



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

## DON KAISER

Clayton, MI

inducted 1971

Don was a member of the WSHPA for many years.

He was a class A pitcher and a real tough competitor.

He won many district tournaments and qualified for the top 36 man championship class in the world tournament in Keene, NH in 1968.

Read his story below. An excerpt from a newspaper article about Don and his game. 1967



### *This Pitcher A Real Ringer*

Don Kaiser mentioned that he "got his first pair of shoes when he was ten years old," and the listener was dabbing his eyes before learning the "shoes" were a horse of a different color -- or a horseshoe of a different color.

Kaiser is a little man who has cut a big swath in the sport of horseshoe pitching. He has practiced between two and five hours from spring to fall nearly every day since 1955 but has not yet entered a national tournament and remembers a second place finish as his finest hour in the "pits."

<p>The Clayton pitcher who finished fourth this summer in the State Horseshoe Pitching Championship at the Michigan State Fair in Detroit was discussing his career. And when a fellow who once made</p>	<p>and interest was not sustained well enough to keep the league going. So Kaiser spent his summer traveling and will practice all winter in Cowell's corn storage building near Weston where they've built a</p>	<p>"I remember back in 1955 after I first entered competition that I made 51 straight ringers one night in practice," he said. "But it's tougher in competition. Sometimes you hit a court you just can't score on when you</p>
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51 ringers in succession tells how, a listener is prone to attentiveness.

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"I remember it was in 1926 at Waterloo, Ind., when my dad gave me my first pair of shoes when I was only ten," Don said. "He didn't care much for any sports, but horseshoe pitching was big in Waterloo. Pretty soon I was pitching with the older men. I've been at it ever since.

"I'm only 5-5 and weigh 125 pounds, but size is no barrier in horseshoes. It's a good sport for young and old. It's not at all expensive and provides good exercise. You can't beat it."

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Don moved into the county in 1945 as a signal maintainer with the New York Central railroad. He built a clay court (clay is the only kind to have, he says, because the shoes bounce in dirt but will stick nicely in a well cared for clay court) and began pitching.

In 1955, he entered his first competition - the state finals in Detroit. He finished second.

"Since then I've won over 40 trophies," he said, "but I still remember that second place trophy more than any others."

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Since 1955, horseshoes has been his main hobby. He has competed in Michigan, Indiana and Ohio in county fair tournaments and participated in weekly Michigan Horseshoe Pitching Association tournaments.

"There are 150 pitchers in the MHPA," he said. "Bob Sibson of Fairfield, Dick Cowell of Weston and myself belong from this area. And more younger fellows are joining. It's no longer a sport for only older men."

The trio are the top pitchers in the area. They had started at local league at Riverside Park, but the pits are not in good shape

clay court.



Don Kaiser  
51 Ringers In Row

His latest victory was in Class A at the Williams County Fair at Montpelier, Ohio. Hew was first in Class A at the Lenawee County Fair, the Lucas County Fair at Maumee, Ohio, the MHPA tourney at Battle Creek and Jerome Park in Toledo. He took fourth at the Michigan state tourney at Hartford out of 24 in Class A.

The classes are established on ringer percentage. The state champion hit 75 percent. The national champ at Greenville, Ohio this summer hit 84.4 percent. Kaiser normally does much better in competition, but last week in practice hit 47 of 50 ringers for an amazing 94 percent. His best tournament record is 61 of 72 ringers for 84.7 percent.

switch around in round-robin competition.

"All pitchers - as in any other sport - have there good and bad days. A former national champion couldn't even qualify in this year's nationals. Sibson and Cowell went to Greenville and couldn't qualify. And they are experienced pitchers.

"I've never tried to qualify for the nationals. Next year they will be held in New Hampshire. I think my wife and I will take our vacation then so I can give it a try."

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Kaiser started with a three-quarter turn on his shoe but found it just too slow. He switched to a one and one-quarter turn to a one and three-quarter turn because "with more speed you can grab that stake about four to six inches up and really hang on."

The Clayton pitcher likes bowling but finds it "too expensive."

"Good shoes cost between \$5.50 and \$8 a pair," he said, "and even good clay courts are not hard to maintain. The cost is very minor compared to other sports."

Kaiser has a court at home and at his lakeside cottage. He has fun with guests, spotting them 20 points in a game to 21 and winning 21-20. He often fixes a board or blanket in front of the stake and pitches to the blind stake - still scoring ringer after ringer.

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"My only problem is finding someone to pitch with," he said, "I wish more interest would develop in this area. It's an inexpensive sport and provides good exercise in the walking and bending over for older men.

"You ought to come out and give it a try some day."

If he'll spot this writer 21 points, he's got a game.