



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

JONAS "HAP" OTTO

Ann Arbor, MI

inducted 1967



WSHPA President 17 years 1943-57 1968-69.

Promoter Organizer Pitcher

Runner up to State Champion Lee Jacobs in 1944.

Attended several world tournaments and was a delegate to the NHPA Convention.

He pitched in many of the association district tournaments and won many titles.

He was a dedicated member and was instrumental in keeping our Association going.

[Read newspaper clipping below.](#)

[From Horseshoe Digest:](#)

Michigan Wolverine - Interest is high in the state which had such a large representation at the World Tourney, President Jonas Otto and Secretary Jim Compton head a very active state wide program. NHPA membership declined some during 1968 but magazine subscriptions gained. The state has a active Junior program headed by the Dimondale, Burr Oak and Dyke Cowell's Weston clubs. The 1969 National AAU horseshoe tourney is scheduled for the courts in Detroit's Chandler Park.

Jonas Otto, Ann Arbor and Lee Jacobs, Belleville, practically neighbors and friends of long standing and now President and Vice President of the WSHPA respectively, were elected as non Pitcher's to the exalted body now reposing on this high pedestal of recognition and distinction. We, in Michigan are tremendously proud of these fine gentlemen and competitors.

Competent and experienced leadership, a practical and workable constitution, extensive and enthusiastic participation, close national affiliation, we in Michigan conclude, is the formula for a bright future for horseshoe activity in Michigan.



'The secret is getting a ringer'

Horseshoe pitcher enters Sports Hall of Fame

By Dave Rigan

"Friendship ends when the first horseshoe is thrown."

Anyone who knows Ann Arbor's Jonas "Hap" Otto, might be very surprised to hear those words from him.

He was recently inducted into the Michigan Amateur Sports Hall of Fame his contributions to horseshoe pitching.

Otto has been so honored because he "has brought the sport of horseshoes to a lofty level through his continued participation and selfless administrative efforts."

HE HAS ALSO made large contributions to the sport in Ann Arbor, where he has been a resident since he was born in 1900.

"The whole secret is getting a ringer. All pitchers lie a little about how many ringers they throw, but most of the good ones can make 80 percent."

HAP'S INTEREST in the sport goes back a long way. Back in the 1920's there wasn't the wide variety of activities for people there is today.

"There was no golf, softball or bowling, so I built a court in our backyard," Otto said.

"In 1938 Lou Hollway (longtime Ann Arbor High athletic director) and I got together and built courts on Wines Field. For some matches, there were more than 200 spectators."

Hap's distinction comes not from his ability at the game, but from his dedication to the game over the years. The Ann Arbor

The first court was built his residence on First St. and still exists. A group of friends get together once a week in the warm months to compete against each other.

The competition is very friendly, but there is an internal battle that Otto seems to thrive on.

"It's an individual sport," he said, "You and the other guy. You get to know them and they know you. You've gotta beat him and he's gotta beat you.

VETERAN horseshoe pitchers use a certain style that Otto describes. "There is the one and three-quarters turn that the experienced pitchers use," he said. "The less experienced use the one and one-quarter turn and beginners use a three-quarters turn. The advantage with the one and three-quarters turn is a greater margin for error. You don't have to be as exact to get a ringer.

Horseshoe Club began in 1938 with Hap as the promoter and organizer. He was named president of the Wolverine State Horseshoe Pitchers Association in 1943 and served for 17 years.

HIS BEST YEAR competitively was 1944 when he placed second in the state tournament and was sixth in the National AAU Tournament in Detroit.

He won three State Class D Championships in 1962, 1964 and 1966.

He also is a top bowler. He was winner of the Washtenaw County March of Dimes Tournament in 1968. He bowled a 709 series on games of 211, 244 and 254 in 1968.

He has retired from his work as plumber for Local 190. He learned that trade beginning at the age of 16 and continued at it for some 50 years.

Hap lives with his wife Meta and continues to pitch horseshoes in his own backyard on First Street.