



## **TOM WILLIAMS**      **Cement City**

inducted 2008 at Kalamazoo

Born into a traditionally rich horseshoe pitching family, Tom Williams continues to carry on that proud heritage which began in the 1920's when his uncle, Beryl, started pitching on a farm near Paulding, Ohio. Beryl introduced the game to his brothers during the 1930's and 1940's, and he continued to pitch until age 92 with the Jackson County Horseshoe club league. Tom, the son of three...time state champion Robert "Ozzie" Williams and brother of Sue Williams, 1980 Junior Girls World Champion, Tom has created his own historic niche into the annals of horseshoe pitching in the state of Michigan. Tom has earned the right to have his name mentioned in the same breath with Michigan's all-time greatest pitchers Joe Latzko, Roy Smith, Doc Maison and Ken Jensen.

His family has played the most important role in Tom Williams horseshoe career. Tom and his father are the only father-son combination to win Class A state championships. He and his sister, Sue, share great memories of traveling about the country with their parents to world tournaments. The support Tom has received from his family throughout the years has been uncompromising. Tom had two great practice partners while learning the game, his dad, who taught him to throw the turn and a quarter, and Sue. The encouragement from his mother, Peg, brothers and sisters, uncles and cousins became the foundation of Tom's outstanding horseshoe pitching career. The involvement and support from his wife, Lisa, his daughter, Shalane, and his late son, Dallas, have meant the world to Tom. Lisa has become very active with the Jackson league as she sells 50/50 raffle tickets and runs the league tournaments.



Tom takes great pride in his affiliation with the Jackson County Horseshoe Club, which was established in 1973 with his Dad being a founding member. Since the beginning of this outstanding league, which annually has over 100 members, a team consisting of the Williams family has won the championship a total of 15 times. These teams have consisted of his Dad, Uncles, Beryl, Harry and Ray, Brothers Randy and Bob-which is very special to Tom to be able to compete with Bob in the league and in the state tournaments, something that he hopes lasts a long time - and cousins Rob, Ronnie, Scot and Randy. During the course of this league only two pitchers have had a zero handicap, his Dad in 1973, and Tom nine times. His other accomplishments include having high series 29 times, high average 29 times and high game 28 times, including 27 consecutive years his average. Tom has served with distinction as league secretary since 2000.

At age ten, in 1978, Tom entered his first tournament; the Water Wonderland National Open held in Jackson, His illustrious career as a junior included two state championships, 1982 and 1984, a fourth place finish in the World Junior Boys championship division in 1982, and a eighth place finish in 1984, In 1981, Tom won the WorWJunior Boys Class B championship. In 1988, Tom entered his first men's state tournament and qualified for the championship group. Before the beginning of the second day of competition the legendary Dick "Bulldog" Pelton told Tom that he would not win the championship because he had yet to pay his dues. Tom proved Dick wrong as he went on to defeat Dean LeClair in a playoff game for the championship. The 1989 State Championships again found Tom in a playoff but this time it was against his Dad. Never before, or since has Tom felt so uncomfortable in a game of horseshoes. He was still living at home, and the only time, (for a reason,) his mother was not fully cheering for him. Tom lost the game, but at the conclusion of the game became one of the most heartwarming moments ever witnessed on the courts as they all hugged each other. In yet another playoff game in 1995 against defending champion Jim Wiltse, the game was close and went back and forth. With the score at 3 7 each, Tom had the first pitch. His first shoe went on but his second shoe landed left of the stake. Jim, sensing another championship, threw his first shoe on, and as his second shoe was going around the stake it nicked Tom's shoe enough to flip it over and around the stake. At that point Jim jokingly asked Tom if he could score nine points as he had just thrown three ringers, which was politely refused. Having first pitch, Jim threw back down but missed with one of his shoes. Tom stepped up in his calm, cool and collective manner to throw two ringers to claim his third state championship. Through 2007, and 20 state championship tournaments, Tom has won eleven champions and finished second five times. Ironically, Tom has yet to win a championship going undefeated; a goal he hopes to fulfill at some point in the future.

At the 2008 World Tournament, Tom established himself as a force to be reckoned with in the future. With his parents in the stands and ever present support from his family, Tom pitched in class A 1 during the preliminary rounds and finished in third place behind Alan Francis and Brian Simmons with a 10 - 5 record averaging 72.8%. In the championship round Tom finished in fifth place, equaling Roy Smith's 1969 World Tournament finish, and the highest place a Michigan pitcher has ever finished in the modern ERA of horseshoe pitching, by going 13 -6 and averaging 70.9%. As Tom reaches the most productive years of a horseshoe pitcher we can only imagine what heights await him.

Tom has pitched many outstanding games but two of his his most memorable occurred in the 2008 World Tournament. In his game with defending world champion Alan Francis, Tom threw 32 out of 40, 80% and lost 21 - 7, as Alan threw 37 out of 40, 92.5%, and against former world champion Brian Simmons, Tom threw 33 out of 40, 82.5%, and lost 16 - 13, as Brian threw 34 out of 40, 85%. Tom finished 2nd in the world in 2012 in Knoxville, TN was a moment he will cherish forever. His Mom, Dad, Wife Lisa, and Granddaughter Chloe were there as his supporters.

Tom was also an avid bowler participating in leagues from age 10 and up until he was 40. Many top finishes as an adult in scratch tournaments along with 4 - 300 games. Won the Jackson Junior Masters at the age of 18 in 1986. Tom stopped bowling 2007 and along with Eric Soltis and got the winter League Tuesday Horseshoes started in 2007 - 2008. On the Winter leaguethy had 10 - 2 person teams with a maximum of 12 - 2 person teams and then 10- 2 person teams on Thursday in 2009 and at present 2019 all the nights have been filled In the Winter League he accomplished High average game and series the first 11 years 2007 - 201 7. He has served as president & secretary in all 11 years, on this league.

Tom has beaten Alan Francis twice and tied him twice. Alan had two tie games, one of to

Tom which Tom lost the last game to Dan Watson leaving Alan ahead by 1/2 game.

- 1) Alan Francis 14 - 1 87.67%
- 2) Tom Williams 13.5/1.5 81.00%

Tom Williams is more than just a great champion. His love and passion for horseshoes is displayed with each shoe he pitches and to every fellow horseshoe pitcher he meets. Tom has known for many years there is no other sport with people so tightly knit and thoughtful of each others as he found in the game of horseshoes

If Tom had never won a state championship this honor of bestowing him a place into the Hall of Fame would be more than justified as Tom Williams exemplifies the greatness of the game of horseshoe pitching.

State Tournaments:

Stats:

1981 Jr. Boy's Runner-Up to Dave Simmet

1982 Jr. Boy's Champ Averaging 75.7%

1984 Jr. Boy's Champ Averaging 65.8%

1988 Mens' Champ Averaging 64%

1989 Men's Runner-up to Oz Williams

1990 Men's Runner-up to Dean LeClair

1991 Men's Runner up to Dean LeClair

1992 Men's Champ Averaging 66.2%

1995 Men's Champ Averaging 58.5%

1996 Men's Runner-up to Jim Wiltse

1998 Men's Champ Averaging 65.6%

2000 Men's Champ Averaging 70.1%

2001 Men's Champ Averaging 61.4%

2002 Men's Champ Averaging 60.6%

2003 Men's Champ Averaging 58.2%

2004 Men's Runner-up to Doug Bailey

2005 Men's Champ Averaging 67.9%

2006 Men's Champ Averaging 65.1%

2007 Men's Champ Averaging 69.12%

2008 Men's Champ Averaging 60.8

2009 Men's Champ Averaging 71.9%

2010 Men's Champ Averaging 67.7%

2011 Men's Champ Averaging 67.5%

2012 Men's Champ Averaging 68.5%

2013 Men's Champ Averaging 71.8%

2014 Men's Champ Averaging 71.9%

2015 Men's Champ Averaging 68.5%

2016 Men's Champ Averaging 66.5%

2017 Men's Champ Averaging 66.4%

2018 Runner-up to James Dunlap

2009 - 2014 Tom won 58 consecutive games in Championship play

2 Junior Champions

1 Runner-up

Summary

21 Men's Championships

6 times Runner-up

2005-2017 won 13 in a row

World Tournaments:

2008 York, PA 5th in Champ Men's Div averaging 70.91 %

2008 York, PA 3rd in Class A-1 averaging 72.83%

1992 OH 7th in Men's Div 8 average 60.29%

1992 OH 9th in Men's B1 average 57.73%

1987 WE 8th in Men's Div 4 average 52.57%

1985 IN 5th in Jr. Boy's Div 2 average 50.29%

1984 AL 8th in Champ Div Jr. Boy's average 70.30%

1984 AL 2nd in Div 2 Jr. Boy's Average 72.29%

1983 NC 4th in Jr. Boy's Div 1 average 58.73%

1982 AL 3rd in Champ Div Jr. Boy's average 71.84%

1982 AL 2nd in Div 2 Jr. Boy's Average 67.6%

1981 MN 5th in Div 2 Jr. Boy's Average 63.71

1981 MN 1st Div B Jr. Boy's

Men's Championship:

2008 5th 13-6 averaging 70.91 %

2009 7th 11-8 averaging 69.68%

2012 2nd 13-2 averaging 77.29%

2014 8th 8-7 averaging 65.27%

2015 7th 9-6 averaging 68.98%

2017 5th 10-5 averaging 75.06%

(This is an updated report on February 26, 2019 by Doug Bailey)