



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

JEAN SWARTHOUT

Milan, MI

inducted 1975

Jean won the ladies state championships (6) times
1971, 72, 74, 75, 81, 82.

She was Runner-up in 1973, 76, 77, 79, 80 and
1989.

Pitched in four world tournaments
Middlesex, NJ class B second place 1971
Lafayette, IN class B first lace 1975
Water Wonderland class A five time second (4)
times

Greenville Ohio Ringer Classic class B (8) times
She qualified for the Greenville Ohio Ringer Classic
with a 76% for class A

Toledo Ohio Curley Baker Memorial class A (8) times


Capital City Open class A (3) times

Ft Wayne IN 1970 class A third place

Battle Creek Carl Wood Memorial 1969 Class A 2nd place



RENO HORSESHOES
Order From:
Reno Horseshoe Company
670 Reno Road
Lucasville, Ohio, 45648



Jean Swarthout won the 1982 Michigan state women's title averaging 84.9% and setting a state record game of 91.7% with the Reno shoes.

NHPA Approved
\$25.00 plus postage % \$22.00 five or more pairs
All drop forged, medium temper with hard caulks.
West Coast Distributor — Wally Shipley Horseshoe Outlet.

Set a state tournament record for a single game 22
ringers out of 24 shoes for a 91.7% in 1982.

She served as Secretary / Treasurer for the ladies
auxiliary from 1976 - 1994.

WSHPA second vice president for two years.

Hall of Fame committee member 1982-89

Flower fund - raffle - card sending, Mich / Ont

Friendship committees
horseshoe ad

The Milan Area LEADER-September 15, 1982
Jean Swarthout puts a ringer on Billy Sims
Zings a 91.7 percent game at Wolverine

by E. Dale Lee

Assistant Editor

Billy Sims is back with the lions, you say? Big deal. Jack Morris wants to be the best paid Tiger in history or he'll jump the team, you've heard? So what. Michiganians can enjoy Jean Swarthout for many years.

Mrs. Swarthout is a soft-spoken Milan resident who has the uncanny ability to ring horseshoes around stakes more than half the time she tries. That talent has made her a highly successful professional athlete.

A pro for 14 years and a competitor for 28, Mrs. Swarthout has won the Wolverine State Horseshoe Pitching championship six times since 1971. Those titles earned her a snug section in the state's Hall of Fame in 1975. She turned pro in 1969.

When Mrs. Swarthout was molding her form between 1954 and 1971, women were winning state titles by ringing between 30 and 45 percent of their tosses. Sept. 6 in Dimondale, near East Lansing, she won the state's Class A division by connecting on 65 percent of her attempts.



—Photo by Carolyn Corlman
Jean Swarthout is the 20th-rated women's horseshoe pitching woman in the world, according to the latest available rankings.

Propelling her close to her average percentage (67.5) was a phenomenal 91.7 percent she recorded in her second game of the tournament (22 ringers in 24 tries).

"Everyone was coming up to me and making all

"She wins so many times we give the trophies back to the association and take a \$10 prize instead," Stan Swarthout said. "She's good. . . better than I am."

Jean and Stan Swarthout estimate they have competed in more than 350 sanctioned tournaments together. The regional tournaments are harder for Mrs. Swarthout to win because she has to spot opponents a handicap. The state tournament is even-up competition.

"I throw about 1,000 shoes before a special tournament," explained Mrs. Swarthout. "He (her husband) pushes me to practice about five games twice the week of a tournament. At least now I know the proper amount of games and distance to practice."

The formative years of Mrs. Swarthout's horseshoe tossing were spent throwing from 40 feet, which is the distance for men in the state tournament.

"But I was always tired after seven games," she said.

The the couple learned women, girls and boys who enter tournament competition always throw from the 30-foot range.

"When I changed over, I got better," she said. "It was hard to adjust from practice to competition before, but the change eventually paid off." Rated No. 20 in the world by the News Digest of Horseshoe Pitchers in its last ranking just about a year ago, Mrs. Swarthout keeps up with current events in the field by reading that monthly magazine as well as many others. Some magazines and newsletters print the latest ringer percentages of persons she competes against.

Unlike football, Mrs. Swarthout says horseshoe throwing players do not scout, film and evaluate each other for weaknesses. Instead, they take "personal pictures of friends."

"You have to be a good sport to play this sport," Stan Swarthout said. "If I keep score for you, it would be only fair of me to ask you to keep my score. The biggest problem in the field today is getting people who really want to learn how to keep score. Everyone wants to pitch, but nobody wants to score."

It isn't all fun and games, though. Winning is an art, a science which can never be perfected. It can, however, happen regularly for persons who practice.

"When it's windy, throw it low," coached Stan Swarthout. "And try to establish a rhythm which is

sorts of noise," she said. "I tried to calm them down because other players were trying to throw and I didn't want to throw off their concentration. Also, I know you can have a great game like that and fizzle afterward. I didn't get overly excited."

Qualifying for the tournament with a 67.5 average, Mrs. Swarthout netted 65 percent by ringing 161 shoes in 248 throws. She averaged between 55.5 percent and 66.6 percent for her other four games.

The tournament victories have come in droves over the years. Mrs. Swarthout won the state title's top division for women in 1971, 1972, 1974, 1975, 1981 and this year. Only three women have blocked her from continuous championships.

In 1973, Irene Ostrander eked by Mrs. Swarthout. She has since retired. From 1976-80, "a couple of kids" have made Mrs. Swarthout bear down.

"Sandy Clark came on and won it from '76 to '79 and then quit," Mrs. Swarthout said. "And she was gooooooood. Ann Wedel won it in 1980. She's a toughie."

She was Mrs. Swarthout's main competition at Dimondale.

"Competition makes you concentrate more than you normally would," Mrs. Swarthout explained. "To concentrate, I mentally close off everything, give myself confidence and come back to win. I always think I can win if I can concentrate."

Mrs. Swarthout and her husband, Stan, have "more trophies" than they can count in their Main Street house. Her husband gets as charged up over horseshoe throwing as most men do over pro football.

similar to that of a bowler."

"It's important to have the same motion with every pitch," added Jean Swarthout. "I have a mark on the slab. I go to the left or the right of it, plant my feet, swing my arm a particular way three times and let it fly eight or nine feet in the air."

The rhythm was learned twirling bowling balls down Milan lanes for many years. She had a 160 average before she quit.

"Bowling and throwing are the same," she said. "But these sports which require you to use your arms so much can sometimes hurt you."

In 1976, about the time when Mrs. Clark began rampaging to titles, Mrs. Swarthout contracted "tennis elbow," which she says has come and gone periodically since then.

"It usually comes in the winter when the season ends," she added. "I have not had a serious injury."

Horseshoe throwing hasn't spread very well in Milan. In fact, the Swarthouts have tried to organize tournaments and leagues in Clinton, Dundee and other area cities with what can be at best described as mild success.

"There are some pitchers who could be good from Milan," Mrs. Swarthout said, "but they haven't wanted to put the time in and learn what's behind being good."

Mrs. Swarthout is originally from Detroit. Stan Swarthout is a former Chelsea resident. Their daughters are Linda Shaffer of Whitmore Lake, and Donna Thomas of Clinton.

Stan Swarthout, who was named a member of the Hall of Fame in 1979, says he'll show persons his court on request. Call 439-xxxx for more information.