

President's Message

Looking Ahead to the NHPA Council Winter Meeting

by [Stu Sipma](#), NHPA President

Happy New Year! I hope 2016 will be a great year for everyone!

Our 2016 NHPA Council Winter Meeting is scheduled for January 22-24 in Montgomery, Alabama. I have scheduled this meeting for two full days. Items on the agenda include reviewing and setting our 2016 goals, review of our NHPA financials, creating a 2016 budget, reviewing the 2015 budget, discussions on the 2016 World Tournament, sponsorship packages, charter concerns, membership growth ideas, five-year plan, Game Related Sales, NHPA director concerns, just to name a few.

I have also scheduled time to do a walkthrough of the Multiplex at Cramton Bowl, the facility that will host the 2016 World Horseshoe Tournament.

With this being an "off" year, where we don't have to address any bylaws or rule changes at the delegate meeting, Dave Sidles, NHPA Secretary-Treasurer, and I have been working on a presentation of our financials. The purpose of this presentation is to make everyone aware of where we stand financially as we move forward the next few years.

Three Council members will travel to the World Tournament site to meet with World Tournament team members and assist them with the planning and preparations necessary for hosting this event. This year Bill Marvin, 5th Vice President; Jerry LaBrosse, 4th Vice President; and Dave Sidles will travel to Montgomery prior to the winter meeting for this site visit. A report of the visit will be provided in the next *Newsline*.

NHPA Officers Attend TEAMS Conference

by [Stu Sipma](#), NHPA President

On November 9-12, Tina Hawkins, 2nd Vice President and Publicity/Promotion Director, and I attended the 2015 Travel, Events, and Management in Sports (TEAMS) Conference in Las Vegas. We look forward to events like this as they benefit the sport of horseshoes. Not only do these events draw interest in sites bidding to host our World Tournament, but they also raise awareness that horseshoes is played at a competitive level to the various sports marketing groups from all over the United States. We have many sites still showing interest in hosting the World Tournament, and even sites who have hosted the event in the past wanting to pursue the event again. These sites include Charleston, West Virginia; Knoxville, Tennessee; Erie, Pennsylvania; and Biloxi, Mississippi. March 15 is the deadline for sites to submit bids to host the 2018 tournament.

Seeking Nominations for National Awards: Achievement and Hall of Fame

by [Stu Sipma](#), NHPA President

Each year the NHPA recognizes members for their contributions to the NHPA, their charter, and/or local club. The Council is asking all charters to provide a list of individuals who you believe would be good candidates to receive an [NHPA Achievement Award](#). These awards will be presented at the 2016 World Tournament in Montgomery, Alabama. To obtain a form, visit the link.

The NHPA is also looking for your assistance in pinpointing candidates who you believe would qualify for the [NHPA Hall of Fame](#).

Candidates for this prestigious award must have been an NHPA member for at least 10 years and may qualify based on their distinguished, outstanding performances in World Tournament Championship play, or as a person who has made significant and beneficial contributions to the NHPA.

Deadline for submitting nominations for 2016 Hall of Fame voting is January 31. Don't wait until the last minute, as the Hall of Fame Screening Committee has to approve the nomination before that person is placed on the ballot. If you don't have enough time to provide sufficient information for a nominee for the 2016 voting, then take your time and do the job properly and send the nomination in later to be considered for the 2017 voting. Nominations for this award should be submitted to our NHPA Hall of Fame Director [Vicki Winston](#) and the form is available at the link.

World Tournament Preparations

by [Stu Sipma](#), NHPA President

The 2016 World Horseshoe Tournament will be held July 25-August 6 at the Multiplex, located in Montgomery, Alabama. The NHPA trailer has already arrived from Topeka, Kansas, and plans are being finalized for this event. Those looking to attend should begin making plans and getting reservations made. Details on the venue, camping, hotels, things to see and do, and other information can be found through a banner link on the [NHPA website](#) or directly via [this link](#).

Candidates for Vice President Positions Sought

by [Stu Sipma](#), NHPA President

This year positions of 1st Vice President and 3rd Vice President are up for re-election. According to our bylaws, candidates for NHPA office must announce their candidacy in writing, to be received by the President and the *Newsline* editor, no later than April 1. Incumbents, however, must announce their candidacy in the same manner by February 1. I

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

encourage competition, therefore those of you who are interested in one of these positions, please let me know.

New RGS Book Revision Released

by [David Sidles](#), NHPA Secretary-Treasurer

The latest revision of the Rules, Guidelines and Specifications book (the RGS Book) has been published. Copies have been sent to charter secretaries for distribution and are also available [by email](#) request from the NHPA office. The online publication of the RGS book will be completed soon; look for the January 1, 2016 date once it is on the website.

We Have a Winner

by [Tina Hawkins](#), 2nd Vice President and Publicity/Promotion Director

The votes have been tallied and there is a clear-cut winner! With 32 percent of the total votes, the winning design for an updated NHPA logo was submitted by Bobby White of Pennsylvania, and meets ALL the requirements outlined in the contest rules.

Not only can you tell at a glance that it is “horseshoe pitching,” you can also see male and female participation, the association name and the website. This eye-catching design would show well on the back of a jacket or shirt and would need no explanation to those who view it.

As explained in the contest and voting announcements, the intention is NOT to replace the existing NHPA logo, but to add a “companion” design that is easily identifiable to be used in promoting the association to the general public. An announcement will be made when the design becomes available to members.

Bobby will be the recipient of a \$50 prepaid VISA card for his victory! A sincere thank you goes out to every member who gave their time and effort to create and submit all the contest designs.

Are You Properly Carded?

A couple of notes about membership, card numbers, medical exemptions

by [David Sidles](#), NHPA Secretary-Treasurer

Once you are issued an NHPA card number, it should never change, unless you move to a different charter. Most charters can issue up to 9,999 unique numbers. We hope that each charter gets that many members someday. The official record of your name and card number is what is on [NATSTATS](#). You are encouraged to check to see if your number and name are correct. If it is not correct, let the [NHPA office](#) know and we'll correct it.

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

A feature of the new 2016 membership card is a place to designate a granted medical exemption. These exemptions are going to be tracked more closely, particularly at this year's World Tournament. If your charter has granted you a medical exemption, make sure you are able to provide copies of the NHPA provided exemption forms. (Copies of your acceptance forms are available from your charter secretary.)

For a variety of reasons, we cannot stress enough how important it is for you to have a current membership card when you play in a sanctioned event, whether it is a tournament or a league. We are now checking the NATSTATS complete file of results against the names submitted by your charter officials on their final membership reports. If you are on NATSTATS and not on a membership list, it will appear that you played without paying for a membership, and we will be contacting your charter for more information. More often than not, it is a simple mistake in reporting, like a card number mistyped, either on results submitted or a membership report.

The number of members that are reported determines your charter's representation and voting power at the annual business meeting. It is vitally important that these reports be complete and timely. Per the NHPA bylaws, these reports are to be submitted at least quarterly with a final report due by November 1 of each year.

Membership dues are the primary source of funding for the NHPA. Show your support of the NHPA by signing up your entire family. The NHPA Council is doing what it can to minimize costs, but at the same time we want your experience as a member of the NHPA to be the best it can be.

NHPF Grants Awarded to Established Clubs

by [Casey Sluys](#), *President, National Horseshoe Pitchers Foundation*

The three allotted [NHPF grants](#) in the second half of 2015 went to three established horseshoe clubs – one in Montana for the purpose of becoming fully sanctioned so they can host their state championships; and the other two to small facilities in the Central Valley of California, Lindsay and Exeter. Both California clubs run sanctioned events and were forced to run three shifts per day in order to accommodate everyone that signed in for the tournaments. Six courts will be added to the existing facilities for both clubs.

“Fuming” about Painting World Tournament Stakes

by [Jerry LaBrosse](#), *4th Vice President and Charter Communications Director*

At the World Tournament in Topeka, Kansas, I was informed of concerns about the fumes and smell from the white spray paint used on the stakes. NHPA President Stu Sipma asked me to research this issue and make some recommendations to the board for future World Tournaments.

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

As we all know, many pitchers are accustomed to painting the stake to create a visual contrast between the stake and the backstop. Asking many pitchers what they think of this practice, the results vary widely. It seems that the higher percentage pitchers are more onboard with this practice than the lower percentage pitchers. This also holds true for other “on court” practices, such as turning the clay between games.

My research on this topic began by identifying all possible ways to create a contrast between stake and backstop. I asked many seasoned players for their opinions, and I also participated in an [NHPA Forum](#) string on this topic. Keep in mind my goal was to find the best, most practical, and cost effective way to solve this problem for the World Tournament only. There may be local indoor facilities out there that could use a paintbrush or some other non-aerosol methods to apply paint, but those methods would not be practical for our event.

I tested several different methods of making the stake white. Chalk is messy, doesn't cover well, and doesn't last long. Any method of non-aerosol painting, such as a small roller or brush, is just not practical. Shoe polish is also not a practical solution for this purpose.

The forum string talked about making the backstop white and leaving the stakes a dark color. This method is used on the Hall of Fame courts and works fine. If there are permanent backstops, I think it is a good solution. Unfortunately, this idea is not practical for our world tournament courts.

There are reasons that overspray of stake painting is a problem. One reason is the type of paint. Every year we try to run this event as economically as possible. The host is responsible for supplying the paint, and we usually use 200 or more cans during the event. The paint purchased is usually the cheapest white spray paint possible, at about a dollar per can.

Then, it is usually put out on the courts without being shaken. When folks use the paint, it is rarely shaken adequately; so much of what comes out of the can at first is the clear and smelly propellants. Often when the stake is sprayed, the player is spraying it in a scattered manner, which uses far more paint than is needed.

With all this said, here are the recommendations I have for this issue moving into future World Tournaments:

1. **Quality paint:** there is a huge difference in the type and quality of spray paint available. White primer has more pigment and will cover better. Trying three different brands, all at about \$3 per can, they all covered far better than the cheap off-brands. Better coverage equals less paint needed. So my first suggestion is to purchase white primer paint, making sure it is the fast drying variety.
2. Have volunteers **shake every can of paint purchased before it goes out onto the floor.** Nobody knows how long the paint we purchase has been sitting on the shelf

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

or in storage. This paint is not pre-shaken before you buy it. Shaking the paint can be hugely important.

3. **Open a dialog** about this topic when we have all the players in the awards room for announcements. Explain that to minimize the overspray, hold the can no more than three inches from the stake. Move up and down the stake with a slow steady motion. With a little practice, a person can easily spray a stake with two passes and very little overspray.

Here's a [quick film demonstration](#) on stake painting ... just pointing out the basics.

Patching it Together

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

The top prize at local horseshoe tournaments is never a huge amount of money. It is something much more valuable: The Patch! Tournament and class champion patches bring a smile to the face of those who are the winners. Proudly displayed on shirts, jackets, hats and more, these are examples of having a great day on the courts and are symbolic of being on your game. Ever wonder how the tournament director gets them?

As NHPA's 5th Vice President, one of my major responsibilities is to distribute patches to the regional director for each charter. For 2016, nearly 13,000 tournament patches will be awarded. Not included in this total are the patches for the World Tournament, years of participation patches, number of World Tournaments pitched, and all league patches.

Each tournament patch is slightly different. State champion patches, both doubles and singles, have gold lettering, while the class champions of both have red lettering. Tournament champion patches for both singles and doubles have silver lettering, while tournament class patches have blue. Team tournament patches are the same scheme.

Are patches a big deal? To me, they certainly are. I expect to take one home each time I enter a tournament (but rarely do!). Patches may be small, but signify that once in awhile, everyone has a good day on the courts.

Welcoming Non-Sanctioned Leagues

by David Sidles, NHPA Secretary-Treasurer

At this year's annual Hall of Fame banquet, the East Nebraska charter will be recognized for the largest increase in membership in both numbers and percentage. This is usually a phenomenon of hosting the World Tournament, but in this case it was the result of bringing a non-sanctioned league into the NHPA. The result was a 65 percent increase in charter membership; 80 new members are now enjoying the benefits of participating in a sanctioned league, competing for various league awards and patches. They can also achieve

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

national recognition at the annual National Sanctioned League Championship Tournament and with the Top Ten league awards.

We extend an invitation to all non-sanctioned horseshoe pitching leagues and pitchers around the country to take a look at the NHPA.

Growing the NHPA: Shoes Fit Everyone

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

Feeling obliged to put in my two cents on how to grow the NHPA ... it has been shown that the best way to recruit new pitchers is by word of mouth. Members who are excited about horseshoes and ask a friend or neighbor to join them have the best success. This is not to diminish other recruiting methods, but some folks feel a bit intimidated walking up and asking, "How do I get involved?"

Whether you are a pitcher in a league, club and/or tournaments, there is someone you know who wants to join. Take the time to explain how it works and let them know that in the NHPA "our shoes fit everyone."

One Year Down, Ready for Another

by [Jerry Smith](#), *3rd Vice President and Sanction League Director, Junior Scholarships*

When this is published, I will have completed my first year as NHPA 3rd Vice President and Director of the Sanctioned League Program. I'm reflecting back on my year, which required an intense learning process and the need to expand my skill sets. The processes needed to successfully direct the Sanctioned League Program certainly are varied and need attention from January to December.

The year started slow enough when data for winter leagues began to arrive in early January, as did several thousand league patches. The storage and sorting of patches presented an interesting logistics problem, solved by plastic bins and new shelves.

I set up an Excel spreadsheet to deal with incoming league results, thinking it could do what I needed for data manipulation while I tried to understand my predecessor David Sidles's Access program. Not being literate in Access, I struggled, and with David in his new NHPA Secretary/Treasurer position, I did not want to continually be bothering him. So I turned to my Virginia friends, Kevin and Pat Snelgrove, for help. They came to my rescue and Kevin designed and built an Excel program – somewhat under my direction, or at least what was needed to appease me – while trying to make it foolproof for my mistake-prone fingers.

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

Pat began working with David's Access program to make it user-friendlier and to give me an easy way to produce accurate Top Ten reports. These reports are difficult with 30 different categories to sort and many complex parameters. Ultimately, I will be able to produce reports at will, and have the information for award certificates and plaques to be produced. We have burned up the phone lines between Idaho and Virginia with almost daily calls. I cannot thank these two people enough as they have invested countless hours in me and the NHPA.

Meanwhile, February was the time to send out the 2014 Top Ten awards and plaques, as well as Junior Scholarship materials. I also attended my first NHPA winter officers meeting in Topeka, Kansas. The winter meeting is one of only two times (the World Tournament being the other) that the officers can get together face-to-face and discuss the amazing amount of NHPA business, our individual responsibilities, as well as the many and varied aspects concerning the looming World Tournament.

The spring and early summer involved the continued tweaking of the league software, the planning of the Sanctioned League Tournament, preparation for travel, and dealing with World Tournament problems, entering league data, and the never-ending job of shipping league patches. This, of course, brought me to the post office two or three times a week. I also finished my second draft of the re-write of the "Red Book," which should be ready early next year.

During this same time frame, I had to calculate the annual group of sanctioned league clubs (40) that earned five-year longevity awards. I contacted each club to find out if they wanted the award, made sure records were correct, then ordered and shipped the awards. It was also time to choose a "Director of the Year" and prepare background information for his/her ceremony presentation at the World Tournament.

July was World Tournament time ... an intense 21 days of travel and long days of working shifts, and pitching. The tournament takes an immense amount of work by many dedicated people. The NHPA officers and directors are constantly busy and the local organization is rushing toward the finish line of what was probably a two- or three-year endeavor. The Kansas group did an excellent job.

Returning home, I was bombarded by league results and patch requests. I averaged around six leagues a day and this upped my postal service. This pace continued until late October and I have now handled well over 260 leagues so far this year. We will end up with around 300 leagues for 2015, which requires 5,000 lines of data to be entered into the spreadsheet. I have also processed 11 new league applications and certificates this year.

The first weekend of October, I traveled to Wentzville, Missouri, to the NHPA's Hall of Fame and ran the National Sanctioned League Tournament involving 20 three-person teams.

Returning home once again, I found more and more league results, but the pace was slowing, so I decided the patch designs were a little stale after 30 or so years, and I redesigned the entire array of league patches for 2016. Only the undated "percent" patches

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

will stay the same. Next month, I will show off the new designs, which have all been ordered for 2016.

In November, I published the first preliminary [Top Ten list on the website](#) and am in the process of accepting scholarship applications.

I placed newer and better [league forms](#) on the website and hope to have better, more interactive ones up next year. In the next *Newsline*, I will discuss paperwork-related problems and try to better explain my expectations for Sanctioned League Directors.

That covers most of my first year, and I hope this helps explain why some errors were made and some emails were late or lost. Year Two will be better.

I want to thank Rob Hagman, David Sidles, the Snelgroves, and especially my wonderful wife Diane for all of their help. It's been a wild ride, but fun and interesting.

Achieving Perfection: Looking at Perfect Games

by [Mel Yockstick](#), NHPA Statistician

Sports can have perfect games. Walter Ray Williams, Jr. (Florida) has accomplished this in two sports: bowling and horseshoes. In bowling, his career consists of 105 perfect 300-games. Alan Francis (Ohio) tops the sport of horseshoe with a total of 18 perfect games. Walter Ray is second with 13 perfect games. For the Women's Division, Sue Snyder (Indiana) leads with eight perfect games, while Joan Elmore (Tennessee) comes in second with six perfects. Over the years, the NHPA has awarded a total of 168 Perfect Game patches.

The [NHPA website](#) has a list of players with two or more perfect games.

NHPA State Champions Listing Updated

by [Mel Yockstick](#), NHPA Statistician

With NHPA State Championship tournaments in the books, the records are also updated. On the NHPA website, you'll find a [revised list](#) of men with 10 wins or more, women with five wins or more, elders, boys, and girls with three or more, and cadets with two or more.

The following pitchers are new to the list in 2015:

Wins		Div.	State	First	Last
10	Dan Watson	Men's	Alabama	2006	2015
10	Charlie Meredith	Men's	Kentucky	1990	2015
5	Karen Wickham	Women's	Idaho	2009	2015
5	Terry Beagle	Women's	Michigan	2011	2015

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

5	Ruth Rife	Women's	Ohio	2005	2015
5	Tami Gilbert	Women's	Oregon	2003	2015
3	Roger Vogel	Elders'	Kansas	2013	2015
3	Bob Hudnall	Elders'	Kentucky	2012	2015
3	Tim Gilmore	Elders'	Louisiana	2012	2015
3	J.D. Drake	Elders'	Michigan	2013	2015
3	Gregg Craven	Elders'	Missouri	2011	2015
3	Don Branting	Elders'	Nebraska	2012	2015
3	Virgil Rife	Elders'	Ohio	2013	2015
3	Shirl Barney	Elders'	Utah	2013	2015
3	Hayden Lee	Boys'	California	2013	2015
3	Nathan Evers	Boys'	Missouri	2013	2015
3	Taylor Colie	Girls'	Georgia	2012	2015
3	Savanna Johnson	Girls'	Missouri	2013	2015
3	Jamine Knapp	Girls'	Ohio	2013	2015
3	Lexi Taylor	Girls'	Oklahoma	2011	2015
2	Malcolm Clark	Cadets'	Iowa	2013	2015
2	Luiso Molinasa	Cadets'	New Mexico	2014	2015
2	Cale Matlock	Cadets'	Oklahoma	2014	2015
2	Gus Clark	Cadets'	Oregon	2014	2015

Repairing the Brick Patio at the Hall of Fame

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

The Hall of Fame Facility has a project happening real soon: the straightening of some patio bricks that have heaved or sunk due to expansion and contraction of the soil in the winter time. The drainage from the grassy area will also be improved, so as not to let the water seep under the bricks. The Missouri charter's allotted brick area is full and they will expand into the red brick areas on either side. Some of the single bricks will be taken up and replaced by newly purchased large bricks. The contractor doing the work located a facility in Illinois that manufactures the bricks we used on the patio initially so it should be a perfect match. Extra large bricks will be purchased and kept on hand at the facility.

Bricks are still available for [purchase](#). A few years ago, I mentioned that we would NOT put a great emphasis on the state-by-state [ranking of contributions](#), but I would mention it occasionally. The list will be updated in late February as the totals are tallied. We keep this list to give us an idea of where to concentrate our efforts to expand NHPA members' knowledge about the NHPF.

NHPA Historian Bob Dunn has been cataloging all the bricks in the patio and will soon have an alphabetical list available online.

Bob has also been very active and ambitious, producing three books with historic data and memorabilia he's collected. The three books are available through [Bob directly](#). Once

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

printing costs are recovered, the remainder of the proceeds will go directly to the NHPA and NHPF. Besides making a great addition to your own horseshoe pitching library, they can be given away as awards, prizes or tournament raffles.

Finally, check out a [United States map](#) to see how close your World Tournament travels will take you to your Hall of Fame. If you go through St. Louis or thereabouts, Wentzville and the Hall of Fame are a mere 41 miles west on I-70. It's a must-see for any NHPA member on the way to, or returning from, Montgomery, Alabama.

Special Thanks to Our Donors

We express our sincere thanks to the following who have donated.

Donating \$10-95

Pacific Northwest HPA, Washington

Charles Bunner, West Virginia

Lawrence & Mary Figueira, Oregon (in memory of Ed Fogel)

Sodbusters Horseshoe Pitching Club, Vermont

Donating \$100-200

Bayou HPA, Louisiana

Nevada State Horseshoe Pitching

Joe Summers, California

Donating \$250-350

Missouri Horseshoe Pitchers Association (\$.50 per member annual donation)

Donating \$500-600

City of Bronson, Kansas (grant repayment)

Casey & Gail Sluys, California

Donating \$700-800

Anaconda Horseshoe Club, Montana (grant repayment)

Bricks Purchased By

Dan Lessman, Illinois

Austin Bailey, Illinois

Mike and Carol Dentsbier, Missouri

Allyson Craven, Missouri

Mary Jane Stanerson, Iowa

Jimmy Hinton, Indiana

Lions Park Horseshoe Club, Missouri

Nevada State Horseshoe Pitching

Perry Horseshoe Pitching Club, Georgia

Other Income

\$700 Rent, NHPA GRS

\$33 Merchandise Sales (NHPF)

Junior Profile: Tyler Howard

Kentucky Horseshoes to the Bone

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

Tyler Howard may look like your average 17-year-old senior from Richmond, Kentucky. He has played basketball for 15 years and has been bowling for eight years, the last two on his high school team. This young man, however, can pitch a horseshoe like it's second nature.

Tyler is in his senior year at Madison Central High School and attained a Junior Boys' World title this past summer in Topeka, Kansas. He has also won six Junior Boys' state titles and three Cadet state titles. Even with so much hardware, his friends still think they can beat him. That is, until they see him pitch. Then, they suddenly want to play another sport.

At only three years old, Tyler first saw his mother keeping score for a game of horseshoes, and then started throwing from 10 feet. As he started to get stronger, he was able to throw from 20 feet at five years old, and was able to compete in his first tournament.

Tyler practices every day for about an hour, when the weather permits, but amps it up to about three hours before a big tournament.

When asked about his hero, Tyler said, "My dad is my hero, as he has gotten me started in horseshoes and has helped along the way." You can't go one tournament without seeing his dad or both of his parents in the stands supporting and cheering him on.

With so much going for him, Tyler plans on continuing to pitch well after high school and into college. He loves the competition against other juniors, and is looking forward to defending his title in Montgomery, Alabama.

U.S. Congress Holds a Horseshoe Tournament

by [Bob Dunn](#), NHPA Historian

As we approach an election year, we probably will take a closer look at what our representatives in Congress are doing or not doing. If they held a horseshoe tournament, we might salute the effort and the promotion it brings to our sport, but it may seem unlikely that Congress would take on such an endeavor.

Well, Congress has taken on such an endeavor, but way back in 1930. The *Washington D.C. Evening Star* wonderfully covered the event. As you read through the coverage from 85 years ago, do note that the horseshoe pitching was noted as "the grand old sport." The sport certainly could be termed that today, but back at the time of the Congressional Tournament; the sport was barely 10 years old, unless they knew something that we are not aware of.

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

The newspaper gave complete and thorough coverage, but the event was carried live on the radio nationally, by the National Broadcasting Company, a company known to us today as NBC.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO HOLD HORSESHOE PITCHING CONTEST

Tilson-Garner Match to Be Test of Straight-to-Mark and Free-Style School of Thought

Distinguished members of the House and Senate are giving serious attention to a matter which lies close to the hearts of the rank and file of this nation.

It has nothing to do with sliding scales, naval pacts or dial telephones, yet at certain seasons of the year it lies uppermost in the minds of men in every village, hamlet and town in the country.

Briefly, it concerns the intricacies of "throwing a ringer," or, if perfection cannot be obtained, at least a "leaner."

To be more explicit, the Senators and Representatives with a taste for homely sports could not wait for the Star's annual National Capital horseshoe pitching tournament, so they have arranged for a little contest of their own.

It is to be known as the first congressional horseshoe tournament and will be held in Griffith Stadium from 11 o'clock until 12 noon next Friday. Radio announcers will be stationed on the sidelines to keep the folks back home posted on the skill of their Representative in Congress. The National Broadcasting Companies will carry the contest throughout the country.

It is to be a three-way tournament, between members of the Senate and House and members of the "Little Congress," comprising of secretaries to members.

The feature of the day is the proposed match between Representative John Q. Tilson of Connecticut, Republican floor leader, and Representative John N. Garner of Texas, leader of the Democratic side.

The media coverage continued to be intense, as this event most certainly was aiding the NHPA's efforts to promote the sport. This next article appeared in the May 27th Evening Star:

LAWMAKERS STAGE HORSESHOE DEBATE

Members of Congress From Three States Clash on Way to Pitch

In the cloak room of the House of Representatives - Clyde Kelly from Pennsylvania, with heat - I assure you the gentleman from Florida is all wrong on this question.

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

R.A. Green, from Florida, softly – Perhaps so, perhaps so, but that’s the way we have always done it down in my country.

Edward E. Browne, from Wisconsin – Gentlemen, I believe you’re both wrong. Here, let me show you! And Mr. Browne, as though to settle conclusively a debate that threatens to steal the congressional show, took from the hands of Mr. Green a – Horseshoe!

Illustrates Best Method

“This,” declared the gentleman from Wisconsin, “is the most approved manner of pitching a horseshoe.” And he grasped the iron slipper halfway between the toe and the heel and made a feint to throw it down the corridor.

And so progressed today, an argument unique in the annals of Congress. Subject: The surest method of wrapping 2½ pounds of semi-circular iron around a peg 40 feet distant.

The question will be settled definitely perhaps tomorrow, Thursday and Friday, when more than a score of Senators and Representatives engage in a tournament to determine the champion horseshoe pitcher of Congress.

Courts have been laid out on a plot near the House Office Building and the first match will be played tomorrow morning. When the competition has been narrowed to four senators and four Representatives the scene of action will be shifted to Griffith Park.

Here, from 11 a.m. to noon, will take place something new in the history of the grand old game of barnyard golf. For the first time a horseshoe pitching match will be broadcast. The National Broadcasting Company, with all its stations tuned in, will have an announcer at each peg. The United States Navy Band will take over the mikes during lulls in the battle.

While the legislators are having it out, their secretaries and other members of their staffs will play for the championship of the “Little Congress.”

Entries are pouring in today. Jim Preston, in charge of the Senate press gallery, will handle details of the Senator’s section of the tournament and L.M. Hopping, secretary to Representative McLeod of Michigan, will manage the Representatives event. Judge for the finals will be named later.

Due to much activity in the Senate and consequent uncertainty as to which of the horseshoe pitching members of that august body would be free to take part in the tournament. Preston wasn’t able today to give a definite entry list. He was confident, however, that the Senate would put up a fight with the House for the title.

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

The following Representatives had given their names to Hopping: Republicans – Fred D. Johnson, Nebraska; E.M. Irvin, Illinois; Homer W. Hall, Illinois; Roy O. Fitzgerald, Ohio; Carl G. Bachman, West Virginia; Thomas Hall, North Dakota; Clyde Kelly, Pennsylvania; William E. Hess, Ohio; Richard N. Elliott, Indiana; Fred A. Hartley, Jr., New Jersey; Leonidas C. Dyer, Missouri; John L. Cable, Ohio and Arthur M. Free, California.

Democrats – R.A. Green, Florida; W.W. Arnold, Illinois; Henry T. Rainy, Illinois; M.C. Tarver, Georgia; Thomas MacMillan, South Carolina; Louis Ludlow, Indiana; W.A. Ayers, Kansas; Arthur Greenwood, Indiana; Hatton W. Summers, Texas and Gwynn Williams, Texas.

The battle began and the Evening Star covered the action.

HORSESHOE PITCHERS BATTLE FOR CONGRESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Representatives Open Tourney With 17 Matches Scheduled Today

Senators to Play Preliminaries Tomorrow

While vacation-hungry Senators continued strife over the tariff today, warfare of a vastly different nature occupied members of the House. Party lines were withdrawn and policies forgotten as staid legislators went about the business of determining a horseshoe pitching champion of Congress.

The battle opened at 10 o'clock this morning on courts pitched on a lot near the main entrance to the House Office Building. It appeared likely that play would continue until darkness, with 17 first-round matches scheduled for the Representatives and many more for the members of the "Little Congress," composed of secretaries and other Capitol employees.

Tomorrow the Senators will play their preliminaries to determine the quartet that will have it out in a grand finale with the House's four best Friday at Griffith Stadium. The National Broadcasting Company, with a full chain hooked up, will broadcast the first barnyard golf show ever put on the air. It will start at 11 a.m.

One of the feature matches listed for today was to bring together two "big shots" of the House, the Republican floor leader, Representative John. Tilson and the minority leader, Representative John N. Garner of Texas.

Representative Clyde Kelly of Pennsylvania was one of the championship favorites. Several years ago Representative Kelly took first place honors in a horseshoe pitching tournament at Kansas City, held in connection with a national postal convention. In the final match he vanquished a player who held the mailmen's championship of four states. A belt emblematic of his triumph adorns his office on the hill.

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

The Senate will have a strong contender in Senator John M. Robsion of Kentucky. Senator Robsion proved his mettle as a horseshoe pitcher at the recent outing of the Board of Trade.

HORSESHOE FINALS PLAYED TOMORROW

Ashurst and McLeod will Broadcast Congressional Contest

Had they not more or less gifted orators, Senators Henry F. Ashurst of Arizona and Representative Clarence J. McLeod of Michigan probably wouldn't be Congressmen. But whatever is theirs to command in the way of word juggling may be put to a stiff test tomorrow when they become the radio horseshoe pitching reporters in history.

Senator Ashurst noted as an orator and Representative McLeod, a droll fellow on occasions, today accepted posts as guest announcers for the grand finale of the congressional barnyard golf championships to be played at Griffith Stadium tomorrow 11 a.m. to noon.

Four Senators and four Representatives will be engaged in the finale and there may be a special match between a Republican and Democratic leader. There will be no charge for admission and the committee in charge has extended an invitation to the public which doubtless will find plenty of cause to "palpitate."

And the champion is announced!

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON OF NEBRASKA WINS CONGRESS HORSESHOE PITCHING CHAMPIONSHIP

The title of "Champion Horseshoe Pitcher of Congress" was won today by Representative Fred G. Johnson, Republican, of Nebraska, who defeated Representative Albert H. Vestal, Republican, of Indiana, by the score of 21 to 20, in the first Congressional horseshoe tournament, held in the Griffith Stadium. Several Senators who were to participate failed to show up and were ruled out by default. The final matches were played between four members of the House.

Three matches were held and in the first two Representative Vestal defeated Representative Letts, Republican of Iowa, by a score of 22 to 10 and Representative Johnson defeated Representative McMillian, Democrat of South Carolina, 21 to 10.

When the final match between Vestal and Johnson got under way, it looked like an easy victory for Vestal. From the start Vestal was far in the lead and at the ninth inning Vestal had 13 points to Johnson's three.

On the tenth inning, Johnson threw a ringer for three points and on the next round pitched another ringer. From then on the match became close, Johnson gradually increasing his score and cutting down Vestal's lead. After 20 innings with the score

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

see-sawing in favor of one or the other, the score stood 20 to 20. Johnson then scored another point, which gave him the match.

The winner received a set of silver-plated horseshoes in a leather case. Mr. Vestal had to be content with a pair of horseshoes in a case. Both winner and runner-up later spoke over the radio, giving their versions of the match.

Senator Barkley, Democrat of Kentucky and Representative McLeod, Republican of Michigan, were "guest announcers" for the National Broadcasting Company, which broadcast the contest. Oliver Owen Kuhn, Managing Editor of the Washington Star, was master of ceremonies. The United States Navy Band played popular tunes during the matches.

Horseshoe Pitching Facts & Folklore

Hall of Fame Members Profiled (Continued)

by [Bob Dunn](#), NHPA Historian

This issue will continue to review Hall of Fame inductees from years past:

Leland Mortenson of Des Moines, Iowa, became connected with the game and the NHPA back in 1921 and soon made his mark as a promoter, organizer, and director of big tournaments. He also became the recognized historian of the game in the early years, and his articles and writings have enabled the organization to keep track of events and personalities of the sport of the early years, which would have otherwise been lost. For 35 of their 42-year existence, he was superintendent of horseshoe pitching tournaments at the large Iowa State Fair. And when the NHPA was unable to hold official World Tournaments in the years 1936-1939, he organized, promoted and conducted the annual Midwest National in Des Moines. These tournaments were, in every respect, true World Tournaments except for the official sanction. The events provided focus and prestige for the game, which was vitally necessary and enabled the national association to continue. Leland was inducted to the Hall of Fame in 1971. Leland Mortenson passed away October 15, 1978 at age 72.

John Gordon, California, is best known for designing and manufacturing the Gordon Spin-On Horseshoe, which was a highly popular choice of shoe by tournaments pitchers for over 70 years. John Gordon received a patent for his design on November 7, 1933, although the shoe hit the market in 1931, and remained a favorite shoe of many pitchers right into the 21st century. John, a fixture at World Tournaments for three decades, is one of the all-time great personalities of the sport and was recognized as a great promoter and sponsor of tournaments and horseshoe clubs. He was inducted to the Hall of Fame in 1971. John Gordon died January 12, 1959.

George May was a fireman and lived in Akron, Ohio. He won Men's World Championships in 1920w and 1923s. He was the first pitcher to average 50 percent in a World Tournament and is one of several pitchers that are credited with developing the "open shoe." He pitched

NEWSLINE Text

published January-February 2016

National Standard shoes, which were a very popular horseshoe patterned after the George May design, which was patent approved on April 24, 1923. George May was inducted to the Hall of Fame in 1972.

Ralph Forsstrom of Hampden, Massachusetts, was an organizer and promoter of the game in the New England area for over 50 years and served as secretary of the Massachusetts State Association for many years, being instrumental in keeping the game going during the lean years. He served as a regional director and on the NHPA Hall of Fame Committee. He was president and director of the Forest Park Club from 1934 to 1943. He directed the Western Massachusetts and New England meets and helped run the World Tournament when it was held in Keene, New Hampshire, in 1965 and again in 1968. Ralph also assisted at the 1972 World Tournament at Greenville, Ohio, and was inducted to the Hall of Fame in 1972. Ralph Forsstrom passed away April 30, 1985, at age 75.

Dale Dixon of Des Moines, Iowa, qualified for the Men's Championship Class 22 times, accumulating 312 wins, which still ranks 21st on the World Tournament All-Time Wins List, and 12 times he averaged over 70 percent ringers. His best finish was sixth place in 1946 on a 16-7 record. Dale won 11 Iowa state championships. He was elected NHPA President in 1953 and served one term. He designed and manufactured the Dixon Victory pitching shoe, and designed and sold portable courts. Dale was inducted to the Hall of Fame in 1973. Dale Dixon passed away December 4, 1992, at age 85.