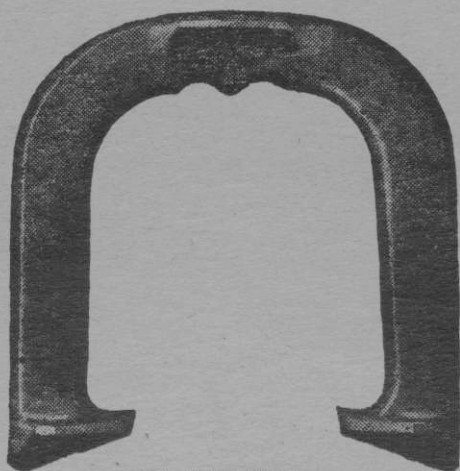


THE HORSESHOE PITCHER

Official Organ of
**The National Horseshoe Pitchers Association
of America**



THE OHIO SHOE

JANUARY, 1952

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EDITORIAL

Many horseshoe clubs and organizations hold their yearly meetings around this time of the year to plan their tournaments and schedules for the coming Summer season. To all of those who do, I want to remind you to send me a copy of your plans and schedules so they can be listed in The Horseshoe Pitcher under "Coming Events." Another suggestion—how about planning to give a few subscriptions to this magazine as tournament prizes? Many of the clubs last year did this and expect to do it again this year. Sure, it will help me but it will also help to popularize the game.

To all those who so kindly remembered me with their good wishes for the holidays I want to thank each and every one of you. Here's hoping you will have the best year of your lives in 1952.

Your Editor, JAKE.

* * *

"I GET IDEAS" ON PITCHING HORSESHOES

By Charley Gerrish

Open Shoe—Probably nine-tenths of making a ringer is to have an Open Shoe, so to do good pitching it is necessary to throw "open shoes" consistently. The short cut to ringers for any player, new or old, is to adopt the $1\frac{3}{4}$ turn or the $1\frac{1}{4}$ turn of the shoe and discard the use of any other turn. Novice players will do well to take right up with the $1\frac{3}{4}$ turn. Anyone used to the $1\frac{1}{4}$ turn can stay with it, or take the $1\frac{3}{4}$ turn any time it seems easier or better. The writer pitched the $1\frac{1}{4}$ for twenty years, then improved his game in a year with the $1\frac{3}{4}$ turn. The $1\frac{3}{4}$ turn keeps to its course better when under difficulties such as wind, rain, etc. It is an interesting turn, not as monotonous as the $1\frac{1}{4}$ turn. It may be startling to say that the Open Shoe at the stake is about 13 inches wide, with modern designed horseshoes. If you don't believe this, try placing a coin on the floor to represent the stake, and place

two horseshoes right and left of the "stake" so each if forced ahead would just slip on the stake, then measure across nearly 14 inches of actual shoe's access to ringing the stake.

Direction—The right direction or aim, so to line the throw to the stake, is of course also necessary in making a ringer. This comes through practice, and a balanced form of Step and Swing. Proper Diet may have a bearing to help one's aim. The direction skill in horseshoes is about the tightest of any manual sport. A baseball pitcher has about one and one-half feet of plate to get over, and three feet up and down to satisfy the umpire. Tennis has wide spaces to hit. Bowling comes the nearest to horseshoes perhaps in requirement for good aim.

Distance—The third thing necessary for a ringer is the right distance. These are the big three for the ringer maker: Open shoe, Direction and Distance. A multitude of muscles must coordinate in the continual control of these things, and the eye and mind also have to concentrate on the effort required to keep carrying on in ringer ability. Accuracy on distance is attained through sufficient practice.

Grip—The Grip on the shoe is perhaps not important, though some players may have other ideas on this detail. New and old players usually seem quite interested in the grip of a good pitcher. But we doubt if anyone can adopt another's hold on the shoe. Each one's hand and fingers seem to have to find a suitable grip and place on the shoe. Some fellows advocate a snug grip. Others spread fingers wide open over one prong of the shoe. Probably the only wrong grip is the one with the forefinger curled over the point of the heel prong. This ancient grasp was used on Dobbin's old holey cast-offs of the fringed buggy days.

Swing—The writer thinks that almost every pitcher can improve his swing. Elbow bending seems faulty and unnecessary, yet nearly everyone does it. This complicates things, when it seems reasonable that simplicity is always better. The plain and easiest way must be no doubt the best way. A good swing which is very important for steadiness in shoe control can be carried thru in a relaxed smooth way as follows: The start of the swing is with the arm hanging easily at full length with shoe in hand about a foot to rear of the leg; then arm kept at length is brought up front to perhaps a foot from vertical above the head before any step is made; next the full

length arm is fall-swept down in front and into the back swing with any comfortable or preferred body bend; after the completion of the back swing the long arm is brought forward for the toss of the shoe in unison with the forward step. A natural "follow through" of the arm will result. Is here any better or easier swing? The arm roll in the swing gives the shoe turn, rather than a wrist snap doing it; thus—keep shoe edgewise or vertical to the ground until end of the back swing, after which the arm is gradually turned or "rolled" until shoe is "flat" at release.

Step—We believe the step can be quite a scientific matter. Perhaps the latest and best idea is that the left foot should be placed about a half-foot back of the right one at the start of each pitch for a right-hander, with all of one's weight balanced on his right foot. The left foot to rear proves better to face or front one squarely to the objective stake. The placed weight always gives poise so one does not roll to one side or lose balance. The step forward with the left foot is then the simple matter of keeping within the 3-foot limit the rules allow. A slight bend of the knee (not a deep bend) is a good custom to develop, as this helps lift the shoe and saves effort in the swing. Keep the back foot or toe in ground contact even after the last shoe.

Break—Some have made quite an issue of what is called the "Break" of the shoe in its flight. The theory being that the shoe can be made to have a jerky series of turns and stops in its trajectory. We tend to question this theory. For example, a flat projected shoe may seem to turn steadily enough, while the "wobbled" shoe may appear to stop and turn on its way. We believe this latter aspect is a delusion. One can realize with a bit of thought that a shoe must do its revolving pretty uniformly in the short space of forty feet. A ballistics informant also assures that the only resistant to a projectile's turning is that of air. Of course air friction is negligible against a 2½ pound steel shoe rotating for forty feet. The shoe "staying open for three feet" from and into the stake, is not all imagination. Here is mathematically why: Nearly 7 inches of the modern horseshoe with inclined heel ends is "open" to ringer access onto the stake, though the actual opening of the shoe may be less than 3½ inches. In turning $1\frac{3}{4}$ times, any point on the shoe takes 40 divided by $1\frac{3}{4}$, or about 23 feet for one rotation. Calling the "open access" 6 inches, would mean that $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the shoe is "open" during one turn, so $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of 23 feet would mean the shoe is "accessibly" open for

some 6 to 8 feet going into the peg. Indeed it is possible that the shoe is "Open" for an approach of twice that distance, say 12 to 15 feet, as it has ringer access from the most left to the most right side of the shoe, a revolving opening of over a foot.

Height—Playing form, fatigue and wind effects are concerns that have to do with horseshoe height. The best regarded height is from 7 to 12 feet above ground at the half-way top point of the shoe's flight. This is good for loose easy form. Ease of form of course helps in steadiness and endurance of the player. Call eight feet high as about ideal. A low thrown shoe is a swift one. Its faults includes flying off the stake, knocking off one's own previous ringer, a tendency to bounce away from the stake when not put on, tightness of the pitcher and a wrenching of the body so to cause undue fatigue and early tiring. It makes sore fingers more than does the high softly thrown shoe. A high shoe is a soft one, a good form. One that is too high however, is affected or turned by strong winds. The slowly turned shoe, such as $\frac{3}{4}$ or even $1\frac{1}{4}$, has the failing also of being upset by wind. The $1\frac{3}{4}$ has good effect in keeping to its course in the wind. The high shoe has the virtue of taking less physical effort than the low swift one. We tend to fear a high shoe will go over the peg. So everyone "fights" against tossing too low. A high shoe is as easy to aim and line up, though one tends to think not. It can drop over the top of the peg too for a ringer whether "open" or not, where a too low shoe cannot do this. One's distance is as good with the high shoe as with the low. The ringer possibility being better proves that one should cultivate and favor using the high shoe. A good height training method is to use a propped up ladder about 6 feet tall, or something else for a height to toss over, such as stretched rope at least 6 feet high. Clear this about two feet. You'll be surprised how well you can get over such a barrier. You might say it helps your highness.

Diet—Some pitchers may feel at first to deride the idea of any diet benefit for the game. But if the football game and other sports need the training table, then the exacting accuracy of horseshoe pitching would be helped by it. One world's champion has advised dispensing with tea and coffee. Doubtless he would bar some other kinds of drink also. Can anyone tell the effects of liquor? Fried foods and pastries are barred from football and other athletic diets, so it would likely help a devotee of the horseshoe game to abstain from such foods for the sake of his ability.

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Practice—Not the least need of any game's gain in skill is that of faithful practice. Practice gives a large measure of steadiness and the build-up of a coordinating system of muscles. In solo practice one can especially study to correct defects, and try out different grips, bends, turns of shoe, theories or whatever. The real practice for meeting tournament competition though, comes almost wholly by playing against good opposition. Lone playing practice can help one make a good score in the 100-shoe qualifying method used too much to decide finalists for many tourneys. Before a meet, for two weeks or more, a player can strengthen and besteady his game by two to six hours of daily practice. Of course ringer percentage can be increased at any time by this devotion of time and perspiration to the sport. One probably cannot practice the many skills he would like to gain, all at once. Take up one or two things at a time, such as the arm-roll part of the swing, or the stance and step.

Solitaire Practice—Every one knows that lone practice inclines to dullness, but there are various ways to have interesting solitary play. Two pairs of shoes may be played against each other in regular game fashion to 50-point score. If painted different colors the shoes are easy to distinguish. This 4-shoe throwing doubles the pitching you do in a game against an opponent when you use two shoes. I remember Jimmy Risk using 6 shoes for his solo practice, so his walking and time was cut to one-third of the same shoes pitched if using two shoes. And Stan DeLeary told me he used eight shoes, though I don't know how he could hold so many. Perhaps he picked up four at a time. This multiple shoe tossing is extra helpful for training one to keep that back toe from lifting after each pitch, so one's feet settle right back into proper position. An excellent 2-shoe workout against "tough opposition" when alone, is to put a ringer and close shoe at each stake as dummy opponents, and play for 50 points against those potential four points in your way all the time. It takes better than 50 per cent pitching of course to defeat the dummies. (This actually takes 6 shoes, as 4 are on the ground all the time.) Another "opposition" drill is to score ringers against non-ringers, counting one point to each, for a total of 100 shoes or points, using any number of shoes. This tells your percentage work without scorekeeper, as for example 60 R. to 40 non-R shows a 60 per cent grade. This R. per 100 S. scheme is extra good exercise to get ready for the preliminary tournament Qualifying, being used so much in recent years.

The above has been an array of ideas by one player, we hope helpful to at least some pitchers. Other players may have better ideas on any of these matters, such as Grip or Practice Stunts for example, that will prove such to be of far more importance than brought out in this essay, so why not write in to Jake about it. Such information can greatly help certain pitchers. If you know something good, don't keep it a secret, but offer it to others. And this kind of material will help get subscribers to The Horseshoe Pitcher.

* * *

NEW JERSEY

By Doc Sol Berman

In the July 1949 issue of The Horseshoe Pitcher, Roy W. Smith had an article entitled "Some Questions and Answers." Quoting "Here is another question a lot of fellows have asked me: Why hasn't a left handed or "south paw" pitcher ever won the World's Title? *Answer:* The one and only reason why a left hander may not win the title is because he is usually more nervous and high strung than a right hander. While the heart is almost in the center of the chest, the lower tip is nearer the left hand side. A person who throws or otherwise employs his left hand more than his right, gradually builds up and enlarges the muscles around his heart. This may cause his heart to work harder, increase his blood pressure and affect his nerves. In other words, he has to exert himself more than a right handed man. A right hander, stepping ahead with his right foot, does the same thing because it throws him into a contortion and cuts down his endurance by affecting his spinal nerves in the region of the pelvis. There are reasons for all things, if we can find them. Perhaps some of the other readers have better answers to these questions than I have set forth. These are only my own opinions and I could be wrong. However, if I can help those with questions that are bothering them, I will be most happy to do so if they will send them to Jake so that he can publish them in The Horseshoe Pitcher." The Good Book says "come let us reason together" and "the truth shall make us free," so let's practice the Golden Rule and help each other all we can. If we will all do this, our sport is bound to go places."

The answer to this question is probably the same as that proposed by experts as to why we have so few left handed tennis and bowling champs. They state that there are probably thirty or forty times as many right handed athletes in

these sports than there are left handers. Thus, you will have thirty to forty times as many right handed champs. Baseball is probably an exception since more athletes playing baseball make an effort to become left handed batters and pitchers, short right field, etc. In golf, many natural left handers switch to right since golf courses are set up to favor right handed players. The World Championship in horseshoes has been held by two men in the past fifteen years or so. The chances of a left hander being champ is thus quite small. In the 1951 championship games there were, I believe, two left handed players. Thus, the odds were eighteen to one.

While I'm in the writing mood, I'll get back to my old subject, the National Tournament. I've read several statements made in various recent copies of The Horseshoe Pitcher concerning the "B" tournament in Utah. They all stated that it was very nice but not quite like playing in the "A" tournament, or in other words, better than nothing.

There were thirty-six in Class "A" and twenty-four in Class "B", a total of sixty. Why not put all sixty in Class "A", thirty in each group? All the odd number qualifiers in one group and the even numbers in the other group. All players would then pitch twenty-nine games. The top six in each group would play in the final games. They play the top six of the other group or a total of thirty-five games as they have done in the past. The final day would thus be of great importance and much greater spectator interest; also publicity. This plan would surely make sixty happy players to pitch in the World Tournament.

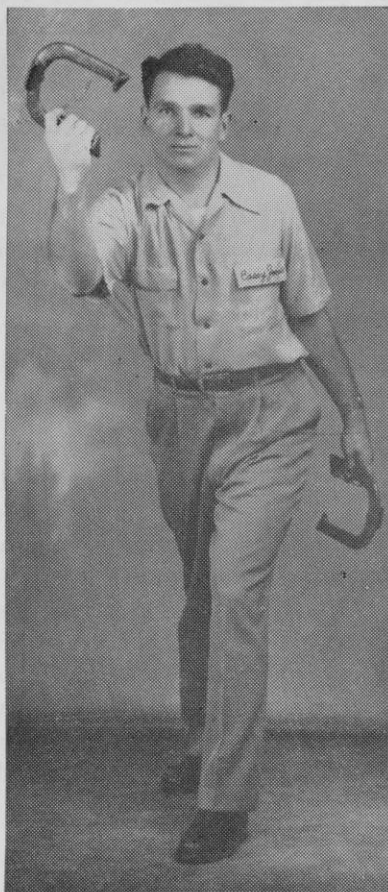
* * *

NEW YORK DAILY MIRROR HORSESHOE TOURNAMENT

In an amazing display of accurate horseshoe pitching, Anthony Brennan 16, of Brooklyn, and Joseph Zichella, 40, of the Bronx, captured Greater New York's highest honors in the junior and senior division of the Mirror-Parks Department's popular tournament.

Zichella, the defending champ, set a new tourney record by flipping 16 straight ringers while retaining the senior crown for the third year. A large assembly gathered, despite the overcast day, at Heckscher's courts in Central Park to see eight contenders pitch for the coveted titles. The competitors were survivors of a record 2,302 entries.

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"CASEY" JONES champion horseshoe pitcher and holder of two great world's records (87½% ringers and 13 games of 90% and over in the Milwaukee National tournament), says, "I changed to OHIO shoes in 1948 and increased my ringer average over 5%. OHIO shoes are well balanced and stay on the stake. I recommend them to beginners and all players who want to improve their game."

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Brennan vanquished Alvin Winter, of the Bronx, 50—24, Mickey Spotto, also of the Bronx, 50—8 and Brooklyn's Albert Raya, 50—11. All the juniors are 16 years old.

Zichella was decisive with his deadly tosses. The New York City Housing employee easily stopped Manhattan's Ted Penridge and Owen Farmer by identical 50—17 tallies before tripping Brooklyn's Joseph Virga, 50—18. Penridge took runner-up honors by repulsing Virga, 50—28, and Farmer, 50—26.

Brennan and Zichella, and each of the three runners-up received handsome 17-jewel Benrus wrist watches from the Mirror. The presentations were made by Mel Daus, Manhattan Ass't Supervisor of Recreation.

* * *

PENNSYLVANIA

The Pennsylvania State Farmer's Horseshoe Tournament for 1952 will again be held on Thursday evening, January 19. This tournament is held every year to pick a State Champion among the farmers of Pennsylvania. Harold Clippinger, State winner in 1950, will be the entry sent by his County to try for his second attempt to win the title. Clippinger is the nephew of John Fulton who won the title in 1936, 38, 40, 47, 49 and 51. He says the way things shape up now, it looks as if Harold will again grab off the 1952 title. Fulton intends to warm up with him in early January to help him get into shape. Fulton will cover the tournament and we will have details of it in the February issue.

* * *

JAKE'S JOTTINGS

Our Canadian friend, Harold Blackman, of Toronto, wants to know if it would be possible to have a few of you folks outline how they operate their League play and how the handicap system works. He says they have been operating a league in Canada consisting of a four man team from their various clubs but thinks it could be improved on. A few ideas



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might help. Here's hoping for a good 1952 for all the players, organizers and those interested in the good old game of horseshoes.

* * *

John Fulton, former Pennsylvania champion, went hunting on the opening day of the season and bagged a fine six point buck and on the same day caught twenty-three muskrats and two raccons! Another well known pitcher, Raymond Frye, of Virginia, got a fine eight point buck for himself. Good hunting, what?

* * *

Now is the time to pay your dues to the National Horseshoe Pitchers Association for 1952. The members of the Empire State Branch can send their one dollar to the Secy.-Treas., George Hart, 559 W. 191st Street, New York, N. Y.

* * *

You can't pitch horseshoes in the Winter but you can read up on it during those cold months. Send in your ideas, suggestions or pet peeves and let the other fellow hear about them.

* * *

Did you move? If you did, send me your new address, because the P. O. Dept. does not forward this class of mail. Lots of magazines are returned to me each month because of this reason.

* * *

Joe Zichella had his picture in the New York Daily Mirror recently, not for pitching horseshoes but for a much nobler deed, donating his blood to the Red Cross. How about the rest of you doing the same thing. Our soldiers NEED your blood.

* * *

Why don't you ask some of your horseshoe pitching friends to subscribe to The Horseshoe Pitcher? If you like this magazine just try to get one subscriber, we can't exist without subscribers. Thanks!

* * *

PRESIDENTIAL POETRY

By Louis Dean

'Twas the night before tournament
And all through the stands
Not a person was stirring
Not a boy or a man
Most fellows had qualified
Slowly, with care,
Their fingers were crossed
Wanting ringers to spare
Some pitchers were bragging
Of all their "four deads"
And visions of prize money
Danced through their heads
The "mike," manned by Archie
Kate out of her mid
Then all settled down
For the long five day grind!
When out of the stands
There rose such a chatter
I sprang from my seat

Wond'ring what was the matter?
I glanced 'cross the courts
As quick as a flash
And lit on a stranger
Who made quite a splash
Shining down on the asphalt
The lights all aglow,
Gave luster of mid-day
To pitchers, below
When, what to my staring eyes
Should appear
But this strange horseshoe pitcher
With all of his gear.

He picked up his shoes
Very quickly, the scamp
Then I knew that he was
The Canadian Champ
Then fast as could be

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His pitches they came
He walked just as fast
As he practiced his game
As dry leaves before
The hurricane fly
His horseshoes came floating
Like clouds through the sky
And all through the stands
The whispering flew
He's a ninety percenter
And he'll win this too.

'Twas then that I heard
Some gallery goof
Shout out "let's go Mac
You're ninety proof"
Mac started sweating
From his head to his foot
He was off to his task
Over anxious galloot
He straightened his stance
And then bowed his back
And his first shoe
Hit the peg with a smack
His eyes, how they twinkled
His dimples, how merry
His cheeks were all rosy
As red as a berry
His fine chiseled mouth
Was drawn like a bow
He looked like a champ
And a really good Joe

But right from the start
He was gritting his teeth
The sweat beads were popping
Like drops on a leaf
His face lost its smile
And he pulled in his belly
His pitching arm shook
Like a bowl full of jelly
His shoes missed the peg
As he tried for control
He seemed to be pitching
Himself in a hole
My neighbor's eye winked
And then to me said
He's got the buck
He's nothing to dread
But Mac went on trying
Kept on with his work
Though he missed lots of shoes
(You could see his arm jerk)
And using his sleeve
To wipe sweat from his nose
He kept pumping away
And soon there arose
A murmur that gradually
Grew to a whistle
Mac was losing the buck
Pitching smooth as a thistle
But I heard him exclaim
As the end was in sight
I barely qualified
Gee, what a fright!

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ARIZONA—Casa Grande Park, Casa Grande; Rendesvous Park, Mesa; Encanto Park, Phoenix.

ARKANSAS—Fair Park, Boyle Park, MacArthur Park, Little Rock.

CALIFORNIA—Community Center, Compton; Exposition Park, Los Angeles; Union Pacific Courts, Long Beach; Mosswood Park, Oakland; Golden Gate Courts, San Francisco; Candlestick Cove, Lincon Park, Santa Monica; Crocker-Amazon Courts, San Francisco; McNear Park, Petaluma; Ives Memorial Park, Sebastopol.

CANADA—Dieppe Park, East York.

COLORADO—City Park and Washington Park, Denver; City Park, Greeley.

CONNECTICUT—Beardsley Park, Bridgeport; Pope Park, Hartford.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA—Commerce Courts, Washington.

FLORIDA—South Waterfront Park, St. Petersburg.

ILLINOIS—Welles Park, Chicago; Athletic Park, Canton; Riverside Park, Moline; Mineral Springs Park, Pekin; Reservoir Park, Quincy; Long View Park, Rock Island.

INDIANA—Brooks Park, Indianapolis; Dorner Park, Frankfort; Columbia Park, Lafayette; Forest Park, Noblesville.

IOWA—Birdland Park, Des Moines; Riverside Park, Ottumwa; Crapo Park, Burlington; Island Park, Cedar Falls; Ellis Park, Cedar Rapids; LeClaire Park, Davenport.

KANSAS—Forest Park, Ottawa; Gage Park, Topeka.

KENTUCKY—Shady Shores, Covington.

MAINE—Auburn, Riverside Courts, Bangor; Bangor Club, Farmington; City Park, Hebron; Community Courts, Portland; Deering Oaks, Rumford; High School, So. Portland; Wilkinson Park.

MARYLAND—Carroll Park, Baltimore; Magruder Park, Hyattsville.

MASSACHUSETTS—Municipal Playgrounds, Westfield.

MICHIGAN—Grand Rapids, Franklin Park.

MINNESOTA—Como & Elfelt, St. Paul; Soldier Memorial Field, Rochester.

MISSOURI—Municipal Park, Carthage; Neosho, Fair Grounds, Springfield; Grant Beach Park.

NEBRASKA—Harmon Park, Kearney.

NEW HAMPSHIRE—South Playground, Portsmouth; Ryan H. S. Club, Dover Point; Poy Ryans, 14 Central Ave., Portsmouth.

NEW JERSEY—Warinanco Park, Elizabeth; Branch Brook Park, Newark; Wildwood, Beach Park.

NEW YORK—Central Park, Inwood Hill Park, New York City; St. Mary's Park, Williamsbridge Oval Park, Woodlawn, Van Cortlandt Park, all in the Bronx; Parade Grounds, Fort Greene Park, Brooklyn; Belmont Lake State Park, Babylon, L. I.; Kirk Park, Syracuse.

OHIO—Jermain Park, Toledo; Cedar Point, Sandusky; Williams Memorial Pk., Wilmington.

OREGON—Laurelhurst Park, Portland.

PENNSYLVANIA—District Courts, Pittsburgh; Pt. Marion, Frank Murphy's Courts; Joe Mett's Courts, Revere; Oakhurst Courts, Johnstown.

RHODE ISLAND—Athletic Field, West Warwick; Scharfner's Courts, Hamilton.

UTAH—County Fair Grounds, Murray; Liberty Park, Salt Lake City.

VERMONT—Stolte Field, Brattleboro; Memorial Park, Bennington; Ethan Allen Park, Burlington; Local Athletic Field, Springfield.

WASHINGTON—Zelasko Park, Aberdeen; City Park, Bremerton; Woodland Park, Seattle; Wright Park, Tacoma; Fair Grounds, Yakima.

WEST VIRGINIA—Bar B-Q Courts, East Nitro.

WISCONSIN—Washington Park, Milwaukee.

WYOMING—Union Park, Cheyenne.

IF YOU ARE NOT LISTED HERE, GET BUSY!