

## Horseshoe Pitching

The horseshoe pitch consists of two ends each of which has a "pitching box" which is a six feet square marked on the ground. Inside each pitching box is a smaller rectangle which measures around three by six feet or slightly less and is referred to as "the pit". The pit is oriented centrally so that its long side is parallel to the long edge of the pitch and is filled with sand to absorb the impact of a horseshoe. In the middle of each pit is a metal stake one inch in diameter sticking up fifteen inches above the surface and inclined about three inches from the vertical towards the thrower. The points where each stake intersects the ground are separated by forty feet.

The area within the pitching box but outside the pit forms two strips on the right and left and it is these that the players must stand within when throwing their horseshoes. Where pitching is done behind a line, both feet must remain behind the line while pitching.

Horseshoes can be any size in informal games but league competitions will have regulations. Typical strict rules would be that each horseshoe should weigh around two pounds eight ounces, be seven and five eighths inches long, seven inches wide and the gap should be three and a half inches wide.

### The Play

A coin is tossed to decide who starts and thereafter the player to pitch first alternates with the end. The first player throws both horseshoes at the opposite stake one after the other. The second player then does the same thing. The score for the end is then calculated and the players play the next end by reversing direction and throwing at the other stake.

Any horseshoe that completely surrounds the stake is called a "ringer" and scores three points unless cancelled out by an opponents ringer. If there is some doubt as to whether or not a horseshoe qualifies as a ringer, a straight edge should be placed against the open end of the horseshoe. If straight edge doesn't touch the stake, a ringer is scored. For such a simple game the scoring can seem complicated because of the way that ringers are cancelled out. To desimplify this, the various options are listed below:

1. If no ringers are thrown, the nearest horseshoe to the stake counts one point.
  2. If both players throw a single ringer each, the ringers are cancelled out and the nearest of the other two horseshoes scores one point.
  3. Should both players score two ringers each, they cancel each other out and no points are scored.
  4. If one player manages one ringer but the other player pitches two ringers, three points are scored.
  5. If a single ringer has been scored that player wins three points plus an extra point if that player's other horseshoe is the closest of the remaining three.
  6. Finally, if a player achieves two ringers and the other player manages none, six points are scored.
- The first player to reach 21 points wins the game.