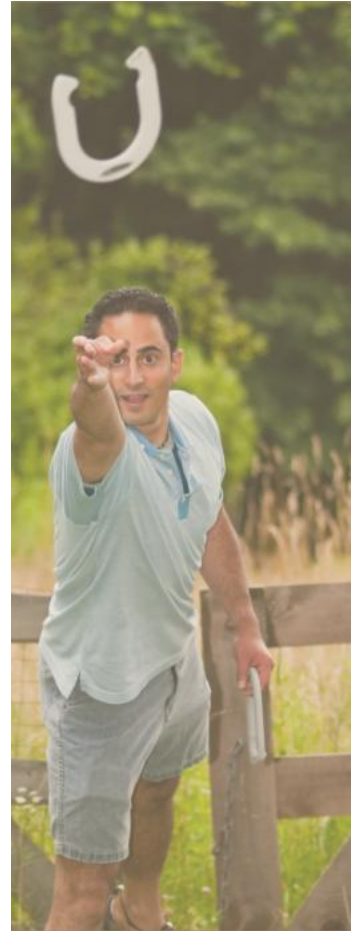


The Newest Old Backyard Sport

If you are looking for a challenging backyard sport with plenty of room to grow into higher levels of competition, you might consider Horseshoe Pitching. Horseshoes has traditionally been a sport handed down generation to generation by Grandparents, Parents, Aunts and Uncles to their younger counterparts beginning as early as 8 years of age. We must have skipped a generation, because participation in the sport has been dwindling over the past few decades. Beyond the backyard, Horseshoes was traditionally a favorite played at family reunions, picnics, outings, the beach or a park.

The benefits of the sport remain as they always were, but are perhaps more important today than ever. First and foremost, it is an out of doors, low impact cardio sport employing the same physical motions as Bowling. In fact, there have been times where the World Champion Bowler was also the World Champion Horseshoe pitcher! Beyond the out of doors, physical aspects, the sport requires concentration (on your technique) and sportsmanship.

Getting started is easy. After an initial investment of two steel stakes and a beginners set of pitching shoes for around \$40.00, the game can be set up and played in the backyard with only a single competitor (you?) or in groups of 2 or more. The single competitor would compete against himself/herself counting “ringers” only with the goal of improving on the number of ringers over a set number of shoes thrown (ringer percentage). At 20%, you’re ready for the next level.



The National Horseshoe Pitchers Association (NHPA) publishes a National set of rules for horseshoe play and sets the distance between stakes at 40 feet. However, Junior Competitors (age 18 and younger) and Cadets (age 12 and younger) can pitch at 30 foot and 20 foot distances respectively. A complete set of rules can be found at <https://www.horseshoepitching.com>. Once you’ve become an accomplished backyard pitcher, there are multiple clubs and leagues around New York State that offer opportunity for advanced competitions. Finding [pitching courts](#) beyond your own backyard can be a challenge, but a good place to start is your local Parks and Recreation Department.

The New York State Horseshoe Pitchers Association has a website, nyshpa.org, as well as social media feeds on both [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)) and also publishes a newsletter, “The Mud”. Each of these outlets include current opportunities to pitch (yes even in the winter!) as well as State wide statistics on players and tournaments. The NYSHPA also sponsors a State level competition annually while the NHPA sponsors a World Tournament. A great deal more information for pitching in general can be found on Facebook at: “All About Pitching Horseshoes” (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/731279450666242>).

This Facebook group is a carefully monitored private group for Horseshoe Pitchers only with over 7 thousand members nationwide.

If you are interested in getting a beginners program going or need additional information drop me a line at youth.director@nyshpa.org.

