

# THE JOHN MARTIN HORSESHOE SCHOOL FOR BEGINNERS

## Lesson # 2 "HOW TO PITCH RINGERS"



A beginner must have a grip with which to hold the shoe and a delivery method to send the shoe to the opposite stake. Sadly it is impossible for anyone to advise a *new-be* which is best. Champions and most pitchers you will be competing with, hold and deliver their shoes in various ways, in order to make the shoe land "open" at the stake. The most common seem to be, the one and three quarter turn, the one and a quarter, the three quarter, and then the various flips. There are several others including the Lenny Davis overhand flip.

You must have a starting delivery, so study the finger position of pitchers you know and the flight of their shoe in the air. In practice try various deliveries and choose one that seems easiest for you to duplicate. This may or may not be the one you finally decide on but you have to start somewhere.

Now take a starting position approximately one half the distance to the opposite stake.. Stand erect but relaxed facing the stake. Swing the shoe forward then back then forward again and release the shoe as if you were gently tossing a ball to a friend. Repeat this over and over, as you consistently begin to reach the stake, gradually step back and increase the distance while working on the turn.

Once you have mastered the distance you will be ready for the finer points of pitching, they are, the grip, stance, footwork, addressing the stake, the swing, timing, rhythm, trajectory, alignment, follow through, etc., etc., etc.. If you were to take all of this into account, your shoe might end up in another court more often than near the stake you were aiming at. Instead start with only one at a time. I suggest "addressing the stake." That is to aim by raising the shoe toward the peg and mentally visualize the flight and the shoe landing around the stake.. The trajectory is next, try to have the shoe between seven and ten feet high at the mid point. Now practice, practice practice.. You will soon be modifying your delivery to include more and more of the finer points.

Bill Schumbacher was one of the best pitchers I knew. Before he passed away he told me, "There are only three things to remember in order to get a ringer. 1. - Throw the shoe 40 feet. 2. - have it land with open heel calk forward. 3. - Have the shoe in direct line with the stake.. One more tip - practice, practice, practice.... jm