

From The KHPA History Files



Joe Clifton

I have real treat for this edition of the History Files. Recently, I reached out to Mr. Joe Clifton from Louisville Kentucky. Joe is the Great Grandson of our 1923 Kentucky State Men's Horseshoe Champion, J. W. Netherton. Joe has been very kind and gracious in sharing his family horseshoe photo archive with myself and the Kentucky horseshoe community. This photo collection futher expands the window into our knowledge of our 1923 Champion. It is really nice to be able to take a look back into this time of the earliest beginnings of organized horseshoe pitching in Kentucky. Joe is not foreign to the sport himself as he relayed to me that he had done quite a bit of pitching back in the 1970's and 80's in and around the Nolin Lake area. Thanks again Joe for sharing your collection for all to enjoy!



J. W.'s Horseshoes and carrying case above. Late 1930's model Gordon "Spin On" shoes.

JOHN WILLIS NETHERTON SR.



J.W. Netherton (right), shown pitching horseshoes at his farm in Worthington.

"The Horseshoe Compendium", a book compiled by Lee Rose in 1940, and the Louisville Courier Journal tells us that the first Kentucky State Tournament was held in Louisville, 1923, and won by Mr. J.W. Netherton. Netherton, a farmer living in the Worthington area of Louisville was born in 1861. By the time of the 1923 Kentucky State Championship, Mr. Netherton would be almost 62 years of age. Not a lot of facts exist on the 1923 State but the reporting articles stated that J. W. Netherton pitched 134 single ringers and 16 double ringers in 11 games. Games were played to 50 points. A later article states that his winning ringer percentage was 32%. I think that it is evident that Mr. Netherton had a real passion for the sport. He would continue to compete in the coming years in some future State Tournaments and in 1925 he won the Louisville Fall Tournament, averaging 45.7%. This was one of the early tournaments managed by the Louisville Horseshoe Pitchers' Club. Netherton participated in league play through 1927 and was a also member of the Shawnee Park Horseshoe Club. Netherton would travel to Florida during the winter months for many seasons in which he was a member and President of the Tampa Tourist Horseshoe Club. At the end of the 1928 Kentucky Horseshoe Season he was mentioned as being a delegate to represent Kentucky at the convention in the February 1929 World Horseshoe Tourney, held in St. Petersburg, FL. He continued to hold high standing in Kentucky as his pitching days entered its twilight. At the 1937 State Tournament, he is shown in a newspaper photo shaking hands with Van L. Young, the newly crowned champion. After a long and full life, J.W. Netherton passed away in November of 1957, just shy of 96 years of age. At that time, he was survived by his wife, three daughters, two sons and many grand and great grandchildren.