

ADDRESSING THE STAKE From The Desk of John Martin =- Lesson 3



Roy Smith, a great player and authority on the fundamentals of horseshoe pitching, was an advocate of, "The Value of a Proper Swing." The swing is the governor of the pitching distance and because the game depends upon the shoe traveling a precise number of feet, it is one of the major factors in your becoming a good pitcher.

Roy's advice was to let the shoe swing backward from the forward address position, in an easy manner, extending it back as far as possible, without any discomfort to the shoulder and arm muscles. The further back the better, with backswings being as high as the pitcher's head or higher.

Just before the end of the backswing step forward, without consciously allowing the shoe to pause, let the weight of the shoe start your forward swing. When it comes in line with your eyes and the stake, relax your fingers and the shoe will automatically release from your hand. This is where our lesson on "Addressing The Stake" comes in, it is where the mind, coordinated vision, and hand movement combine to execute a given task.

The swing does not end here, the hand continues up and above the head, in the follow through, and the shoe is well on its way before the arm is down. In executing this swing, there is no jerking, snapping, or twisting of the arms or hands. You can compare it to the pendulum of a grandfather clock. In perfecting this delivery all movements are rhythmic and perfectly coordinated with the step.

In watching the average or below average pitcher, you will note that invariably they shorten the back swing, then power forward with arms, legs, and body to propel the shoe. This delivery is sure to be inconsistent and often with unpredictable results.. Failure to develop a smooth proper swing as we have described, ruins more potentially good players than any other *necessary fundamental of quality pitching. Good luck, practice, practice, practice... jm

* Coming soon, other fundamentals of quality pitching.. - Footwork, stance, alignment, trajectory, flight-wobble, timing, the grip, warm-up, knee-action.