

# HORSESHOE PITCHING

## PLAYING FIELD & EQUIPMENT

- The standard court is 6' x 46' with a pit at each end. The court features:
  - o The *pit*, also known as the *target area*, measuring 3' x 4' and set 1' back from foul line and the end of the court, and 18" from each side. It should be sand, dirt, or moist clay to prevent slippage.
  - o Two 15"H stakes set 40' apart, centered in the pit, and slightly inclined toward each other at 12 degrees
  - o A foul line 3' in front of each stake
  - o A pitcher's platform that is 18" wide on each side of the target area and 6' long from the foul line to the back end of the court.
- Horseshoes, also called *shoes*
  - o Approx. 7¼" x 7 ⅝"
  - o Approx. 2 lbs. 2 oz. to 2 lbs. 10 oz.
  - o 3½"L curved edges, called heel calks, at each open end and a raised toe calk in the middle.

\* On some playing fields, horseshoes may be replaced with rings or other devices that serve the same purpose.

## OBJECT OF THE GAME

Singles or teams of 2 pitch (throw underhand) horseshoes at the stakes in the ground, trying to land the shoes around or close to the stakes until one player or team wins the contest.

## LENGTH OF GAME

Each game is divided into innings. Four shoes are pitched—2 by each player—in each inning. Games consist of 25 innings (50 shoes), 20 innings (40 shoes), 15 innings (30 shoes), or until a player scores 50 points, 40 points, or a score agreed upon by opponents before the start of the game. Ties are broken by pitching 2 innings (4 shoes by each player) until a winner is decided and the tie is broken.

## PLAYING THE GAME

The first player to throw is determined by:

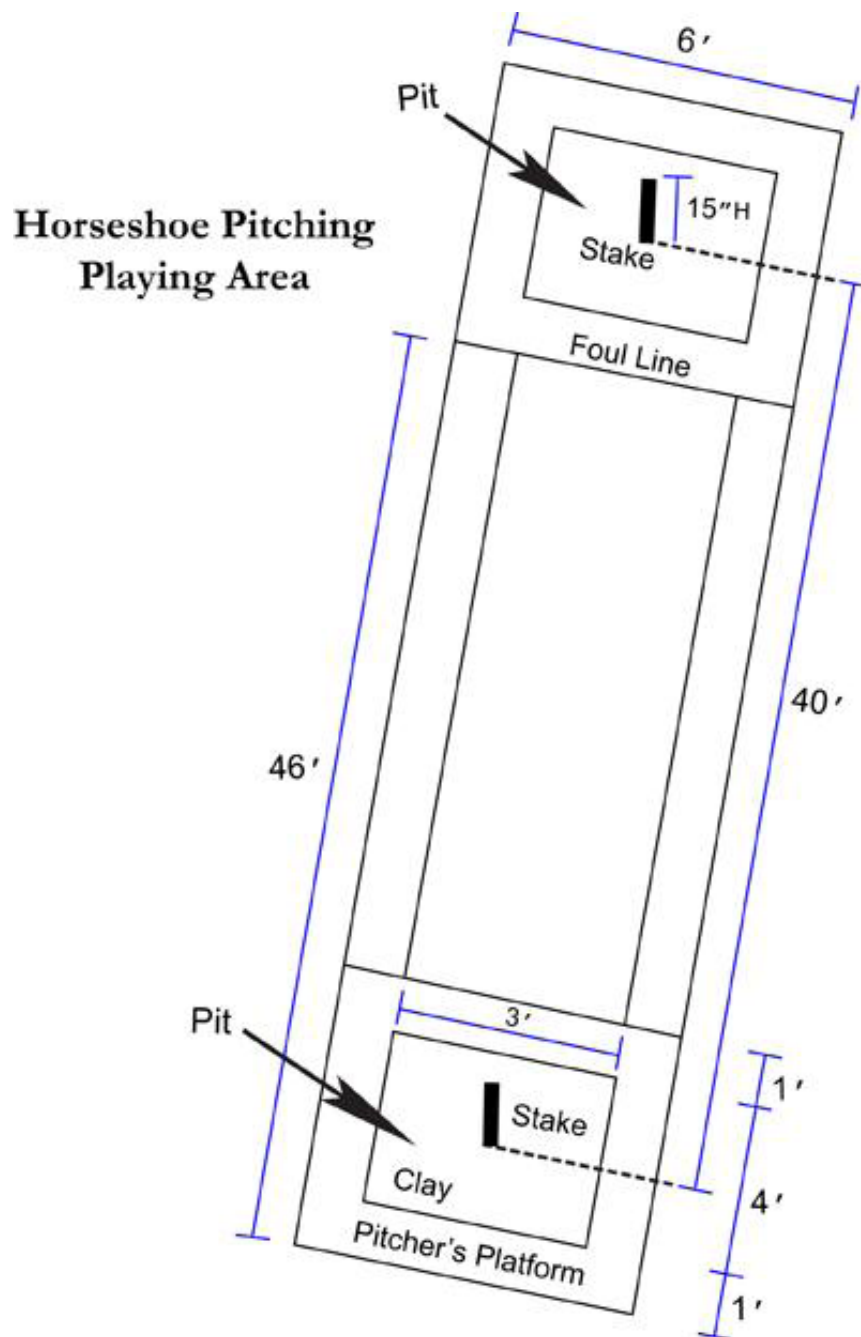
- A coin toss;
- A shoe throw (closest to the stake wins); or
- A shoe flip (each player flips the shoe, with one player calling out whether they will land in a like or opposite direction)

The winner has the choice of pitching first or second.

The pitcher's feet must be on the pitching platform and behind the foul line until the horseshoe is released. The opponent stays on the other side of the stake and behind the pitcher's box. The pitchers may throw from either side, but both shoes must be pitched from the same side. Players stay in the pitcher's box until an inning is finished.

*For Singles Play:*

Both players stand in the pitcher's box at the same end of the court. Each pitches 2 shoes to the target area. One player pitches both shoes and then the opponent pitches.



The players walk to the target stake and record the scores of the inning.

The player who is to pitch first steps to the platform while the opponent marks the score.

The players pitch back to the original stake. The player who scores earns the first pitch back to the original stake.

The players repeat the cycle until the game ends.

*For Doubles Play:*

One partner stands in the pitcher's box at each end of the court. Two shoes are pitched in alternate throws by each player from one end.

The scores of the first 2 players are recorded, ending the inning.

The shoes are pitched back, in turn, by the partners. (Players do not change ends during the game.)

The partner's scores are added, ending the next inning.

The cycle is repeated until the game ends.

The loser of the preceding game has the choice of whether to pitch first in the next game.

### **Scoring:**

#### *Cancellation*

Only one player scores in an inning. Ringers cancel each other and the closest shoe scores. Only shoes that land within 6" of the stake are eligible for scoring points.

A ringer is a thrown shoe that lands far enough around a stake that a straight line run between the heel calks will pass by the stake.

The shoe closest to the stake scores 1 point.

Two shoes closer than both of the opponent's shoes score 2 points.

One ringer scores 3 points; 2 ringers score 6 points.

One ringer plus the closest shoe by the same player scores 4 points.

Only the difference between the scores of an inning count; if scores are the same, no points are earned. Ringers are recorded on a score sheet so each player's ringer averages are correct.

Equal scores are ties and no points count. For example: each player has a ringer (canceling each other) but the next closest shoe scores 1 point in the inning (called ringer alike 1).

The player winning the most games in a class wins.

Notes: A shoe leaning against a stake scores 1 point, the same as a shoe flat on the ground or other close shoe. At the same time, if the opponent has a shoe on the ground that is touching the stake, it is a tie.

The highest score pitches first in the following inning; players alternate when there is a tie or no score.

#### *Alternate Method*

Ringers score 3 points. All shoes within 6" of the stake score 1 point.

Games last 25 innings, with 50 shoes pitched by each player or team.

The team with the most points wins. Ties are resolved by pitching at least 2 extra innings until the tie is broken.

Players alternate pitches throughout the game. One player pitches first to start the game and then pitches first in all odd-numbered innings; the opponent pitches first in the even innings.

Each player scores the points that they pitch in an inning.

**Fouls:**

The following violations are considered fouls:

- Distracting the pitcher
- Touching the pitched shoes before the scores are noted

Telling a player his shoe positions before the inning is over means loss of score in that inning by the offender.

A shoe does not score if it:

- Is pitched from an improper position
- Hits the ground and then enters the target area
- Strikes the pitcher's box

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