# **Nor-Cal News Views**

Northern California Horseshoe Pitchers Association website address is: http://www.nchpa.com

https://www.facebook.com/groups/568662210169482/

### **2020 Annual Meeting**

Due to Covid19 our annual meeting, scheduled for November 14<sup>th</sup> has been moved to Joe and Mary Summers home, 231 Escondido Dr Martinez 94553 at 9:30 AM. Joe and Mary have a large back yard to meet following Covid19 social distancing rules. If the weather isn't good their home is open and we will be able to follow the same guidelines inside. Please make sure to bring your Masks.

In order to hold this important meeting our By-Laws state we must have enough votes in attendance to provide a quorum. Page 7 Section 6. This year the number needed is 17 of the possible 34 available votes available at this time. One person can cover all of your club votes no matter how many you have so you don't have to send 2 or 3 people. Whomever you send will vote all of your club votes, as long as we have 17 votes there we will have the quorum needed.

We have a few things to remember for this meeting. The Board members up for election this year include the following;

President – Joe Summers

2<sup>nd</sup> VP - Alan Trusty

4<sup>th</sup> VP Lorena Tournour 4<sup>th</sup>

5<sup>th</sup> VP Jeff Vieira

Joe Summers and Alan Trusty will seek reelection.

Lorena Tournour has announced she will **not** seek re-election.

Jeff Vieira will seek re-election, but will give up the position if someone else is interested in the job.

Anyone interested in running for a position please contact Joe Summers 925-260-0915 or Gail Sluys 707-486-0594 so we can get that information out. You can also be nominated from the floor.

Please let me know if your club will be represented so we can get a count to be sure we have the quorum needed.

Thank You, Gail Sluys Sec/Treasurer

### 1st VP

2020 has been a crazy year. The NCHPA has had to cancel so many tournaments due to "health" concerns, and city and county park restrictions. It is great to see that some of the clubs like Lincoln, Vallejo, Sonoma, Half Moon Bay, San Francisco and some others have managed to get a few tournaments in the books. I was really looking forward to the horseshoe year, and it came and went without my pitching in one tournament! My wife Karen has been having chemotherapy and radiation therapy and her immune system is so weak that I just

couldn't take a chance on going to a tournament and bringing something home. Although pitching in a tournament is probably no more risky than going to the grocery store. I've gotten my horseshoe fix by pitching on my backyard courts, reading old NHPA Newslines, and by watching YouTube horseshoe pitching videos. I've enjoyed the videos of some of this year's tournament videos that Jeff Williams has posted. Nothing however takes the place of pitching with friends on the NCHPA Since I've been tournament courts! spending time watching horseshoe videos this summer, I thought I would write about three videos that I thought were good or interesting ones that were worth sharing with you. Although the videos have been around for a while I had never seen them until recently.

I've always wanted to see a video of Fernando Isaias pitching his 1 ¾ turn with the high backswing. Old-timers say it was the most beautiful, and graceful horseshoe pitch ever, and after seeing it on film I would have to agree!

You can find the video by searching on YouTube for 10 027 1951 1952 Davis, Dykes, Steinfeldt, Williams 3 of 3.

The Link for the <u>video iss</u> <u>www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjGeNE4dGC</u> <u>o&t=11s</u>

At 1:00-1:48 there is film of a young Carl Steinfeldt. I always liked his "pump-style" windup that I have seen him use in World Tournament videos. At this point in his pitching career he hasn't yet added his signature windup. Carl was the 1976 World Champ and there is some great footage of Carl in Jeff Williams' video on the 1977 World Tournament at the 7:38 mark.

At 2:00-2:55 we have Fernando! What a backswing! I read that when John Gordon (founder of the Gordon Horseshoe) first saw

Fernando and his "rubber shoulder" that he knew he would be a world champion. Isaias won 8 World Championships between 1941 and 1958. The setting is the Salt Lake City World Tournament with beautiful mountains in the background

At 3:01-3:39 I believe is Casey Jones. Casey was from Wisconsin. He was many times a strong contender for the World Title, but it eluded him! I'd never seen a video of him. He has sort of a wild style!

At 3:47-4:01 is more footage of Fernando Isaias! Sort of takes your breath away, doesn't it?

At 4:02-4:17 more of Casey Jones

At 4:18-4:31 is Ted Allen. Outside of a couple of newsreel shorts, you don't see a lot of film of Ted Allen. 10 time World Champion.

At 4:56-5:08 a left- hander unknown to me. Does anyone know who he is?

At 5:09-5:16 I'm not sure who that is either...a young Titcomb?

At 5:17 to the end of the video is Walter Ray Williams, Jr. The video was taken in his back yard in Chino? Great film of a young Walter Ray! Poetry in motion! Deadeye.

Now that I have seen video of Fernando Isaias, if I can just see a film of Guy Zimmerman I can die a happy man!

The second video is another great one! I've probably never seen a better video to study a 1 ½ turn! There are some great over the shoulder, down the line shots of great turn and a quarter pitchers: Walter Ray, Charlie Meredith, Don Titcomb, and Ron Powell. The video can be found on Youtube by searching for 1994 Don Titcomb Invitational Tourney. The link for the video is:

 $\frac{www.youtube.com/watch?v=HObbHYp-}{Fyk\&t=574s}$ 

The Invitational tournament was held on a Thursday in August of 1994 at the Winchester, KY horseshoe courts. Walter Ray had just won the 1994 World Championship in Syracuse, NY (representing the Stockton Horseshoe Club!) 8-player round robin included Tennessee's Jack Freeman and some of Kentucky's finest pitchers: Don Titcomb (living in Winchester at that time), Charlie Meredith, Ron Powell, Lois Webster, and Tony & Randy Hankins.

I've been working on a Flip in the back yard.....and at 4:15 to 4:30 Lois Webster throw two of the sweetest flip shoes you will ever see!

Another favorite clip of mine is Charlie Meredith at 5:09 to 5:27, two beautiful shoes, and is that a great backswing or what?

I'm sure Don Titcomb was instrumental in having the courts built. They are still there on Google Maps. Checking on the Kentucky website, there are no Kentucky tournaments scheduled on those 12 courts in Winchester.

The third video I have for you is a nice story about a Junior Pitcher and his grandfather pitching horseshoes. The Junior Pitcher is Mark Dyson from North Carolina who won the Jr. Boy's World Champion three times from 1979-81. Mark's horseshoe career is an interesting one. The video can be found on YouTube by searching for 10 022 Kids World PM magazine episode 176. The Link is below:

### www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEt4XZOgbaI &t=267s

This is a television show that is a kid's show. After a short introduction, the first 3 minutes tells how Mark and his grandfather share a love of horseshoes. It is a story that is similar to Casey and Travis. Last year I

had my grandson Ryan who is a great little baseball player out to watch Hastiin and Walter Ray; he really got a kick out of it, and I would love to get him out on the courts.

Mark Dyson's Junior career fits into a slot between Walter Ray and Jeff Williams who dominated the Junior title in the early 70's, and Alan Francis who followed Mark with four straight Junior Championships.

The 1979 World Tournament was held in Statesville, North Carolina not far from Mark's home in Taylorsville, NC. about the tournament write-up Mark credited his grandfather with his avid interest and improvement in the sport. The article also said that Roger Norwood (Tennessee State Champ), and Jack Fahey (Kentucky State Champ) had worked with Mark and had aided him throughout his brief This reminds me of the interest career. Bermingham, by Rick Jesse shown Gonzalez, and Walter Ray in our Cadet Champ Hastiin Begaye. Mark won the Title in a playoff pitching 73.6%. Mark said after the tournament, "I expected this to be a tough tournament and I practiced very hard for the tournament, pitching around 2,900 shoes per week. I might take a break now on the practice." Ottie Reno wrote, "It's unbelievable that an 11-year old could withstand the pressure and win the World's title in the first place. He waded through some very tough young knockers to win it. But to that add to your thinking the fact that he was pitching in his home state in his first World Tournament adds mountains more pressure and he still overcame it all. He must have nerves of steel." Jonathan Williams pitched a respectable 59.8 percent in the group won by Mark.

Mark defended his crown successfully in 1980 in Huntsville, Alabama. He was undefeated and pitched 82.1%. Jonathan

Williams was again in the Championship Class improving to 66.7% and finishing in the middle of the pack.

Mark won his third Junior Title in 1981 He pitched a at Genola, Minnesota. smoking 84.1%! Mark only lost one game, and it was noted in the write up that in his only other close game he beat Jonathan Williams 50-41. Jonathan finished 5<sup>th</sup> with a nice 82.29%. Nathan Williams was in the group, finishing 9<sup>th</sup> with 70.59%. Of note is a young Alan Francis finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the group, pitching 78.89%. Bob Dunn wrote, "No big deal was made about the entrance of Alan Francis; at the time no one could foresee the horseshoe pitching career that was about to unfold. The next year he would begin a stretch of four straight Junior Championships and then go on to the Men's Division."

In 1982 in Hunstsville, Alabama Alan Francis would win the Junior Title undefeated at 84.1%. Jonathan Williams lost only two games with an impressive 82.6%! Mark Dyson finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Nathan Williams finished in the middle of the group with a sweet 69.1%.

In 1983 Alan Francis and his brother Tom finished tied in the Boy's Championship Group, with Alan winning a best 2 out of 3 playoff. Mark Dyson finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> behind the Francis brothers. Marks 80.3% was high ringer percentage for the group. Bob Dunn would write, "This 1983 event marked the end of Mark Dyson's junior career. He had would could be classified as the fifth-best all-time for the Junior Boys Division. He had three titles and ended up with two third-place finishes even though he had very good performances. His 49 career wins still rank third best on the All-Time Wins List."

Remarkably, Mark was able to make that monumental move from the Junior Group to the Men's Championship Group. In 1984 in Huntsville, Alabama, Mark joined the best men in the world. As a rookie he finished 15<sup>th</sup> place at 10-13 with a 73.21% to that year's winner Jim Knisley of Ohio. In the group Mark had wins over Art Tyson (NY Champ), Dale Lipovsky (MN and World Champ), and Ronnie Simmons (CA Champ).

In 1985 in Lafayette, Indiana Mark once again pitched in the Championship Group finishing 16-15 with 74.78% behind that year's Champ Walter Ray Williams, Jr. Mark had notable wins over Coke Bowker (Texas Champ), Norm Rioux (CT Champ), and again over Art Tyson and Dale Lipovsky.

Unfortunately that was Mark Dyson's last World Tournament appearance. Mark seemed to have walked away from Horseshoes, I found no other traces of him after the 1985. I would love to know the story behind Mark's leaving the sport.

In addition to Mark's Junior World history, he won 4 North Carolina Boy's Championships, and he won the North Carolina Men's Championship in 1984 and 1985. As a fitting end to the story in 1983, Mark and his grandfather "Flake" where inducted into the North Carolina Horseshoe Hall of Fame. I contacted Jonathan Williams and asked him if he knew what happened to Mark Dyson. He said that he didn't know why he left horseshoes, but said that many years ago he ran into him in Las Vegas where he was throwing tournament darts.

I hope you have enjoyed my "Horseshoe Video Corner!!" I hope to see you all on the courts soon. *George Davis*, 1<sup>st</sup> VP

### 3rd VP

The NCHPA 2019-2020 pitching season officially came to an end on Labor Day 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a great impact on the number of tournaments pitched and the number of pitchers entered in tournaments during the 2019-2020 pitching season. The 2019-2020 pitching season got off to a good start on Sep. 7, 2019 and through Mar. 9, 2020 34 tournaments were pitched and 6 were cancelled due to poor conditions. And then the pandemic hit. Between Mar. 10, 2020 and Labor Day 2020 57 tournaments were cancelled due to COVID-19, 1 tournament was cancelled due to weather, and 2 were rescheduled. The tournaments pandemic had a huge effect on our 2019-2020 season. :(Let's hope that the 2020-2021 season is much better. I hope to see you on the courts.

As always you club statisticians can make my task pretty easy if you submit your results in a timely manner. I would like to have them within two days after your tournament is complete so that the pitchers will have their averages submitted to Natstats in time for the following weeks update. Please email results to me at: meanderson99@yahoo.com. And please be sure that the boxscore files that you send are generated in HSMaster as Tournaments, Reports, Format, Results [not Results (Brief) ]. Keep in mind that I would like to see member numbers in every file that you send. That means I want the long version, not brief version, of every file. Thanks for all your help. Mike Anderson, 3rd VP

### **NCHPA WEBSITE**

For a number of years now we have been asking if there is one of you who would like to become our webmaster. Steve Summerlin our long time webmaster has passed away. We are in the process of attempting to gather the necessary passwords in order to be able to copy the information that our website has. Since no one ever volunteered in all those years I asked Jasmine Brady to assume those responsibilities. Although she is a neophyte with web design she indicated that she'd be willing to learn and put together a website for us.

It's also been suggested that we form a committee to decide what the website content should be. (The description of a committee is: A camel is a horse designed by a committee.) Of course I say that tongue in cheek, but how a Charter website should be setup is that the officers of that charter determine what is put on that site. They can either work through a liaison or directly with the webmaster/mistress. We shall call Jasmine by whatever title she would like. If she chooses to accept this responsibility I believe that the NCHPA should allow a stipend annually plus pay her dues as long as she remains the website guru. Casey

## CLUBS

### McBean Lincoln

On Sept. 6th and 7th 2020, Wayne Lockhart and Stan Cummings broke the Guinness "Longest Records World Horseshoe Pitching Marathon." The event was held at McBean Park Lincoln Ca. They started pitching just after 6AM Sunday morning. With the exception of video technical difficulties the starting was with the sun rising in the east. Then the fire smoke was very heavy in the air, Cal. was on fire. As the smoke cleared in the afternoon, the heat set in, it was a record breaking day for the hottest day, 110 degrees in Cal. And the smell of smoke in the air. Stan wanted to quit 8 to 10 hours in, the heat was getting to him, and everybody!

They made it through the night with the temperature getting down to 80 degrees. With the notice of the sun rising again, they knew they had beaten the record. They pitched for 24 hours 16 minutes 57 seconds. Wayne and Stan pitched 2544 shoes. Wayne got 491 ringers and Stan pitched 410 ringers. Nathan Williams also pitched on the courts next to them, 1079 ringers 2308 shoes.

Thank you Rick Eddy for showing up early at the start to help out, also frank O'Connel, Corinna Mills, Marshall Merino. Bobby Bartel, Debra Aitkens.

Then on Wednesday morning, Good Day Sacramento did a segment on TV. *Jeff Williams* 

### **Half Moon Bay**

We started our season on the weekend of July 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>, totaling 9 tournaments to date.

@ club, 5 National, 1 Tri-Valley & the Northern California Walking Doubles. The turnout has been surprisingly good considering the environment we are faced with.

I found a company that can make plates, plaques & awards with great quality & reasonable prices. They are 123-Awards, currently in Pacifica. 123-awards.com Toll Free 1-888-805-7253. To make an order for plates you must put it on an excel merge file to cut down the cost. I will send anyone who wants this file through e-mail. It is quite easy and of course I will help you before you send it. Please check out their web site and see what you think.

The Half Moon Bay Horseshoe Club would like to welcome Julie Carter. Julie is brand new to Horseshoe pitching and has already pitched a 30% game. We also welcome back after 6 years from Tri-Valley, Ed Cortez.

We are going to cancelled our Thursday Night tournament the Big Pumpkin, October 15.

We wish everyone good health & safety for all your Family & Friends.

See you on the courts! Rick Della Santina

**San Francisco** – It's a Ringer! One Perfect Day in Golden Gate Park.

On Tuesday Sept. 22, 2020, Luke Zepponi 3 x California NHPA Junior Champion and student at Abraham Lincoln High School was awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> Place in the coveted city wide Fracchia Prize writing competition for his essay and walking tour discussing the history of the Golden Gate Park Horseshoe Courts and surrounding areas. The contest theme was "One Perfect Day in Golden

Gate Park". During the remote 'zoom' video award ceremony the three student winners were congratulated by the mayor London Breed of San Francisco, the President of the Park Commission Mark Buell, the General Manager of Parks & Recreation, SF City Guides, SF Historical Society, among others. The walking tour will be included in published guides by SF City Guides as well as incorporated into an interactive walking tour app. It will also be published in the SF Historical Society newsletter 'Panorama'. Luke has been invited to lead a guided tour for the SF Chronicle newspaper with reporter for a feature in a future column.

At SFHPC we are excited for extensive publicity and exposure the courts will be receiving. The GG Parks have recently reopened with 'socially distancing' rules in While the GG Park Courts were closed, we were utilizing the open courts at Stern Grove for tournaments. We had a pop-up sanctioned tournament in August utilizing an unused sanction #. A group of UCSB friends were having a reunion outing and asked for us to give lessons and provide equipment. They made a nice donation to the club, so we used it to make 5 of them Provisional Members and 1 full member, Joseph Newfield, (welcome Joe!) and ran it as a sanctioned event. I hope we do it again next year and have them upgrade to full memberships. The Stern Grove courts are in relatively good condition but need some work. Luke and his friend are continuing with the Lincoln High Horseshoe Club they started last year and all but one of the members are coming back. Parental concerns due to Covid-19 for students participating in club activities is a new challenge for attracting members. "Club Days" are this week, (online), so they

created a marketing flyer and are promoting it as a 'Socially Distant Sport', since most school sports and activities are cancelled. Hopefully, they can attract new members looking for a way to safely get together for a fun outdoors activity.

Long delayed work, due to shelter in place, on the landscaping around the entrance to the Golden Gate Park Horseshoe Courts is underway in preparation for a Community Challenge Grant that the Friends of Oak Woodlands Park Partner was awarded. I cofounded the 'Friends' non-profit to be an official advocate for the HS Courts and surrounding Oak Woodlands. SFHPC is a member of the Friends group.

The restroom repairs are still delayed, but they were scheduled for repairs prior to Covid-19. We are still hopeful that it will be completed this year. They will be a huge benefit to the usability of the courts. The beautification of the entry stairs and path is expected to increase activity and use and it's looking really good. *Peter Zepponi* 

https://www.sfhistory.org/education/fracchia
-prize/

https://sfcityguides.org/scholarship-winners-2020/

https://www.facebook.com/SFHPC/

### **Forebay Park**

Forebay park. Well it was an interesting season to say the least. We lost all but 6 sanctioned members at our club. And all are non-sanctioned members. Most of our regular club members are all local bowlers too. So when they shut that down, well you guessed it. We did however manage to pull off our only three tournaments. The 1st two together in June we had to have the help of the Lincoln club to get it done. Thanks Lincoln! And we also lost our statistician this year so thank God for Corina! Pretty

fair turnout though. We had two from Washington state and Nevada. Nevada said their tournaments all shut down so were happy to accommodate them. So as far as I know nobody got Covid. Our club league play ended this 1st week of September due to short daylight. Our club championship was won by member Lylie Goudie in a playoff with me after a playoff tie. Dang it! I don't know what's in store for next year, or who we will have, and they want my tournament dates now, even though our year end meeting is not until November. It's hard to plan ahead not knowing what's going to happen. See you out there. World 2021! Rick Eddy

### **Sonoma County**(Santa Rosa)

When the county health official closes all parks and puts barricades at all entrances our club could do nothing but walk in. Therefore having to park a block away some of the members continued to practice carrying their shoes and coolers in. That lasted a number of weeks until some nosey neighbor called the city parks dept and they planted a sign in the middle of the courts stating that this is a no-play zone.



That plus about 5 others scattered throughout our park barely lasted 24 hours

before they were tossed into the trash! What on earth were they thinking a HIGH TOUCH AREA!...really?

Once the barricades were removed and we could once again enter the park with our vehicles we resumed our sanctioned league which we've been holding for 25 years. One thing changed though, we began playing count-all so as to eliminate close contact by debating whose point it is.

Since the park reopened we've held 2 tournaments both sparsely attended by out of towners, but fortunately we have some new members and they created a decent turnout. Oh BTW some righteous jerk called the police on us both times! The issue MASKS of course!

We did have to cancel the Mystery Money tournament as there would be too much money changing hands.

Look for us in 2021 as we will host some nice events and we hope to have all of you back at one of the finest pitching facilities in California. *Casey Sluys* 

### San Jose

At this time it looks like the San Jose Club will not host any tournaments in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.:( We hope to host some tournaments in 2021 and look forward to seeing everyone then.:)

After our club building burned at the end of July we did not know if San Jose Parks & Rec would clean up the mess or if we would have to do it. Fortunately the San Jose Parks and Rec kindly came in and cleaned it up in early August. So now we are all set to truck in equipment and materials to tournaments next year. Due to the loss of our building we expect to no longer have our potluck meal after each tournament. Perhaps there will be some time after each tournament to sit around, have a drink, and talk. Time will tell how it all works out.

Best of luck to everyone in these difficult tournaments next year. Due to the loss of our building we expect to no longer have our times, Be safe! *Mike Anderson* 

### **Stockton**

All is quiet on the Stockton horseshoe scene. The club will bid to host the 2021 California State Tournament at the coming year-end meeting in November. Happy Holidays to all, let's hope that we will have a normal year in 2021. I leave you with a Great Horseshoe thought: REPETITION IS THE KEY TO MASTERY AND GREATNESS *George Davis* 

BEGINNING IN 2021 WITH THE FIRST ISSUE OF JAN, FEB, MAR **ISSUE** 24.1. Ι WILL BE **ACCEPTING ARTICLES FOR** PRINT FROM WHOEVER WANTS TO WRITE ONE. THAT'S PRETTY MUCH BEEN TO CASE ANYWAY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE NOW IS THAT THIS INVITE WILL GO OUT TO ALL RECIPIENTS OF THE NEWS AND VIEWS.

The subject matter should revolve around horseshoe pitching. How did you hear about the NHPA? Was it a family member, an Aunt or Uncle, a Grandparent, brother, sister, mom, dad, a friend? Did you find it online, hear about it, read an article in the newspaper etc etc.

# Did you read this in Newsline?

From the desk of the NHPA Secretary/Treasurer NHPA eShoe to replace Natstats for 2021By Jim Kinney Jr., Secretary/Treasurer We are nearing the end of another year for the National Horseshoe Pitching Association. 2020 has been an exceedingly difficult year for many members and their charters due to the Corona Virus mandates. Our membership numbers for 2020 are down from last year. This has been an ongoing trend for quite a few years. I know the virus has been a factor with the numbers. One saving grace for the organization, and the sport, is online pitching. This has grown to be a huge part of our sport. I feel when we get back to a normal way of conducting business this way of pitching will be here for the long stay. Most of the pitchers I have observed have handled the changes we have had to make with a professional and patient attitude. I thank everyone for this. We will all get through this together. The first year of the membership tracking program, eShoe, has been a huge success. I have been working with each charter on updates, invoicing, and other tools thru out the year. Kurt Whaley, and his team, have been working diligently to continue to work on eShoe and the integration with HSMaster. This fall we will ask states to start getting familiar with the Tournament features of eShoe. Our goal is that all tournaments for 2021 will get setup in eShoe in advance of the tournament being held, typically when the state has determined their schedule for the year. We expect that this would be done by some combination of the state Regional Director and/or state Statistician. Whatever works best for each Charter. A schedule for all tournaments in the US will be available for viewing in eShoe with various search options. Any tournaments run

with HSMaster, will be able to send results directly to eShoe. The results and resulting averages will be up-dated immediately! For tournaments that are not run with HSMaster we will provide manual ways for those results to be entered into eShoe. In all cases the goal is to replace NATSTATs with eShoe immediate record keeping tool. This gives us our official NHPA membership and official event participation in the same system. To make this all work together will require a new version of HSMaster be installed on your personal computer. This will also be available this fall. This is the next phase of eShoe being implemented. Until we transition NATSTATs to eShoe with the results we need everyone to help monitor the way the names of the members appear in both eShoe and NATSTATs. If anyone notices the spelling or display of a member's name in any way different in eShoe then it is displayed in NATSTATs please contact me with the correction. The Tournament directors are the first ones who can help with this by making sure all members names are listed as they are in NATSTATs until the transition is made. I know this makes for extra work, but it is just temporary. I would like everyone to know that Kurt Whaley, Dave Sidles, and myself have been working together to make this transition to the eShoe program as smooth and easy as possible. Everyone will be able to update their membership for 2021 on October 1st, 2020. If you have any questions about the program or need any assistance, please contact me. Jim Kinney Jr @ sec.treas@horseshoepitching.com

P. O. Box 205 Drexel, Mo. 64742 816-738-0868

### **Sue Snyder**



Horseshoe Pitching lost a legend last month as 7-time Women's World Champion Sue Snyder passed away at age 73. Most horseshoe pitchers know Sue to be an all-time great, but there may be some new pitchers who know the name Snyder only as a name engraved on popular Flip-Style Horseshoes. I wanted to write an article in tribute to Sue Snyder; I decided to write one that is from a California Horseshoe Pitching perspective. Sue pitched in two World Tournaments in California that I will describe, but over the years she also pitched against many of the great Women Pitchers of California. Before reading my article you should take the time to read Sue's Tribute in the July-August NHPA Newsline, pages 29-30 available on the NHPA website.

<u>www.horseshoepitching.com/newsline/20/2020 07 - NHPANewsline.pdf</u>

Sue Snyder began pitching horseshoes recreationally in 1981. She joined the American Horseshoe Pitchers Association which was a rival organization to the NHPA founded by Arlo Harris of Indiana, a one-time NHPA president. The organization, based in Indiana, believed strongly in the "Count-All" method of scoring, believing it was more fair than the "Cancellation" scoring method used in NHPA tournaments, particularly when applied in horseshoe leagues. Sue was urged by a friend to join the NHPA.

After a year where she pitched in both organizations, she finally and fortunately chose to convert to the NHPA. An NHPA Newsline article said that early in her career Sue idolized 10-time Women's World Champion Vicki Winston, of Missouri. When Sue began in horseshoes Vicki was the Women's World Champion, so it would make sense that Sue would look up Interestingly, Vicki Winston threw a turn shoe (a one and a quarter), and of course Sue became an iconic flip pitcher. It makes you wonder who might have been an influence on Sue's flip style of pitching. In Indiana, Bonnie Seibold was State Champion when Sue started, and Bonnie threw a turn and a quarter. In the years before Sue started playing Ruth Hangen, Debby Michaud, Lorraine Thomas, and Opal Reno threw a flip shoe and won the World Champion with it. Sue may not have played with Ruth, but I do think she competed with Lorraine Thomas and Opal Reno. also played against Debby Michaud, but Debbie had converted to a turn shoe by then (Debbie won the World Championship ('77) with a Flip and then with a 1 ¼ ('85).) There is a good video on Youtube, "1977 World Horseshoe Championship Women" which shows Debbie Michaud throwing a Flip from 1:02 to 1:17, and a clip at 1:17-1:39 that shows the stylish Ruth Hangen of NY. Other Flip pitchers of that era that probably inspired Sue with a flip shoe were Dianne Canton, Opal Reno, Lois Webster, and Diane Canton, Opal, and Lois can be seen on a YouTube Lopez from California. video "1990 World Horseshoe Tournament Highlights" from 1hr.27 min.-1hr.41min. In the first segment of the video which is Women's A Group you see a couple of short cuts of Sue pitching with a nice picture at the end with Sue holding the Class A Trophy. Most of the women who won the World Championship in the years immediately before Sue took the crown in 1992, Phyllis Negaard, Tari Powell, Debbie Michaud, and Sandy McLachlin, threw turn shoes! Once Sue broke through in '92 all eyes were on her FLIP! It probably goes without saying, but I think just about all flip pitchers were inspired by Jesse Gonzalez!

Through hard work and dedication Sue made her first appearance in the NHPA World Tournament in Eau Claire, Wisconsin in 1987, finishing 8<sup>th</sup> place in the Women's Championship Class just 6 years after starting in the NHPA. That Sue loved horseshoes, and worked diligently at the sport is illustrated in a story written in Newsline; when she [Sue] moved with her husband, Rick, to Indiana from Kentucky, installing a home court was a priority. "It was like, 'To heck with the house!' We built a court instead," says Snyder.

The 1988 World Tournament was very important to Northern California horseshoe pitchers because it was right here in our own backyard at the fairgrounds in Pleasanton, CA. Our own California star Diane Lopez won the Women's Title! Diane was 5'-1'' and 125 lbs. She threw a backhand  $2\frac{1}{2}$ 

flip at such a fast pace she was nicknamed "Buzz Saw." Gail Sluys said her first shoe wasn't even on the stake before the second shoe was in the air. Diane said in a Newsline interview, "Pitching fast gives me little time to think about what I am doing." Sue Snyder came out to California to finish 6<sup>th</sup> place in the Championship group. Other California Ladies in the top group were Sharon Paddock who finished ahead of Sue in 3<sup>rd</sup> with an 11-4 record and an 81.7% ringer average (wow!), and Stockton's own Billie Sue Pennington finished 8<sup>th</sup> at 7-8 and 73.13 % ringers. The California Ladies did well against Snyder. Although Sue threw a 78.1% game at Billie Sue to beat her 41-26, Sharon Paddock beat Snyder 45-35 with a 79.5% scorcher which I'm sure Sharon remembers to this day, and Diane Lopez beat Snyder 43-17 laying an 85.9% game on her.

The 1989 World Tournament in Spearfish, South Dakota, and the 1990 Tournament in Stone Mountain, Georgia were similar years for Sue Snyder in that both years she failed to qualify for the Championship Class yet in both years she won the Women's A Class. Sue certainly didn't seem to let missing the top class get her down! Dealing with the ups and downs of horseshoes was probably a real lesson learned. In 1989 Phyllis Negaard of Minnesota won the Title, and while Sue was not in the Championship Class, two California women were. Diane Lopez and Billy Sue Pennington were 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> in the top group. Sue won Class A with a nice 70.83%, and two California ladies battled her in that class, Helen Vigil (See note about Helen at the end of this paragraph) finished 3<sup>rd</sup> behind Sue, and Carolyn Webb (Carolyn was inducted into the Southern California Hall of Fame in 1998 and was from the San Diego area) landed in 15<sup>th</sup>. In 1990 at Stone Mountain Tari Powell took the Ladies Championship with an 83.1% performance. Californian Mary Fumia (also, see note at end of this paragraph) battled for a 13<sup>th</sup> place finish in the top Group. Sue won Cass A, while Californians Helen Vigil and Billie Sue Pennington finished, 9th and 10th respectively. Snyder's 80.7% blew the A Class away and was only 2 percentage points behind Powell the tournament winner. In fact Sue's ringer percentage was bettered by only two pitchers in the Championship Class. This performance definitely hinted at bigger things to come for Sue. 1989 and 1990 seemed to serve as two years in "the wilderness" for Sue; she would soon be ready to take her place at the top of the game! **Note**: as an interesting side note both Helen Vigil and Maria Fumia were Nuns! Jonathan said he thought they came from the Ventura area, and I don't know if they are just pulling my leg, but Gail Sluys, Sharon Paddock, and Linda Hoelscher all say they were Nuns and good pitchers! Since we're talking about Nuns, and the Bible says that you have to believe 3 witnesses, we're good with Helen and Maria being Nuns. They were said to be real nice, and Sharon Paddock said, "The ladies gave them a bad time saying it wasn't fair they had the good guy above on their side."

In 1991 in Biloxi, Mississippi, Sue was back in the Championship Class finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> behind Tari Powell. No California women challenged Sue that year. There's a nice video clip on YouTube of Sue and Tari pitching. You can find it by searching for"1991 World Horseshoe Pitching Championships, Part 5." The clip runs from the 38:22 to the end of the video. Sue shows a shorter address and backswing than she would show in later years in the clip. A good video which shows Sue's more developed form can be found by searching YouTube for "Horseshoe Pitching Pro Tour Intro & Highlights from Frederick, MD Players Tournament" This video is from 2010. The clip is from 2:45-3:08 and is a classic shot of Sue's backswing and famed follow-through as she plays her rival Joan Elmore.

In 1992, in Columbus, Ohio, Sue Snyder became the Champion of the World. Sue won that first one with a great 84.61 average. Two California women were challenging Sue in the group. Our own Sharon Paddock came in 8<sup>th</sup> place; in her game against Snyder she lost 40-9 with Sue bludgeoning her with a 93.3% game, mercy! Diane Silva (Lopez) finished 16<sup>th</sup> and was beaten by Sue 40-30 with Sue throwing 70%, her lowest of the tournament. Our California ladies got the best and the worst of Sue Snyder that year. You can almost feel Sue's happiness over reaching the top in her words after the tournament, "I really can't believe it," Snyder cheerfully said, holding back the tears and sipping Gatorade, "I'm so happy, it's just great."

In 1993 in Spearfish, South Dakota Sue Snyder was the defending champion. Iowa's Cathy Carter won the Women's Title. Sue finished  $2^{nd}$  with a 76.59%, the highest ringer percentage in the group. Northern California's Sharon Paddock finished  $13^{th}$  in the group. Sue beat Sharon 41-7 with an 83.9% in their game. So what does anyone do when a pitcher throws almost 84% at you?.....you lose!

In 1994 in Syracuse, NY, Sue won the Woman's Championship in a step-ladder playoff over Kentucky's Lois Webster. In the preliminaries, our Gail Sluys averaged a respectable 60.50%. In the preliminary game that Gail played Sue, Sue won 33-18, pitching a scorching 82.5%; Gail had a very nice 70% in the game. Gail grew up back in that area, so I'm sure it was kind of a homecoming for her.....probably friends and relatives in attendance. Newsline wrote about Sue, "No one in either the Men's or Women's finals was more impressive or had such a hot hand as Sue Snyder. When asked if she was surprised by her overwhelming victories, the usually very modest Snyder confidently replied, 'I really earned this title...I've been throwing 500 practice shoes every day preparing for this championship.' No one could doubt that on this occasion, the old cliche,

'practice makes perfect' said it all as Sue hit 164 out of 182 shoes pitched for her 90.11% playoff performance." There's no doubt that Sue had talent, but her work ethic and practice habits set her apart.

In 1995 in Perry, Georgia Sue went undefeated to take her 3<sup>rd</sup> World Championship. There were no California women in the Championship Group to stop Sue!

In 1996 Gillette, Wyoming, Minnesota's Bev Nathe won the title with Sue finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> with an 88.38% average that was highest in the group. Sue lost the last game to Bev, when they both were at 14-0. Sue lead most of the game only to be overtaken by Bev when Sue's final shoe bounced off the stake. The heartbreaking final score was 42-39. All Sue could say after the game was over, "I had her, I had her." Sue's only consolation was that her 88.38% average was a new World Record. A rough way to finish second! There were no Californians in that Top Group that year.

In 1997 in Kitchener, ONT, Canada, Bev Nathe repeated as Champion. Sue came in 9<sup>th</sup> at 10-9 with a 77.53% average. I guess she had a "bit of an off year," You're really something when someone suggests you've had an off year when pitching 77%! No California women challenged in the Championship Group.

In 1998 in Ainsworth, Nebraska, Becky Kemper of Kentucky threw her Imperial horseshoes with a turn and a quarter to win the Crown. Sue Snyder came in 2<sup>nd</sup>, her 82.55% ringer percentage was once again the highest in the group. Sue lost the final game to Becky 42-31. Once again no California Women in the Top Group

In 1999 the World Tournament went to Greenville, Ohio where Sue won with a torrid 84.52% average. In an article in the Greenville newspaper, one of Sue Snyder's opponents, Amy Hall, was asked what it's like to pitch horseshoes against the Kentuckian. "Let me tell you...if you're not flat on the pole, you can hang it up...period, "said the Virginian, just before the awards ceremony at which Snyder was crowned the 1999 NHPA Women's Champion. Bonnie Seibold, an NHPA Hall of Fame Member and mother of Men's World Champion Mark Seibold said, "I think right now, Sue is the best Women's pitcher ever." Amy Francis said, "Sue is one of the game's best all-around pitchers and she works hard at the game." California was represented in the Championship Group by Sonoma's own Gail Sluys. The Greenville paper wrote, "She (Sue Snyder) had 4 games over 90 percent, including a 94.1% (32 of 34) against Gail Sluys in round six. That was the high game of the event but just barely, as Connie J. Filley pitched 15 out of 16 for 93.8 percent against Gail Sluys in the first game of the round-robin." Welcome to Ohio and the Big-Time, Gail!

In 2000, in Bismarck, North Dakota, Canadian Sylvianne Moisan won the Title. Sue finished in 5<sup>th</sup> place. No California women represented that year in the Championship Group. Similarly in 2001 in Hibbing MN Sylvianne Moisan won with Sue finishing in 6<sup>th</sup> place, and there were no Californians in the Championship Group.

In 2002 Sue missed the World Tournament. I couldn't find any information on why she couldn't be there. Even when you are a horseshoe legend, sometimes Life gets in the way!

For Sue Snyder 2003 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin turned out to be a replay of 2001. Sylvianne Moisan won her her 4<sup>th</sup> title and Sue again came in 6<sup>th</sup> place. No Californians were in the Top Class at Eau Claire!

In 2004 the World Tournament blew into Pocatello, Idaho, and Sue Snyder was once again the World Champ, a game ahead of her friend and rival Joan Elmore, who had the group high 82.44%. No competition in the Top Group from California women that year.

In 2005 the Big Show came to Bakersfield, CA, and Sue Snyder made her 2<sup>nd</sup> appearance in a California World Tournament. Sue was again the World Champ with an 82.39% average, again by one game over Joan Elmore whose 84.29% was once again higher than Sue's. As you would expect since the tournament was in California we had 4 Californians in the Top Group! Sharon Paddock finished 9<sup>th</sup> with a 64.97 average, Kimmy Stockli was 10<sup>th</sup> with 63.54%, Linda Hoelscher (the reigning California Champ) finished 17<sup>th</sup> at 61.18%, and Diane Silva (formerly Lopez) was 20<sup>th</sup> with 55.30%. All of the California women had been State Champions except Kimmy, who the next month in Yolo would win her first of 6 State Titles with 65.83%. In the individual games at Bakersfield Sue Snyder pitched 82.8% to beat Sharon 42-22, pitched 90% to beat Kimmy 42-5, threw her low of the tournament 68.2% to beat Linda 40-21 (Linda had 54.5%,) and Snyder pitched a cool 87.5% against Diane beating her 43-6.

In 2006 the World Tournament went to Gillette, Wyoming. This would be Tennessean Joan Elmore's first Women's Title. Sue Snyder finished 3<sup>rd</sup>. Reigning California Champ Kimmy Stockli finished 12<sup>th</sup>. Joan threw a redhot 90% at Kimmy, 38 out of 40 shoes to beat her 42-6, and Sue Snyder tossed 76.7% at Kimmy beating her 41-20.

Ardmore, Oklahoma was the site of the 2007 Tournament. Joan Elmore won her second Championship, but to do it she had to beat the undefeated Sue Snyder in the last game of the round robin 42-36, then beat her in a playoff 42-19. It must have been intense! Kimmy Stockli represented California and finished 12<sup>th</sup> place at 8-11 with a 66.19% ringers. Kimmy battled Joan but lost 40-22, Joan throwing 81% to Kimmy's 70.7%. In the opening game Sue Snyder with 67.4% (which was her low game of the tournament) beat Kimmy's 54.3% by a score of 42-26.

In 2008 the NHPA went to York Pennsylvania. Sue Snyder won her 7<sup>th</sup> and final World Championship. Kimmy Stockli again flew the Cali-Colors, finishing 15<sup>th</sup> in the group. Sue beat Kimmy 43-5 throwing 30 ringers out of 34 shoes for a cracking 88.2%.

In 2009 the Tournament went to the "Land of Lincoln," rolling into Springfield, Illinois. Joan Elmore won her  $3^{rd}$  Title pitching 84.97% while Sue Snyder finished  $3^{rd}$  at 83.26%. No women represented the Golden State in the Top Group

Cedar Rapids, Iowa was the site of the 2010 World Tournament. The big California news was that our Casey Sluys was inducted into the NHPA Hall of Fame! Joan Elmore took the Women's Crown, while Sue Snyder finished in 4<sup>th</sup> place. Representing California was Kimmy Stockli who finished in 15<sup>th</sup> place, and Sharon Paddock finished in 17<sup>th</sup> place. Joan, the champ, beat Kimmy 40-9 tossing a 87.93% at her, and beat Sharon 43-15 with a 78.95%. Sue Snyder beat Sharon 40-7 with a 78.95%, and beat Kimmy 42-17 with 79.41%

In 2011 in West Monroe, Louisiana Joan Elmore won again with Sue Snyder in third place behind Marlene Ray. No California women made the Championship Group on the Bayou.

The NHPA Big Show was in Knoxville, Tennessee in 2012. Joan Elmore won and our girl Sue Snyder finished 4<sup>th</sup>. There was no California Lady in the Championship Group, in fact in looking through that year's line-up the first California woman I came to was Stockton's Ashley Chambers who pitched 5.33% into Women's Class L. Go Ashley!

The World Tournament was in St. George, Utah in 2013. Cindy Hoffman of Pennsylvania won the Women's Championship...Sue Snyder finished 4<sup>th</sup>. California Ladies in the Championship Group were Kimmy Stockli (the reigning CA State Champ) who finished 15<sup>th</sup> and Sandra Johnson from Southern California who finished 16<sup>th</sup>. So how did our girls do against Sue Snyder? Sue beat Kimmy 40-30, Sue throwing 70.30% to Kimmy's 66.60%....a good game! Sue beat Sandra 41-24, Sue threw 70.60% to Sandra's 60.30...another pretty good one. Incidentally Sandra beat Kimmy in their game 40-18 throwing 61.5% to Kimmy's 48%. Sandra would go on to win her first California Women's Title in 2014. Sandra currently has 5 State Crowns and counting.

Buffalo, New York, was the site of the 2014 Tournament. The California Headline from Buffalo was that Hayden Lee took the Jr. Boys World Championship. The last Californian to win the Boys Title was Jeff Williams in 1976, a 38 year drought! Joan Elmore prevailed in the Women's Title chase with a great 86.91%. Sue Snyder finished in 6<sup>th</sup> with 69.63%, maybe starting to lose a step?

In 2015 Topeka Kansas held the Big Tournament. Debra Brown of Vermont was the Woman's Champ. Sue Snyder finished in 4<sup>th</sup> place with only 4 losses, but her ringer average dropped a point from the previous year to 68.93%. Sadly, this would be the Great Champion's last World Tournament, she had pitched in 28.

I've heard that Sue began having trouble calling scores on the horseshoe court, and became easily disoriented. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer 's disease, and as you know passed away this past August 19<sup>th</sup> in her home state Indiana, 5 years after her last World Tournament.

Sue Snyder was certainly a remarkable horseshoe pitcher and a wonderful woman. The horseshoe pitching world will never forget her! I'm sure that the games our California Women pitched against Sue Snyder are memories that are among their most cherished in their pitching careers!

Sue had one last interesting connection with California horseshoe pitching. A 1993 Newsline article said, "Sue is the first Woman's champion to throw the Cal-Flip horseshoe. Before that time everyone in Indiana pitched Gordons. Cal-Flips were made by "Horseshoe Pete" Donoho who made these first horseshoes designed for flip pitchers with the thumb cleat on the top of the shoe in Redding, California. Pete sent a pair of Cal-Flip horseshoes to President Bush, who threw a ringer with them when the NHPA was hosted at the White House in 1989. If you would like to see a video of the President throwing a Cal-Flip you can search on YouTube for "President George Bush and Horseshoe Pete's CAL-FLIP 0001. wmv" I'm sure that Sue pitching the Cal-Flip helped it to gain popularity. I know that several Top California pitchers used Cal-Flips including Woman's Champ Teddy Guillotte, Gail Sluys, and 1996 Elders World Champion Ray Santana.

It is not surprising that Sue had a flip horseshoe made in her name. I believe I read that the "Snyder EZ Flip" horseshoe was the most used horseshoe at the last World Tournament, taking Ted Allen's perennial spot at the top of the list. Sue's shoe was expertly flipped by Lindsay Hodgins, the 2019 Women's Champion. Due to the passing of time, and the realities of business, the name SNYDER was removed from the engraving on the shoe, and the shoes are now known officially as simply EZ Flips. I have a feeling that no matter what the manufacturer wants to call them they will long be known by horseshoe pitchers as "SNYDERS."

I asked Gail Sluys what it was like to pitch against Sue Snyder, and what she was like as a person. Gail said, "Sue was a total joy to pitch with. She was focused, honest and oh so good. In Greenville OH I wilted the temp was so high - they said highest on record for that time of year (they always say that you know). We ladies pitched at the park and between games they iced me down - the worst tournament I ever threw. Sue was a true friend - she helped me work with the Japanese ladies at the WT in Kitchener

Canada. All I did was ask and she said "I would love to". She gave them many great hints and one of them placed in her group - it was such a great experience - it was an honor to pitch with Sue, she never made anyone feel like they were less than her and was always encouraging."

Rest in peace Sue Snyder!



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### **President**

Judges Training

Joe Summers 231 Escondido Dr. Martinez, CA 94553-3035 925-260-0915 40ftforever@gmail.com

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President

**Statistics** 

Mike Anderson 1614 Longspur Ave. Sunnyvale CA 94087-4833 408-738-4661 meanderson99@yahoo.com

### Secretary/Treasurer

Gail Sluys 1721 San Ramon Wy Santa Rosa, CA 95409-3964 707-538-3128; 707-486-0594 nchpagail@gmail.com

### 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

**New Members** 

George Davis 1435 W. Vine St. Lodi, CA 95242-3861 209-365-1190 guydavis@comcast.net

### 4<sup>th</sup> Vice President

By-Laws/Schedule

Lorena Tournour
PO Box 113
Calpela, CA 95418707-485-7894 or 707-489-6227
latournour@gmail.com

#### **NCHPA Statistician**

Mike Anderson 1614 Longspur Ave Sunnyvale, CA 94087-4833 408-738-4661 meanderson99@yahoo.com

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Social/Sec

Alan Trusty. 2734 E. Whitmore Ave Ceres, CA 95307-2735 831-245-9254 alant 21@yahoo.com

### 5<sup>th</sup> Vice President

**Paper Supplies** 

Jeff Vieira 1537 W. Fairmont Apt-D Fresno, CA 93705 (559) 317-0721 jvhiker54@yahoo.com

#### Regional Director/Newsletter Editor

Casey Sluys 1721 San Ramon Wy. Santa Rosa, CA 95409-3964 707-477-8893 kcslus@sbcglobal.net