



information acquired from the WSHPA Hall of Fame Book, newsletters and other sources

ROBERT A. HARTON

Lansing, MI

inducted 2006

Robert A. Harton was recognized as Michigan's State Champion by the National League of Horseshoe and Quoit Pitchers in 1918, 1919 and 1920 and was considered to be one of the giants of horseshoe pitching during that era.

Mr. Harton finished in seventh place at the 1919 Winter World Tournament held at Williams Park, St. Petersburg, Florida, in which he won 31 games and lost 23 while throwing 195 ringers. Each pitcher played his opponent three games. The tournament was played on sandy loam courts with eight inch stakes having a one inch lean toward each other. This was the first world tournament to be pitched from 40 feet and the last with an official match being a 21-point game.

At the 1920 Winter World Tournament, Mr. Harton finished in fifth place by scoring 1,151 points and throwing 347 ringers in 24 games. The year of 1920 is considered a watershed year for horseshoe pitching with the turn shoe being introduced in the world tournament. George May of Akron, Ohio, pitching a one and one quarter turn, won the championship by scoring 1,200 points and throwing 430 ringers. In addition, games were played to 50 points, ringers counted as three points, shoes within eight inches of the stake counted as one point and a leaner was not counted except as a close shoe.

The 1921 Winter World Tournament saw Mr. Harton finishing in third place, scoring 993 points and throwing 424 ringers of which 53 were double ringers. Vincent Grady, Illinois state champion, handed Mr. Harton his first defeat, 50-32, on the fourth day of competition, which caused the Illinois delegation of fans to carry Mr. Grady around the arena upon their shoulders. Charles Bobbitt of Lancaster, Ohio, won the championship by scoring 1,040 points and throwing 439 ringers of which 90 were double ringers. The stakes were raised to 10 inches and this was the last tournament a world championship would be decided by total points scored.

In 1919 Mr. Harton was elected as a vice-president of the National League of Horseshoe and Quoit Pitchers, which was formed by players from 25 states on February 26, 1919 at St. Petersburg. This organization, which in 1921 became the National Horseshoe Pitchers Association of the United States, would merge with the Grand League of the American Horseshoe Pitchers Association in 1925, to form the National Horseshoe Pitchers Association of America.

