



## Press Release

### **NATIONAL HORSESHOE PITCHER'S ASSOCIATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 17, 2024**

**Tri-Cities WA to host 2024 World Horseshoe Pitching Tournament Championships  
Kennewick, WA (July 29, 2024)**

The Tri-Cities is a community made up of three closely linked cities (Kennewick, Pasco, and Richland) near the confluence of the Yakima, Snake and Columbia Rivers in the Columbia Basin of Eastern Washington. Pasco was the first of the Tri-Cities to be incorporated, in 1891 with Kennewick joining in 1904 and Richland in 1910. Farming was the basis of every part of the economy in the early years and even today remains a big part of the Tri-Cities, especially in Pasco.

Located in the heart of Kennewick, the Three Rivers Campus with 44,000 sq. ft. of playable floor space and the Three Rivers Convention Center, a 75,000 sq. ft. facility provides a perfect location for the NHPA 2024 World tournament. The tournament will be hosted at that location (7016 W. Grandridge Blvd., Kennewick) July 28-August 3, 2024, with free admission for all. The competition begins each day at 8 a.m. and ends at approximately 10 p.m. daily. A total of 553 athletes will be competing in the event with entries from the United States, Norway, Germany, and Canada. Prizes totaling \$97,440 will be awarded including 9 new World Champions in the Women, Men, Senior Women, Senior Men, Elder Men, Junior Boys, Junior Girls, Cadet Girls, and Cadet Boys divisions. All applicable health protocols will be followed.

Horseshoe's is a sport that has existed for many years. While horseshoe historians have not been able to discover when the game changed from quoits to horseshoes pitched at two stakes, it began as a modification of the old Grecian game of discuss throwing. In 1869, England set up rules to govern the game with the distance between the two stakes as 19 yards. No tournaments were held, or records kept until 1909. One of the members of the National Horseshoe Pitchers Association (NHPA) competing this year in his 60<sup>th</sup> consecutive World Tournament is Mark

Seibold, who currently has a 52.13% ringer percentage and is from Florida. We're excited to see Mark compete as 60 consecutive years has never been accomplished before.

We welcome many pitchers from the host state of Washington. There are seventy-five members of the NHPA competing from the state. We are grateful to each of them for competing with us this year and being great hosts for the NHPA World Horseshoe Tournament.

Returning to compete after winning his 27<sup>th</sup> World title is Alan Francis from Defiance, Ohio. Alan has competed in 42 World Tournaments since 1981, is a 1996 NHPA Hall of Fame member, and has a phenomenal win/loss record of 616.5 wins and 59.5 losses. He is ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in the Men's division at 85.05% ringers, looking to add to his World Record collection. Ranked number two this year at 76.78% ringers is Ben Webb, NHPA 4<sup>th</sup> Vice President and NHPA Junior Director. Ben finished 5<sup>th</sup> in Lansing Michigan and has been preparing for the opportunity to pitch against Alan again this year. Close behind rounding out the top 5 are Dan Watson (AL-74.03%), Austin Bailey-Acting NHPA President (IL-72.35%), Matt Fuller (WA-68.60%) Others in the Men's championship are: Nathan Williams (CA), Rick Bermingham (CA), Dalton Rakestraw (CA), Jeff Finke (TX), Bobby Bartell (CA), Cal Beaudoin (AB), Todd Liles (OR), Don Davis (WA), Terry Hudson (NC), Joseph Smith (IA), Gary Currier (ME).

The defending Women's Champion is Sarah Chaffee of Chippewa Falls, (WI). Sarah captured the title in 2023 pitching 81% ringers and winning with a 15-0 record. She has won 3 world titles with 2 as a junior pitcher and 2 wins in the Women's division. Competition will be tough in the Women's division with 7 of last year's championship class returning for a shot at the championship. Sarah comes into the tournament with an average of 86.59%, followed closely by Shalee Cason (FL) at 83.75% who was not available for last year's tournament. Marlene Ray (TN) 82.21%, NHPA Hall of Fame recipient will be a strong competitor at 82.21% and John Elmore, NHPA Hall of Fame recipient (TN) 77.94%, who has competed in 26 World Tournaments, is a 10-time Women's Division World Tournament champion and is searching for another title. She will have a strong field to compete against with 7 of last year's championship class returning for another shot at the title. last year's second place finisher and has her eyes on the top spot. Other pitchers in the championship class are Doris Hieden (TX), Maxine Griffith (TN), Penny Steinke (WI), Amy Francis (OH), Blanca Hettinga (OR), Karen Graham (NY), Trisha Lincoln (AZ), Jane Cordingley (AB), Cindy Clausen (WA), Helen Hawkinson (MN), Ellen Perry (NY), and Lori Finke (TX). The Women's division is always a competitive experience and one that spectators will enjoy with fierce competition.

The Elder's division is wide open for a new champion with none of last year's top 5 finishers competing this year. Competition will be tough with Tom Moffat (British Columbia) at the top of the group at 78.01. Close behind is Mike Massari (AZ) 73.58% and Benj Rains (UT) 72.95%. Others hoping to compete for the championship are John Bruhn (WA), Jim Bilderback (WI), Dale Marteney (GA), Joseph Cisneros (KS), Ricky Grim (PA), Bob Mccauley (BC), Dan Hiatt (KS), Don Gillette (MO), Roy Buhler (UT), Dale Hulet (UT), Sante Michielin (BC) Alan Larson (MN) and Al Ross (OK).

Since Maxine Griffith (last year's Senior Women's Champion) moved back to the Women's division, the Senior Women's championship is up for grabs. Heidi Haraga (British Columbia) leads the group at 65.85% with last year's 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher (San Juanita Murray-TX) 59.48%, ranked second and last year's 5<sup>th</sup> place finisher Sheila Shepard (CO) 59.21% as third), returns as the defending champion for Senior Women. She has won the Senior Women's championship nine times in the 18 World Tournaments she has entered. Sheila is a 2020 NHPA Hall of Fame member. Others in the top ten are Diane Luiz (CA), Wei Xiao (BC), Janet Larson (MN), Val Andres (BC), Mary Fimbres (AZ), Laurie Lampkin (KY), Shelly Martinez (MA), Elaine Mcmath (BC) and Jan Knaub (CO).

Ranked at number 1 in the Senior Men's division is Ken Fraser (NY) at 72.75%. Ken was the 5<sup>th</sup> place finisher in last year's competition with 57.78% ringers. Close behind is Stan Griggs (MO) with 66.06%. Stan was the 2<sup>nd</sup> place finisher in 2023 with 60.34%. Previous World Champion, Jacob Fimbres (AZ) returns with 59.6% to compete again for the title. Others in the Championship class: Steven Gibson (UT), Ramiro Coronado (CA), Vern Kollasch (IA), Mark Seibold (FL), Eddie Montoya (CA), Ken Heinritz (WI), Ken Jones (NM), Cortian Mathewson (WA) and Bill Navratil (CT). Significantly absent is our friend and NHPA President, Gary Roberts, who unexpectedly passed away earlier this year. His competition will be significantly missed in this year's competition.

If you are looking for some fun and enjoyment at the World Tournament, don't miss out on the Cadet and Junior Girls and Boys competition. Pitching from 20 or 30 feet, depending on their age, these pitchers will show how to enjoy the sport that we have all loved. The top 4 cadets this year are Zachary Smith (IA) 32.44%, Gavin Begaye Jr. (CA) 29.31%, Jeremiah DeMello (WA) 24.58%, and Eben Begaye (CA) 22.81%. The Cadet division will be open for a new champion with the absence of last year's top 3 pitchers from this division. The top Junior girl is Lily Strong (CA) 51.05%. She will be competing against Sadie Wolken (MO) 46.25% and Adilaide Ohms (UT) 29.02% for the top spot. Hastiin Begaye (CA) 73.78% holds a strong spot for the Junior Boy's champion with the closest competitor as Zack Grzembki (MA) 52.33%. Tom Grose (NV) 48.12% was second in the 2023 World Tournament with 67.60% and will have to compete at that level for a shot at Hastiin this year. Rounding out the top junior class is Coulson Ohms (UT) 47.47%.

The media day is set for July 29th at 10:00 a.m. and the "Warm Up" tournament on Saturday, July 27th at 8:00 a.m., all events are free to the public to come and watch. The Hall of Fame Banquet will be Sunday, August 4th at the Red Lion Hotel Columbia Center, located at 1101 N. Columbia Center Blvd. with Social hour at 5:00 pm and dinner at 6:00 pm. Tickets will be on sale at the NHPF booth. Welcome to the 2024 NHPA World Horseshoe Pitching Tournament.