A World-Wide Event

Each year, the NHPA hosts the "World Horseshoe Tournament." This special event brings in over 1000 horseshoe pitchers from all around the US, as well as other countries from across the globe. After two weeks of class play, Division Champions are crowned as the Best-In-The-World. The setup of this tournament allows players of all skill levels to compete. Some top players occasionally exceed 90% ringers in their games; a spectacle to behold!

A Professional Tour >>>

Some of the top-tier players participate in the Horseshoe Pitching Professional Tour. These Tournaments have fast-paced, ringers-only, count-all games. Play consists of two preliminary qualifying rounds followed by a final elimination round where 40 ft and 30 ft division winners are awarded for the tour event.

If you would like to ask questions about the sport or want to connect with other people interested in Horseshoe Pitching visit the “HORSESHOE AMERICA” online community at: www.HorseshoeAmerica.com/forum

For more information about local Horseshoe Pitching, Contact:
Welcome to the World of Competitive Horseshoe Pitching!

Horseshoe Pitching is one of the most popular recreational activities in the US with tens of Millions of Americans “tossing shoes” or “flipping ringers” with friends and family. Members of the National Horseshoe Pitchers Association (NHPA) have chosen to take their game to the “next level” and participate in organized Horseshoe Tournaments. Though competitive, NHPA members often develop strong friendships that last a lifetime.

Setup >>>
Horseshoe Tournaments are usually set up with multiple “classes” of players with similar skill levels grouped together. Class groupings are based on a players “Ringer Percentage,” which is the number of times a player makes a ringer in 10 tries, on average. A player with a 50% average will usually make one ringer for every two pitches.

Classes play a “Round Robin” schedule, allowing each player to play against all other players in their class during a tournament. Games are played to a set number of pitches or points. The player with the most wins at the end of the day is awarded first place for the class and may receive a trophy, a patch, as well as a cash award. In the event of a tie, the tied players will often face each other in a high-stakes playoff game to decide the winner!

A tournament may have multiple divisions such as “Mens,” “Womens,” and “Elders” for adults, and “Juniors” and “Cadets” for kids. At smaller events, divisions are often combined and players of similar skill, from all divisions, play against each other.

The “Tournament Director” oversees the management of the tournament and can be a great resource to address spectator questions.

Scoring >>>
Players score by making a “Ringer,” which is when their horseshoe encircles the stake, or by making a point, which is when a horseshoe is within 6 inches of the stake...Yes, in Horseshoes, close does indeed count! Games are played following either the “Count All” or “Cancelation” system.

In “Count All,” both players may record a score after pitching. If t

Point” = 1 (or 2 pts)
“Ringer 3” = 3 pts
“Ringer 4” = Ringer 3 + 1 pt
“Double Ringer” = 6 pts
“2 Dead” = 2 canceling ringers, 1 pt
“3 Ringers 3” = 2 dead ringers 1 live ringer (3 pts)
“4 Dead” = 4 canceling ringers (0 pts)

“Cancelation” play only one player can score at a given time. Ringers from each player cancel each other making this style of play particularly challenging and exciting to watch. Players often revel in calling out “4 dead,” which means that both players pitched Double Ringers, an indication of great skill and undoubtedly, a very entertaining game! The player who scores is the one who calls out the score.

Rules >>>
There are a few important rules that players must constantly observe. The first is the Foul Line. If a player steps past this line, their horseshoe does not count in the scoring. Men, ages 18-70, pitch from the full 40 feet. Women, Elder men (older than 70), and Juniors (12-18) pitch at 30 feet. Finally the young Cadets (kids younger than 12) pitch at 20 feet. A Foul Shoe is a horseshoe that did not land in the horseshoe pit. If a Horseshoe hits anything other than the stake, or the dirt in the pit, it is out of play and does not count in the scoring. Player Etiquette dictates that each player let the other pitch their horseshoes without any interference, so after pitching, players stand quietly behind their competitor. Once both players have pitched, if they cannot decide on the score of the shoes (too close to call) a Judge is called to measure and make the final call. --- For a complete listing & description of the official rules, visit the NHPA at: www.HorseshoePitching.com

Fun Facts >>>

Presidential Game.
The White House and Camp David each have an official set of Horseshoe Courts. They were put in by President George H.W. Bush. Earlier, President Truman also pitched Horseshoes on the White House lawn!

“Leaner”
In organized horseshoes, “Leaners”, horseshoes that lean against the stake but are not ringers, count as only 1 point. Back yard enthusiasts will often award 2 points for a “Leaner.”

Perfection
World Champion, Walter Ray Williams Jr., holds the distinction for pitching the highest recorded perfect game in competition, an incredible 56 consecutive Ringers!

If the shoe fits...pitch it >>>
Horseshoes come in a myriad of shapes and designs. Some are specialized for players who like to “flip” their shoes, others are designed for players who prefer a “turn” (horizontal rotation), while some are more generalized and work well for either a flip or a turn. Regulation Horseshoes weigh no more than 2 lbs 10 oz and come in differing tempers, from a hard metal that resists nicks and dings to a soft metal that resists bouncing off the stake or other horseshoes in the pit. Most have a pointed or inverted “ringer breaker” along the inside of the shoe that helps keep ringers on the stake.

Pitching Horseshoes are available from many on-line retailers.