihan, Sr.</u>	Washington <u>Phyllis Quist</u>
	Virginia	West Virginia <u>Donna Dodson</u>

Or mail your request for tickets and payments by September 22 to the Raffle Chair:

Chris Callihan  
319 Radio Road  
Durant, OK 74701

Thank you for your support of the NHPA and NHPF! Good luck!

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## ***Rules and Bylaws Update***

by Dan Sanders, 1st Vice President and Bylaws/Rules/Grievance Director

As President Stu Sipma recapped in his article above, the NHPA Council's winter meeting was held in Topeka, Kansas the first weekend in February. From that, I'm providing here an update of our Rules Committee progress with the Proposed Rules Changes (PRCs) that were submitted on or before the December 31 deadline. I say "progress" only because our Rules Committee was unable to process all of the PRCs that were submitted, as many of these PRCs (12 or so) weren't received until just before the deadline.

The PRCs that had been processed and voted on were presented to our NHPA Council, for their consideration and approval. Most, but not all, were approved by the Council and will be advanced for voting by the World Tournament Convention delegates in July. The remaining PRCs will be processed by the Rules Committee, and also by our Council, during March and April.

All of the Council-approved proposals will be printed in the May/June issue of *Newsline*. These same PRCs will be posted on the NHPA website and will be sent out to all members who have provided us with their email address. These PRCs will also be included in the delegate packets, which will be sent to our charter presidents in June for distribution.

Another rule-related agenda item had to do with the NHPA approval of measuring tools. This requirement can be found in the current RGS Book on page 34 under *Equipment Specifications, Section E: Pitching Accessories*.

The bottom line here is that all measurement tools manufactured for sale purposes must be pre-approved by the NHPA Council. So far, three tools have been submitted to our Council for approval. The requirements for NHPA approval include:

- 1) The measuring tool must be 'named'
- 2) The tool must meet the measurement specifications indicated in Section E

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3) The tool must include a semi-permanent label that includes the name of the tool, and with the wording “approved by the NHPA”

All manufacturers who would like to have their measuring tools approved by the NHPA should contact [me](#) or the [NHPA Secretary-Treasurer](#) for details.

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***Random thoughts from Bill Marvin***

by [Bill Marvin](#), 5th Vice President and Regional Director and Court Sanctioning Director

One of the more interesting and challenging facets of being an NHPA vice president is writing an article for each edition of *Newsline*. Sometimes writer’s block prevents me from focusing on one topic, so this month I am beginning the theme “random thoughts from Bill Marvin.” I hope it doesn’t bore you and isn’t too disjointed.

Court Re-sanctioning

As stated in the NHPA’s official Playing Rules, Guidelines and Specifications (RGS), all courts must be re-sanctioned in 2015. The process is done under the direction of regional directors. Court sanctions fall into two categories, conditional and full. Court sanctioning certificates provided to the regional directors have a series of questions that further explain the two levels of sanctioning. The process is very important because all sanctioned events must be held on courts that have been sanctioned. The question often comes up as to why courts have to be sanctioned at all. The short answer is to make sure pitching conditions are standard for all tournament play. A complete explanation of requirements can be found on pages 34-39 of the RGS book or at [this link](#).

Remember how you got started

When is the last time you asked a friend to join you at a tournament? Isn’t that how you got started? If you can, buy a card for them to get them in their first event. Remember: “In the NHPA, our shoes fit everyone.”

Make money at the 2015 World Tournament

If you are going to the World Tournament, consider being a scorekeeper or judge. You can make money each shift plus help keep the tournament running on schedule. Training for both will be available in Topeka, Kansas.

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***Newsline: Meant for Email***

Over the last couple of months, a handful of people have once again questioned getting a hard copy of *Newsline*. As of January 2015, *Newsline* is no longer printed in any form by the NHPA itself. It’s strictly a bi-monthly email.

As it was first announced, it is the responsibility of the charters to distribute any printed copies to their members who don’t have email, but still wish to receive it. To assist with this, each issue will be available in a text-only PDF document on the NHPA website. The document will contain all stories, and the “continued” text.

Archived issues will continue to be available under the [Our History tab](#) on the website.

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## ***Roll the Cameras***

Are you an aspiring filmmaker? A seasoned cinematographer? Someone who just enjoys shooting and editing video?

If you are looking for an outlet for your creative talents, the NHPA may just have the job for you! Volunteers are being sought for filming World Tournament action, using the NHPA digital video camera, or your own video camera if you have one, and editing the footage into viewable, usable videos and video montages.

Videos could be used for historical and/or entertainment purposes, online as well as in the theater of the NHPA Hall of Fame Museum.

Contact NHPA Secretary/Treasurer [Dave Sidles](#) to volunteer or for more information.

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## ***Deadline for World Tournament Sponsorships is Fast-Approaching***

If you are interested in supporting the World Tournament in Topeka, as well as getting your name and/or product in front of horseshoe pitchers from across the country, act fast. The deadline for sponsorship commitments is March 15. Learn more on the [World Tournament website](#).

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## ***Keep an eye on your calendars***

*Consider NATSTATS with April and May tournaments*

So, do you have your required four events to qualify for the 2015 World Tournament? You must have them registered with NATSTATS by May 13.

A note to all tournament directors that will be having tournaments in late April and early May ... pitchers are going to need these events for World Tournament qualifiers. Make certain that you report the results right away so credit can be given to the players. This is especially and critically true for those running tournaments on the weekend of May 9. You will need to submit your results immediately following your event. The NHPA sees this problem every year. Please be a part of the solution.

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## ***Horseshoes by the Numbers***

*2014 league results add up to interesting facts and figures, Top Ten Awards*

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Horseshoe is a game of numbers. Three points, six points, one point, 30 feet, 40 feet, ringer percentages, shoes pitched, and on and on.

What about tallying some of those numbers?

- A total of 287 sanctioned leagues reported results in 2014
- Those leagues pitched a total of 6,780,986 horseshoes
- Of those total shoes, 1,667,520 were ringers
- That's an all-league, nationwide average of 24.59 percent

Check out further breakdowns for all divisions and the Top Ten League Award list on the [NHPA website](#). Congratulations to all the winners and to the league secretaries for all their number-crunching throughout the year!

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*Junior Profile: Denise Daly*

***Fierce 'til the end***

by [Aleena Lepak](#), Junior Promotion Director

Fierce, fabulous, and talented are only a few words to describe 17-year-old Denise Daly. Living in Winchester, Illinois, Denise is enjoying her high school senior year to the fullest with a smile on her face every day. She participates in color guard, runs hurdles and the 4 X 100 in track. She enjoys painting, hanging out with her friends, and loves reading about different languages and time periods. With so many things in her life, Denise still makes time for her passion of horseshoes.

Over the winter, Denise practices every other weekend at indoor courts in Jerseyville, then at her grandma's house or at her league courts in the summer. Right now she practices about once a week, but will start going out every day once the weather warms up.

Denise practices with her grandma and some of her friends who find the sport intriguing. She is even in the process of helping with a junior tournament to get her friends interested in pitching competitively. Pitching since the age of 13, her practice has paid off as she already has won three Junior Girls state titles, placed in various tournaments, and was in the pro tournament last year and will be again this year.

At the time she started pitching, Denise had two important people in her life pass away – her childhood hero Zach Banes and her grandpa – both from cancer. She admired Zach, as at the time of his passing, he was strong through it all and unselfishly wanted to make sure everyone else was going to be okay. Her grandpa, who pitched horseshoe and was involved, was the reason she started pitching. Prompted by her grandma, who also wanted to get involved, Denise went with her grandma and they both have since stuck with it. There are bound to be a couple angels on her shoulders ever since.

So far, Denise has pitched in World Tournaments in Utah, New York, and will be competing in Topeka, Kansas this summer. She loves pitching at this annual tournament because it is a full two weeks of pitching and is a chance to hang out with her friends.



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“It’s one big family!” says Denise. “I have friends from all over the states and Canada.”

Denise also prefers to pitch with and against other juniors because they are similar in age and can understand what the others are going through. They can relate not only in competition, but in school as well. Overall, Denise loves the people she meets through pitching horseshoes. “Everyone is so nice; you make friends easily and stay friends.”

Recently accepted at Illinois State University, Denise plans to start her career in the medical field to one day be an oncology surgeon. She enjoys helping others and even loves the hospital food. Denise won’t be too far from home, so she can still pitch while in college and compete competitively. One thing for sure, we will continue to see her name throughout the years.

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***Beyond Borders: NHPF Supports Horseshoe Outside of U.S.***

by Casey Sluys, *President, National Horseshoe Pitchers Foundation*

In addition to supporting the NHPA Hall of Fame, the National Horseshoe Pitchers Foundation (NHPF) supports promotion and publicity of horseshoe pitching, not only in the United States, but overseas as well, an example of which is South Africa.

The NHPF assisted in shipping horseshoes to their country in 2011-2012. Then, in 2011, the first South African pitchers participated in our World Tournament in Monroe, Louisiana. They proved to be very good at pitching, winning two class championships, one second place and an 11th place.

In 2013, we welcomed both South African and Namibian pitchers, making it a true “World” tournament and an international event.

The next year, 2014, during the Junior Jukskei Championships in South Africa, they held a small horseshoe pitching tournament for the juniors with the same horseshoes that we had sent them. It gives one a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment knowing that our promotional efforts have proven fruitful.

Also in 2014, the NHPF issued a couple of grants – one to a new facility in Massachusetts and another to a new club in Kansas. We wish both these clubs much success and look forward to their support in future years.

We also look forward to YOUR support, as the facility needs every horseshoe pitchers’ support. Imagine if each of the 8,000 NHPA pitchers put away just 50 cents a week for an entire year, equating to \$26 per year each, and donated it annually, the NHPF would be in fairly good shape. That’s a lofty goal, but with your assistance we could attain it. Please spread the word about the work of the Foundation and the NHPA Hall of Fame. Run a few benefit tournaments to support the NHPF. Benefit tournaments seem to work well for other causes, why not for the sport you enjoy?

You all are aware of the adage, “If you build it, they will come.” The NHPA Hall of Fame is built. Now come. All who are travelling to Kansas this year are encouraged to swing by Wentzville, Missouri, for a visit.

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Many new bricks have been added in the last few years and they alone are worth the stop. It's interesting reading tributes and memories from across the NHPA.

The displays inside the hall and museum are constantly rotated for your enjoyment; the video room is completely touch screen and allows viewing of a multitude of videos; the plaques recognizing our \$500 plus contributors have been updated to include all donations through 2014. Wouldn't it be great to see YOUR name on a plaque or a brick?  
See you in Missouri, then Kansas!

Questions regarding the NHPF can be directed to Casey Sluys.

**Special Thanks to Our Donors**

We express our sincere thanks to the following most recent donors:

**Donating \$10-95**

Charles Bunner, WV  
Nevada State HPA  
Eastern New England HPA

**Donating \$100-200**

Richard L. Timmer, IL  
Dave & Cathie Loucks, CA  
Leroy J. Law, IA  
Scott Henne, CA  
Paul Stewart, NC (cost of hosting NHPF webpage)

**Donating \$500-\$600**

Casey & Gail Sluys, CA  
Herschel & Rose Walters, IN

**Bricks Purchased By**

Doris Hieden, TX  
Karen Meredith, KY

**Other Income**

\$700.00 Rent, NHPA GRS  
\$3000.00 Rent, Quail Ridge Horseshoe Club

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Horseshoe Pitching Facts & Folklore

***Who is the Greatest? (Part Two)***

by Bob Dunn, NHPA Historian

(Continued from the previous issue of *Newsline*)

Another great pitcher from the 1940s and 1950s was Don Titcomb (California). He battled both Ted Allen and Fernando Isais, but could not bring home a title until 1960. That decade brought a new

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era and a host of great pitchers. In fact, during the 1960s, there were seven different champions; only Harold Reno (Ohio), Elmer Hohl (Ontario) and Dan Kuchcinski (Pennsylvania) were able to repeat as the Men's World Champion. That was a tremendous change in the sport, as two pitchers had previously dominated the sport; there were just three different champions in the past three decades; and Guy Zimmerman had just the one championship at that.

The other champions from the 1960s were Paul Focht (Ohio), John Monasmith (Washington) and Curt Day (Indiana). Of these three, only Day would go on to win another title, doing so in 1971 and again in 1974. Picking the best pitcher of the 1960s is next to impossible, but by bringing the 1970s into view, all becomes clearer.

The 1960s was the most competitive decade of our sport and by adding the 1970s, which was nearly as competitive, we see that Dan Kuchcinski won a third championship in 1970. But one pitcher stands out above everyone else: Elmer Hohl with four more titles for a career total of six world championships. To that, add a record-setting 88.15 ringer-percentage performance in 1968, which included the first perfect game in 20 years, a 30-shoe gem. Here are the records for Elmer Hohl's championship years:

Year		Event Site	W	L	R	SP	%
1965	WC	Keene, NH	32	3	2428	2870	84.6
1968	WC	Keene, NH	35	0	2613	2964	88.2
1972	WC	Greenville, OH	33	2	2619	3044	86.0
1973	WC	Eureka, CA	32	3	2248	2692	83.5
1975	WC	Lafayette, ID	33	2	2267	2682	84.5
1977	WC	Greenville, OH	23	3	1980	2326	85.1

How can one say the 1960s is the most competitive era? By counting the number of 80 percent performances. Each event in the 1960s averaged 6.8 pitchers averaging over 80 percent ringers. By expanding the factor to include a count of those additional pitchers averaging at least 75 percent during the 1960s, an additional 9.1 pitchers averaged better than 75 percent ringers. Those 75 percenters are the pitchers that are not the top contenders, but they could upset the apple cart on occasion by beating the top ranked pitchers and creating playoffs or dropped pitchers out of the right to be in a playoff for the championships. Those pitchers averaging in the high 70s, at times, did stage upsets that decided who ended up champion in that tournament. That is a factor that is not present today.

The same review of the competitive factor for the 1940s shows an average of 3.2 pitchers above 80 percent, an additional 4 as 75 percent plus players. A bit surprising, but those numbers did not change much for the 1950s with 3.2 at 80 percent pitchers and 4.6 additional 75 percent pitchers. These numbers are considerably lower than the 1960s. Applying the review to the 1970s finds the numbers very similar at 4.8 for 80 percenters and 10.1 as 75 percenters ... a bit lower, but still highly competitive.

So now, how do Elmer Hohl's six championships, in a more competitive era, stack up against the career records of Ted Allen and Fernando Isais?

As the 1970s decade was closing, a young teenager entered the arena and at age 19 won his first men's world championship in 1978. He was fresh off of winning three Junior Boys World Championship (1971, 1972 and 1975) and in the process picked up the nickname "Deadeye."

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His name was Walter Ray Williams, Jr. (California) and he was the star of the 1980s, even though Dale Lipovsky (Minnesota) won three championships (1982, 1983, 1987) in the decade, and Jim Knisley (Ohio) won two titles (1984, 1988) in the decade and a third in 1990. Walter Ray also won titles in 1980, 1981, 1985, and again in 1991 and 1994.

Do Williams's six titles stack up to Hohl's? Probably not, even though "Deadeye" had an 88.1 percent tournament in 1980. The competitive factor for the 1980s had dropped to 1.8 for 80 percenters and 5.4 for 75 percenters and the games were changed to 40 points rather than the 50-point games up through 1981. Those factors do matter when comparing players from different decades. Here are the title years for Walter Ray Williams Jr.:

Year		Event Site	W	L	R	SP	%
1978	WC	Des Moines, IA	34	1	2087	2480	84.2
1980	WC	Huntsville, AL	31	0	1732	2020	85.7
1981	WC	Genola, MN	22	1	1707	1938	88.1
1985	WC	Lafayette, IN	31	0	1459	1818	84.8
1991	WC	Biloxi, MS	27	0	1377	1598	86.2
1994	WC	Syracuse, NY	17	2	765	910	84.0

At the end of the 1980s, in 1989, another youngster won his first world tournament and that was then-19-year-old Alan Francis (Missouri, Ohio). Since then, Francis has won a total of 19 world titles, including a streak of eight consecutive from 2003-2010. In the past 20 years, there is only one player to dethrone Alan, and that's Brian Simmons (Rhode Island, Vermont, Connecticut), accomplishing that feat three times, in 2000, 2002 and 2011. The 88 percent record mark set by Williams Jr. and Hohl has been bettered three times by Alan Francis: 89.35 percent in 2008, 90.26 in 2009 and 91.23 in 2013. And Francis has recorded six perfect games in 2005, 2007, two in 2008 and two in 2013. Here are the records for Alan Francis's title years:

Year		Event Site	W	L	R	SP	%
1989	WC	Spearfish, SD	28	4	1426	1846	77.3
1993	WC	Spearfish, SD	32	3	1449	1880	77.1
1995	WC	Perry, GA	11	4	817	1040	78.6
1996	WC	Gillette, WY	13	2	767	944	81.3
1997	WC	Kitchener, ON	18	1	1051	1248	84.2
1998	WC	Ainsworth, NE	14	1	714	832	85.8
1999	WC	Greenville, OH	19	0	952	1142	83.4
2001	WC	Hibbing, MN	15	0	790	922	85.7
2003	WC	Eau Claire, WI	23	0	1181	1408	83.9
2004	WC	Pocatello, ID	22	1	943	1134	83.2
2005	WC	Bakersfield, CA	23	0	750	886	84.7
2006	WC	Gillette, WY	19	0	606	690	87.8
2007	WC	Ardmore, OK	19	0	574	708	81.1
2008	WC	York, PA	19	0	738	826	89.4
2009	WC	Springfield, IL	19	0	917	1016	90.3
2010	WC	Cedar Rapids, IA	19	1	740	846	87.5
2012	WC	Knoxville, TN	15	0	670	806	83.1
2013	WC	St. George, UT	15	0	593	650	91.2
2014	WC	Hamburg, NY	15	0	650	754	86.2

Alan Francis's incredible career and setting of an extreme list of records has occurred in an era of continued decline in high-skilled pitchers and where a majority of his events were played indoors, protected from the weather elements. The competitive factor for the 1990s was about even with the previous decade at 1.5 for 80 percenters and 5.3 for 75 percenters, but in the first decade of the new century, those numbers dropped to 1.6 and .9, respectively.

So now all the data is out there. Can you determine who is the greatest? Please be reminded that this is only the men pitchers that have been reviewed, there are still the lady pitchers to be considered! Do tune in to the next issue of *Newsline*.

#### Folklore Jottings

1) Anyone think Walter Ray Williams, Jr. or Alan Francis were the youngest men's world champions in our sport? Not even close, Harold Falor won the championship in 1923 at age 15.

2) Was Walter Ray Williams, Jr. the first junior boy world champion to also win a men's championship? Actually he was, in 1978. Mark Seibold was the junior boys world champion in 1966 and won the men's title in 1979 and again in 1985. Alan Francis rounds out the list of three to have won titles in these two divisions. Frank Stinson, junior boys champion in 1924, won the senior men's division championship in 1976.

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#### EDITORIAL

### ***Let's get back to the joy of pitching***

by Randy L. Johnson

Do you remember the first time you tossed a horseshoe? How about the first time you made a rock-solid, locked-on ringer? Oh what a sweet sound and a great feeling!

I would wager to say that it was not at a tournament, or in a league or anything to do with an organized event. It was probably in the backyard with family, or maybe at a campground or park. You can remember when strict adherence to the rules was not needed. C'mon now, you all remember that shoe that bounced off a hill and went on the stake and we bragged that we meant that to happen, then laughed so hard. We loved pitching and were hooked; yet it may have taken years to join a club.

Horseshoe pitching is a social sport. Have we gotten too focused on winning? Or maybe on our NATSTATS? And maybe that next tournament. With the membership numbers falling, I propose we need to get back to our roots when we threw shoes mainly for the pure enjoyment of the sport and the social interaction with those that enjoy it as well.

There are many people out there that would love to pitch, but at their time in life, they may not be able to commit to every week, or leagues or tournaments. Maybe they can only attend every other week or once a month. They may have kids involved in other activities like baseball, football, swimming and so on. Those are the people that we need to focus on. The more they are accepted and inspired to join a group, the more likely they are to stay. We need to accept them where they are. If we only have a league night, they may not be able to commit that kind of time, right now. But the more they enjoy it, \*poof!\* they find more time to attend.

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Does your club have regular times to just pitch? I know of some clubs in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and they are thriving, but they also have lights to be able to pitch in the evenings during the week. I know there are many clubs that do not have that luxury and are forced to pitch only on the weekends. We may need to save those competitive times for tournaments and leave the other times for the pure enjoyment and the social part of our sport. This is especially true for those clubs that are struggling. Be creative and return to the joy of throwing that shoe.

***About the author:***

*Mr. Johnson lives in Oak Point, Texas and is an active NHPA member, taking after his dad, who was an NHPA pitcher from California.*

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**2015 World Tournament Links**

**July 13 - 25**

**Topeka, Kansas**

- **Getting There**
- **Lodging**
- **How to Qualify**
- **Prize Fund**
- **Camping**
- **Sponsorships**
- **Things to Do**
- **Facebook Page**

**World Tournament Entry Form**

Entry Deadline is May 18