

Idaho State Horseshoe Pitchers Association

Hall of Fame

Idaho horseshoe pitching has a long and distinguished history which no doubt has included many great pitchers and promoters. The oldest records on state tournaments date back to 1952 when the Idaho Association was believed to have been formed. In 1958, the association was chartered by the National Horseshoe Pitchers Association and has been an active member ever since.

In order to honor the people who have led the Idaho charter by pitching greatness or administrative hard work, in 2011 a by-law was passed establishing the Idaho State Hall of Fame (HOF). In 2012 the inaugural class of charter members was inducted. The HOF Guidelines outline the criteria for induction into the Hall. The current contact person for the HOF is David Spears whose contact information is available from an Idaho State Officer.



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Charter Members: 2012

E. J. Wiley

Nampa resident E. J. Wiley has the distinction of being Idaho's first (men's) State Champion (in 1952). EJ (Encil John) won 12 consecutive state titles from 1952 through 1963. EJ also held two state records during that timeframe: 1) a 70% state tournament average in 1957 and 2) an 86.6% single game percentage at the 1960 state singles tournament. EJ passed away in 1989 at the age of 89 and was survived by his wife Edith of Nampa, two daughters both of Seattle, and a son in California.



Dean Curry

Dean Curry was a fourteen-time men's state champion spanning the years of 1964 through 1992. He was a member of the NHPA from 1964 through 2006. He also served three terms as the Idaho State Horseshoe Pitcher's Association (ISHPA) President and was instrumental in building 18 horseshoe pitching courts in Lewiston. Dean was a strong advocate of holding the state tournament on Labor Day weekend and was a constant promoter and organizer of the horseshoe pitching sport. Dean passed away in January of 2010 at the age of 85.



Inductees: 2014

Clarence Cummins

Clarence and his wife Juanita came to Idaho from California in the early 1970s and resided in St. Maries. He became one of Idaho's best pitchers and state champions. He won six state championships between 1973 and 1981 and averaged over 58% for the 54 tournaments that can be found in the records. This was one of Idaho's highest averages during that time frame. While he lived in Orcutt, California he often posted ringer percentages in the high 60s. Clarence's reputation was well known at the time. He passed away in 1991 at the age of 80 in Coeur d'Alene.



Elmer Currie

A former Kootenai County Commissioner turned horseshoe pitcher, Elmer Currie (age 94 in 2014) didn't take up horseshoe pitching until he was 55. He fell in love with the game and went on to raise funds to help build two horseshoe pitching complexes, one was at the Kootenai County fairgrounds and the other at Winton Park in Coeur d'Alene. Elmer intensely promoted horseshoes and eventually served as ISHPA's President for three terms. Elmer was the first Idaho pitcher to receive Yakima's "Mr. Horseshoe" award which is given out annually to a pitcher in the Northwest who exhibits outstanding efforts for the promotion of horseshoes. A local newspaper stated "If it wasn't for Elmer Currie's DOGGED determination, Coeur d' Alene likely would not have organized horseshoe pitching." Elmer passed away in 2019 at the age of 99.



Jim Kosterman

Jim Kosterman was instrumental in the formation of the Idaho Association in 1952, also serving as the first Secretary/Treasurer of the Idaho Association. His efforts also helped Idaho be chartered into the National Horseshoe Pitcher's Association in 1958. Jim was very influential in the construction of the horseshoe courts in Boise's Julia Davis Park in the 1950's. By 1960, these nine courts were sanctioned with lights for night play and became the largest horseshoe pitching center in Idaho. The Boise Club led the way hosting tournaments in Idaho, including initiating in 1958 a "Pac-Out Trophy;" the holder of the trophy had to defend it the last Sunday of the month. This type of rivalry not only promoted horseshoe play but also received much favorable publicity in the local newspapers. Jim hosted many tournaments and leagues throughout the years until leaving the state in 1964. He died at the age of 78 in Vancouver, Washington.



Inductees: 2016

Nick Piva

Nick Piva was President of the Challis horseshoe club for over 20 years. He ran many tournaments during that time and started the Fourth of July doubles tournament that continues today. Living in Challis was a challenge for his love of horseshoes and caused him to travel great distances to pitch, which he did. Nick went to three World Tournaments and finished second twice and third once. Nick worked with Lynn Johnson who ran a High School "Lifetime Sports" program in the 90's by teaching horseshoe pitching. He introduced many players to the game and taught them how to pitch better. He helped with the Idaho state tournament when it was held in Salmon and went on to win three Idaho state championships as an elder. He won those titles in 2008, 2009, and 2012. Nick was always a gentleman at tournaments and a powerful influence to the game of horseshoes in the state of Idaho.



Bob Zausch

Bob Zausch began pitching organized horseshoes in 1990 after pitching casually for years. Bob was a leader in the development of the Pocatello Horseshoe Association (Gate City) and served as President for many years. He signed up over 400 new pitchers over the years. In the early 2000's in Pocatello he started the Idaho State doubles tournament, a tournament he directed each year until 2015. He was president of the ISHPA for two years and directed the state singles tournament several times. Bob was awarded the "Tournament Director of the Year" in 2003 and served as Vice-President of the Pocatello World Tournament organization for the 2004 World Tournament (WT) held in Pocatello. He received a "Certificate of Appreciation" from the mayor of Pocatello for his work in putting on the WT. He won or placed high in many horseshoe tournaments and helped get youth involved by setting up a juniors program. He helped pitchers get into the game and improve their pitching skills. The sport is stronger and more popular because of Bob's hard work and diligence in maintaining a high level of leadership.



Bobby Faulkner

Bobby started pitching as a boy in Tennessee and continued to do so wherever he went, including Washington and Idaho. While serving in Vietnam he promoted the game to fellow servicemen. Bobby came to Pocatello and became involved with the Bar League. He started promoting the NHPA to bar league players and grew the Gate City Association to great heights. Bobby was a full-time promoter of horseshoe pitching and informed local TV stations and news media to the activities of horseshoe pitching in Pocatello. Bobby encouraged many new pitchers into the game in several local communities and instructed them in the ways of the NHPA. He made the game fun and enjoyable to all those pitchers around him.



Bobby's ultimate goal was to get the WT to Pocatello. He was the driving force in getting that done and in 2004 the WT was successfully held in Pocatello. He helped raise the funding, negotiated the Holt Arena arrangements, solicited businesses to support the event, and helped increase the Gate City Association membership numbers which in turn became the largest local area participation in the history of the WT. He was instrumental in the creation of an indoor pitching facility which allowed the local pitchers to pitch year around. Bobby will forever be remembered as the face of 2004 WT and the driving force behind Pocatello horseshoe pitching, both sanctioned and non-sanctioned.

Inductees: 2018

Linda Martin VanGorder

Linda was a staple in the sport of Idaho Horseshoe Pitching until her departure in 2001. Linda was very active in the sport while residing in Fairfield and also helped Berle and Leona Reise run events. She also served as the "Four Dead" newsletter editor. During her many years as a solid Idaho pitcher Linda captured 19 women's State Championships and was one of the most dominant players throughout the state during her many years of pitching.



Gary Kollmann

Gary started pitching in the mid 80's after responding to a horseshoe pitching ad for a Caldwell league. Since that time horseshoe pitching has been a big part of Gary's life. Gary is now a 5-time men's State Champion who has done much for the sport. Gary, while teaching and coaching when employed with the Nampa school district, included horseshoes into his P.E. program to interest his students in the game. Gary has also run many tournaments in Nampa at Lakeview Park. Gary has been an officer of the state association and has contributed in many ways while in that role. Through Gary's and the efforts of others he setup the first and only Junior Tournament at Lakeview Park in 1997. Gary has also contributed greatly with the court improvements at Lakeview Park.



Jerry Smith

Jerry moved from California to Idaho in 2004, and soon after the move he chose to run for the ISHPA secretary/treasurer position in 2005. Jerry was elected to that position and started his newly elected role in January of 2006. Jerry also took over as the newsletter editor as well as the statistician. Jerry, being an avid horseshoe enthusiast, took on writing books for Don Titcomb along with compiling Volume 2 of the NHPA history of the World Tournament after the passing of Gary Kline who wrote Volume 1. Jerry received the NHPA Achievement award.

Jerry has been the "go to" person for horseshoe pitching knowledge. In addition to the above roles, Jerry has been a constant promoter and organizer of the sport and brought in new members while running many tournaments. Jerry and Gary Kollmann also worked together with the Parks Department to upgrade the courts in Lakeview Park that included extending pitching platforms, adding a fence around the courts, and adding a small shed to house brooms, shovels, and other equipment. Jerry is currently the NHPA 3rd Vice President, a position serving as the Sanction League Director and overseeing the Junior Scholarship Program.



Inductees: 2020

Keith Lewis

In the 1980s Keith Lewis was introduced to horseshoe pitching by Don Moser and began pitching in Inkom City tournaments. Soon he and Don paired up as doubles partners. Keith's induction in the Hall of Fame "Promoter/Organizer" category is based on his attention to detail, specifically when it came to the 2004 World Tournament held in Pocatello. Having been the Gate City Horseshoe Pitcher's Association treasurer from 1998 through 2012, he was a natural choice to be the treasurer for the 2004 WT. Keith's work on the 2004 WT helped to make the tournament a success as well as to bring recognition and prestige to the State of Idaho and our state association. Keith was respected as a pitcher, too, known as a good sport on the courts with the ability to come on strong late in the game. He was a 4-time State Doubles champion, a 6-time Idaho State Class champion, and an overall club tournament champion on two occasions.



Carlena Shove

About forty years ago Carlena Shove saw an ad in the newspaper about pitching horseshoes at the fairgrounds. She contacted the organizer, Elmer Currie (a 2014 HOF inductee), showed up, and the rest is history. Carlena and her late husband, Don, played and introduced young people to the game, often visiting schools. They also were instrumental in the construction of a horseshoe complex in Kellogg, and Carlena was the driving force behind the Elmer Currie Classic and other Coeur d'Alene tournaments. Carlena organized tournaments for two decades. In 2001 she was key in restarting the Kootenai County Horseshoe Pitchers Association. She was club secretary, treasurer, director, and designer of hats and shirts, too. Inducted in the Hall of Fame in the "Promoter/Organizer" category, Carlena was also well-respected as a pitcher, winning her class at four state tournaments and many local tournaments, and finishing sixth in her class at the 2004 World Tournament held in Pocatello.



Inductee: 2022

Kay Keskinen

Kay's father taught her to pitch horseshoes at her family's Minnesota lake resort when she was around eleven. Pitching at 40 feet, she and her dad would play doubles against fishermen; a win brought her dad a beer and her a root beer. Thus began her lifetime passion for the sport, often going above the call of duty to better the game. She created her own horseshoe pitching website in order to give people access to information and teaching tools on horseshoe pitching. Kay worked with Moscow Parks and Recreation to improve horseshoe courts so that sanctioned tournaments could be held in Moscow.



Kay was the ISHPA assistant newsletter editor for two years and has been the editor for the past ten years. When the webmaster for the ISHPA suddenly passed away, Kay stepped in to continue the web presence of the ISHPA. Her relentless effort of getting things done has expanded the newsletter in many ways. She pitched at 40 feet until 2008 when she began to pitch in sanctioned tournaments. A three-time Women's State Champion, her lifetime ringer average is 54.5%. In 2021, the NHPA presented her with the Achievement Award recognizing her outstanding efforts at the state and local levels. Kay has been a vital part of the Hall of Fame Committee, plus she is an organizer and promoter of the game in the Moscow area. The ISHPA Hall of Fame has three categories of eligibility for the Hall: player, player/organizer, and promoter/organizer. Kay qualifies for the Hall of Fame in all three categories.

Inductee: 2025

Karen Wickham

Karen's career pitching began in 2003 when a friend asked her to sub on a horseshoe league night. Karen says, "The shoes just went on the peg very easily for me, and I thought, 'Wow, I can do this.'" Yes, she sure could. Judy and Bobby Faulkner then got her qualified for sanctioned tournaments with a 33% ringer average, and that's what really got her started pitching. Driving an hour each way, she pitched at the Rim Rock tournaments. She recalls playing in a lot of tournaments that summer; the courts were so busy, all the pits were full.

Karen played on a team that was at the bottom of the league (no one more than 10%) and needed one more player. Play was handicapped, and they had to give up 30-40 points in each game. Her opponents were unhappy with her on that team and a fight nearly broke out. Karen's best game was one with 24 ringers out of 26 shoes at Chalkhorse.

With Karen's six state women's championships, her advice to new pitchers is: "Play people who are better than you; you will learn more and it will push you to try harder. Single points win games. You can come from behind. Never give up." Once she was losing 13-37 and pushed through winning 40-39. She says that was her most memorable tournament ever. Karen is inducted into the Hall of Fame in the player category.

