

From The Desk Of

John Martin Nov 18, 2013

Did you ever wonder how the term "Four Dead" originated?

In the NHPA archives I Found that Earl Wilson of the NHPA Hall Of Fame committee, has some evidence, it was Jack Cleaves who first coined the saying. Jack ran the St. Louis Municipal Horseshoe League and was an avid horseshoe promotor in the 1930's. He often featured such talent as Fernando Isais and Ted Allen in exhibitions. In 1939 he became vice president of the NHPA, Jack died in 1946..

When four ringers were thrown, the usual call to the scorekeeper was simply "*four ringers on* " or "*all four on* ." As an occupation, Jack was a caretaker for a large cemetery called Sunset Burial Park. During one of the exhibitions, when all four shoes thrown by the players were ringers, he suddenly called out, "four dead for Sunset Park." The spectators didn't know exactly what it meant but thereafter when all four shoes thrown were ringers, someone would invariably call out "four dead." Players around St. Louis reporting to scorekeeper's took up the phrase and gradually it became commonly used though-out the N.H.PA.

It sure sounds likely that's how it began, my only regret is that when I pitch, I never hear it all that much. jm