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ROBERT BROWN (deceased)
Almond, New York

The second inductee in the Hall of Fame was Robert Brown, three time winner of the State championship in 1931, 1932, and 1935. He was among the first pitchers in the State to "break the 50% barrier, and his constant improvement of the game shows him to be one of the most interesting.

His State tournament averages show him to be a most formidable opponent with a steadily increasing percentage as follows:

1931: 50.1%	accumilative average: 50.1%
1932: 54.8%	52.5%
1935: 71.0%	58.6%

Accepting the Hall of Fame plaque for him was his daughter and his second wife, at the ceremonies in Dunbar Park, Pulaski, N.Y. in 1974.

He had the distinction of being the first N. Y. State pitcher to average over 70.0% ringers for the tournament. (1935).

A former Alfred University track star, Bob 'cut a handsome figure' on the courts, using a $1\frac{1}{4}$ turn in his delivery.

Working closely with Frank Niven, a promoter of the game, Bob gave sensational exhibitions of trick pitching throughout the State for many years.

For a time he resided in the city of Rochester, but his wife, Vera, now resides in Scio, New York, and still maintains Bobs scrap-book of his achievements.

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A BRIEF ON PITCHING RINGERS

Horseshoe Pitching, like many other skillful sports, is a simple game to learn, but a difficult game to master. It is the purpose of this article then, to give a few of the basic fundamentals in order that a better understanding of the principles of pitching may be had by a larger majority of people who come in contact with the game, and in order to simplify it for the beginner. To become an expert requires years of patient practice, study, thought and some natural ability, but for the masses who play the game for the sport of it, and who wish to know more about pitching, there will be given herein some pointers which may be of help.

First of all, merely consider the game in this light; a shoe weighing two and one-half pounds, is tossed through the air by a systematic set of motions in such a way as to make it land forty feet away and result in a ringer, by the shoe opening up and going on the stake by means of the opening in the shoe. The information wanted by most people is how to make this set of motions with the greatest proficiency and consistency. If you will watch a professional in action, you will note that his form is practically the same every time he throws the shoe. In other words, he is performing this set of motions with almost machine like precision—almost but not quite, since he misses occasionally showing that he cannot perform with absolute consistency every pitch. Since pitching is almost mechanical it becomes necessary then to learn a set of motions, and the right set, in order to come somewhere near to mastering the art.

There are two standard turns to use when pitching, either the one and one quarter turn, or the one and three quarter turn, which merely means that the shoe turns or revolves around during flight, just one and one quarter times to land open, one and three quarter times to do likewise. There is another turn used, namely the three quarter turn, but one has to be a master of the game in order to have any degree of success with it. The turns of the shoe depends on the grip used and the side on which the shoe is held. It will be noted that a one and one quarter pitcher holds the shoe so that the opening is towards the leg when the arm is dropped by the side. The shoe is held with the opening away from the leg for both the one and three quarter and the three quarter turns. These three turns all have their advantages and disadvantages. A little practice will soon show you which turn is the best for you to use.

The shoe is generally sighted before the swing is started. There are several methods of doing this, which can be gathered by ob-

servaion of a group of players. The arm is held straight, and swings from the shoulder like a pendulum of a clock. It is swung from the aim point back to a termination point in the back swing, which is generally as far back as the arm can be swung without discomfort, or loss of balance, and then forward again and the shoe released at practically the same point as it was aimed from. During this swinging operation, the feet have to be shifted in order to keep balance, and make pitching easy, just like taking a step to throw a ball. The step is started the instant that the arm is starting forward from the termination point in the back swing and it is completed when the arm has reached a point opposite the leg. Thus the step is taken rather quickly but very smoothly, and is for the purpose of keeping balance. The weight is shifted from the two feet to the left foot by means of the step, and the whole body moves forward on this step and the right foot is generally lifted clear of the ground about the time the shoe is released. Now the step and swing must be coordinated in such a way that the motions are smooth and efficient. This is known as timing of the step and swing. This soon becomes a habit, but much care must be taken at first on this factor.

The shoe must not be pitched so that its highest point of elevation during flight is not more than ten feet from the ground, and not less than six feet. The shoe must be held with a firm grip and one that is practical and can be used consistently. Both feet are generally together when the aim is being taken. Some players stand a little sideways to give a little more room for the arm to swing by the leg without interference. However this is overcome in most cases by what is known as the crossover step. On the step the left foot (the stepping foot for right handers), is crossed over in front of the right foot slightly as in Indian fashion. This helps keep balance, throws the hips to the left and allows the right leg to swing to the left on the step in order to allow the arm to move in a straight line from the aim point to the release point. This also gives alignment, and is the way the player is enabled to hit the stake consistently. The swing governs the distance. If the swing is controlled by an aim point, and termination point in the back swing and a release point, the length of the swing is then controlled, and if these points are the same every pitch little trouble will be experienced with the distance. Now a shoe is never thrown, heaved, tossed or pushed, it is swung. The weight of the shoe is great enough that when the arm goes through the pendulum swing, little effort is required to land it forty feet away.

With these factors in mind, along with these ideas of keeping relaxed at all times, taking pains to see that your balance is correct, your timing right, and that you are standing in exactly the same spot every shoe you pitch, you should make good headway in the game. It takes hours of practice to master these and develop them into habits, but don't become discouraged with results. Master the fundamentals and the ringers will come without a great deal of worry or effort. This is a clean sport, a healthy sport, and an exciting sport. If you doubt this, purchase two pairs of shoes, and a couple of soft iron stakes and try pitching. You cannot realize that you could have so much fun as this game offers everyone. It is inexpensive, too. So in closing, I hope that I have given you just one idea, which will help your game, and perhaps make you a champion.

—“BOB” BROWN, —
N. Y. S. Champion,
1931-1932.

Horseshoes

Past—Present—Future

by ERNEST R. HILLEBRANT

Chairman Promotion Committee

My earliest recollection of horseshoe pitching was with the discarded footgear of old Dobbin' himself. Of course the shoes were of various weights and sizes, if a nail did not come out readily, it stayed there, we pitched them just the same. Pegs driven in the ground about thirty feet apart, constituted what we now call a court. They projected about four or five inches above the ground. Ringers, if we were fortunate enough to get them counted five points, leaners three points and top ringers ten points. A game was 21 points.

In the winter of 1923 I entered a tournament at the Arena in Syracuse, N. Y., where I used regulation pitching shoes for the first time. Twenty courts with fifty men, pitching 15 point games. This contest continuing for three evenings and ending in a tie. Winner was decided by pitching one 50 point game. In this game I would say there was around 20% ringers pitched amid wild applause. We left the Arena firmly convinced that never again would we witness a contest of that calibre. In September, 1924, I entered the first New York State Tournament at the Rochester Exposition. C. C. Davis of Columbus, Ohio, then Wold's Champion, was giving exhibitions. I promptly decided that I had not seen anything yet. The old game has grown by leaps and bounds since that time. Percentages made in that tournament would not get you to first base now. There are a good many Clubs in Rochester and more in the surrounding towns and cities at present. We also now have a strong State organization and I hope I am not too visionary in predicting a future when teams will compete in different cities under cash guarantees to defray expenses, etc. So fellows let's get back of our local and State Association and give the old game a place amongst the other leading sports, that it richly deserves.

(Editors' Note:—“Ernie” was presented a loving cup at the completion of the 1933 Tournament for having successfully competed in all 10 State Championship Events 1924-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33).