

# HORSESHOE STUDY GUIDE

## NATURE AND PURPOSE

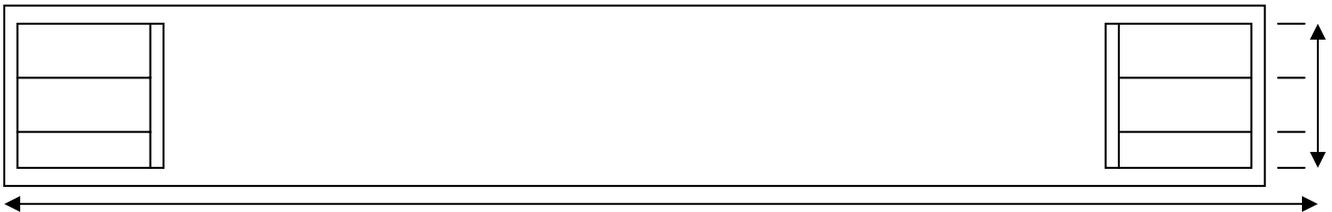
Horseshoe pitching has been popular for a long time both as a recreational and competitive sport. The formation of the NATIONAL HORSESHOE PITCHERS ASSOCIATION in 1921 has given rise to chapters in nearly every state as well as Canada. The N H PA sanctions local and regional meets for men, women, boys, and girls. A world tournament is held each year for Men and Women while a Junior Boys and Junior Girls World Champion is also decided.

The game is played by pitching horseshoes toward a metal stake some 40 feet for Men's competition and 30 feet for Women and Juniors. Points are scored for shoes landing closest to the stake, providing the shoe is not farther than 6 inches from the stake. A ringer (shoe which encircles stake) counts 3 points. The winner is the player who first scores 21 points (informal play) or 25 innings (official tournament competition.) Players shall alternate the first pitch, with the player having first pitch in the even innings, and the other in the odd number innings. In singles play the players move from stake to stake after each throw, but in doubles one partner is stationed at each stake and makes all throws from there.

## PLAYING AREA AND EQUIPMENT

**THE COURT:** The official horseshoe court (see figure) is 50 x 10 feet with one-inch metal stakes placed 40 feet apart or 30 feet apart. The stakes are centered in a 6 x 6 foot pitchers box.

**HORSESHOES:** An official shoe should not exceed 7 1/4 inches in width and 7 5/8 inches in length, and should weight no more than 2 pounds 10 ounces. The opening can be no more than 3 1/2 inches from point to point.

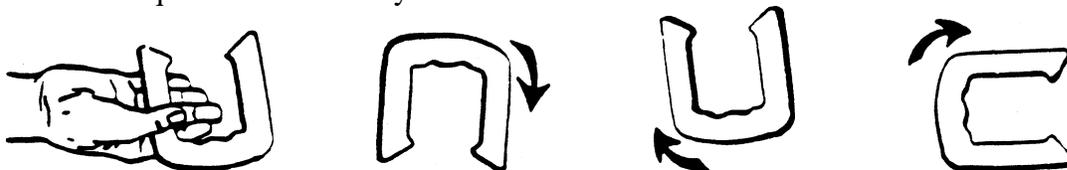


## SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

Players must stand behind the foul line on the pitching platform when pitching. Most players assume a starting stance with the pitching arm closes to the stake and in a position which permits a forward step in the act of delivery of the shoe. The number of turns which the shoe takes in flight usually determines the style of grip to be used. Regardless of the grip used, there are several factors common to all pitches:

1. The shoe should be held parallel to the ground with calks down;
2. The rotation of the shoe should be clockwise;
3. The open end of the shoe should face the stake when landing;
4. Weight evenly distributed on both feet in the beginning stance, step off on opposite foot, knees bent, eyes on target, shoulders square to target.

The one and one-quarter turn delivery.



## **BASIC RULES**

The National Horseshoe Pitchers Association establishes the official rules of horseshoe pitching.

1. A game is divided into innings, and each contestant pitches two shoes in each inning. A game consists of 25 innings (50 shoes pitched by each person.)
2. The choice of the first pitch to start the game is decided by the toss of a shoe or coin.
3. A shoe that has left the pitcher's hand is ruled a pitched shoe.
4. A pitcher's opponent must stand behind the person in action and may not interfere with the pitch in any way.
5. A contestant may not walk to the opposite stake or be informed of the position of the shoes until the inning is completed.
6. Shoes thrown when a foul has been committed are considered shoes pitched; however, they may not receive any point value. Fouls may be assessed for the following:
  - a. Illegal delivery of shoe.
  - b. Failure of opponent to stay behind the pitcher, or his/ her interfering in any way with the opponent while he is in the act of pitching.
  - c. Touching thrown shoes before a measurement has been made.
  - d. Thrown shoes which strike part of the pitcher's box or land outside the foul lines and then rebound into the box.
  - e. Stepping on or over the foul line.
7. Ties are broken by pitching an extra inning(s).

## **SCORING**

1. The shoe nearest to the stake scores one point providing it is within six inches of the stake.
2. Two shoes closer than opponent's shoe score two points.
3. One ringer scores three points and two ringers, six points.
4. A player having two ringers to one by his/her opponent scores three points.
5. All shoes equally distant from the stake count as ties and no points are scored.
6. A leaning shoe has the same value as that of a shoe lying on the ground and in contact with the stake.

## **COURTESIES AND SAFETY**

1. Stand well away from the pitching court when not involved.
2. Be aware of people around you when swinging the horseshoe. Pitch only in designated area.
3. Do not disturb a person who is in the process of pitching.
4. Observe all rules
5. Keep emotions under control
6. Be aware of the game and position in the game so you are ready to pitch when your turn comes

## **TERMINOLOGY**

**CALKS:** raised areas on the heels and toe of one side of the pitching shoe that tend to make the shoe less likely to skid when striking the surface of the pit area.

**DOUBLE RINGER:** two successive shoes that encircle the stake.

**FLIPPED UP SHOE:** flipping shoe to determine who goes first, "rough" or "smooth"

**HEEL:** the ends of the prongs on each side of the open end of the shoe.

**INNING:** the pitching of two shoes by each player.

**LEANER:** shoe which leans against the stake.

**PITCHER'S BOX:** the area which includes the pitching platform and the pit.

**RINGER:** a shoe that encircles the stake.