

## **Basic Horseshoe Rules**

### **The Courts**

1. Stakes are placed 40 feet apart.
2. Stakes should extend 14 to 15 inches above the pit surface.
3. Stakes may be inclined toward each other, but not more than a 3 inch lean.
4. Stakes are solid or hollow steel 1 inch in diameter.
5. Stakes should be a minimum of 21 inches from the front and back of the pit.
6. Pits are constructed 31 to 36 inches wide and 43 to 72 inches deep. If the pit is less than the maximum dimensions, the extra space shall be filled with the same material of which the platforms are made and shall be level with the pit and platforms. The stake at the center.
7. Pits are best filled with clay, which must be watered periodically to maintain its texture. Sand, sawdust, and loose soil are more commonly used. The purpose of the filler is to keep the shoes from bouncing excessively, so any material that accomplishes this can be used. Minimum depth of the substance is 4 inches but 8 inches is recommended.
8. A foul line is marked 3 feet in front of each stake. Thus, the resulting throwing distance (foul line to opposite stake) is 37 feet. For Female, Junior, and Elderly contestants the foul line is 27 feet from the opposite stake.

### **Backboards**

1. Backboard should be at least four feet behind the stake.
2. Should be at least one foot high and extend the width of the pit.

### **The Horseshoe**

1. It shall not weigh more than 2 pounds, 10 ounces.
2. It shall not exceed 7 1/4 inches in width.
3. It shall not exceed 7 5/8 inches in length.
4. On a parallel line 3/4 inch from a straightedge touching the points of the shoe, the opening of the shoe must not exceed 3 1/2 inches.

### **The Rules**

1. Each player pitches both shoes followed by the opponent's two shoes.
2. In pitching a shoe, the player may not cross the foul line.
3. When playing teams, half the team throws from one stake and half throws from the other.
4. Games can be played to 40 points in a point limit game or 40 shoes in a shoe limit game. In the shoe limit game the player with the highest points wins. If a tie exists then each player can take a half win or a two inning tie breaker can be thrown.

### **Scoring**

1. Any shoe must be within one horseshoe-width (measured across the outside of the open end of the shoe) of the stake to be considered for points. (Official rules call for 6 inches max).

2. The closest shoe to the stake gets 1 point.
3. If you have two shoes closer than any of your opponent's, you get 2 points.
4. Ringers are worth 3 points each and must completely encircle the stake so the ends can be touched with a straight-edge without touching the stake.
5. If you have the closest shoe and a ringer, it's 4 points.
6. If your opponent throws a ringer on top of yours, they cancel and no points are scored.
7. Leaners are worth 1 point and are considered closer than any adjacent shoe except ringers.