

## Analyzing the TOP 10 Greatest Women's Kentucky Horseshoe Pitchers

As a follow-up to the Top Ten Men, I knew we needed to cover the greatest Women's players in Kentucky. With the women, we have some definite breaks in skill level that sets these ladies apart. This list is for discussion and recognition of Kentucky's finest. The list was compiled by KHPA Historian Robert Taylor.

## #1 Sue Snyder



At the head of our list is non other than Sue Snyder! If you look at overall achievement, there is no question Sue is the #1 Kentucky player. Sue has captured 7 Women's World Titles, 3 Ky. State Titles and is an 8-time Indiana State Champ. Sue holds the Kentucky record for highest State Tournament average at 89.5% and also holds the record for the highest state

game pitched at 94.1%. Sue burst onto the Kentucky scene in 1995 and won her first state title that year. Sue would also capture state titles in 1998 & 2003 and has recorded 8 perfect games in her pitching career. Sue resided in Madisonville, Ky. from 1995-2009 before moving to Jasper Indiana. Sue throws a single flip using a horseshoe that bears her name, The Snyder E-Z Flip.

## Becky Holmes #2

Our #2 player is Becky Kemper Holmes! Becky has been a dominate force in the Women's Division in Kentucky since graduating from the Junior Girl's Division in 1996. Since then Becky has won the Women's State Championship 11-times, most of any Woman in the State. Becky has won the state title against both, Sue Snyder & Lois Webster. Becky has won the state title from 1999-2002



## #3 Lois Webster



Lois Webster comes in at the #3 slot and is a prime example of what one can achieve as a player through practice and determination. Lois steadily improved her game through the years and met each challenge to capture 7 Women's State Titles! After 2 runner-up finishes to Champion Debbie Cooper in 1986 & 1987, Lois would take her game up a notch to win her first state in 1988. Lois would

win four more in 1989 & 1992-1994. When Sue Snyder came to town and dominated in 1995, Lois just buckled down and took her game to another level to re-claim the title in 1996 with an average of 83.3%. Lois defeated both Snyder & Kemper in winning her last state in 1997. In the Women's World Championship Lois recorded a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish in 1994, and finished 3<sup>rd</sup> twice, in 1989 & 1990. Lois has also pitched 3 perfect games!

## Comments...

The top 3 Women in Kentucky have definitely set themselves apart from the rest of the crowd in skill level and accomplishments through the years. These three are the only Kentucky Women to have surpassed the 70% & 80% level of play. If you went by State Tournament play alone one could consider all three as equals but the separations are based on overall achievement and World Championship success. All three have battled each other to the wire with each winning a state against the other.

## Debbie Cooper #4

Debbie Cooper would pitch in the KHPA only four short seasons but in those years she would prove to be the one to beat, winning the Women's State Title 3 consecutive Years from 1985-1987, each time by averaging above the 60% level of play. Debbie's highest state Average would come in 1988 when she came up 8 points short against Lois Webster of making it four titles in a row. Cooper averaged 64.7% in the runner-up effort. Debbie Cooper was a tough competitor, managing to pull out all three of her state wins in deciding playoff games, in 1985 against Kathy Nockerts and in 86 & 87 against Lois Webster. Debbie throws a single flip, using Cal-Flip horseshoes and is from Hopkinsville, Ky.



### Comments...

Just as our top three women is way ahead of the rest of the pack, Debbie Cooper is also a head above the rest of the field. While some of our other champions have broken the 60% barrier in state play, Debbie is the only one that proved to be able to do it consistently time in and time out.

## #5 Barbara Elliott



Barbara Elliott competed in the Women's Kentucky State Championship for 7 consecutive years from 1989-1995. During this period Barbara won the State Title in 1990 going 4-0 and averaging 58.0%. Barbara finished 2<sup>nd</sup> twice in the state; 1991 & 1993. Barbara was very consistent with her state averages ranging mostly in the

upper 50% level. Barbara tossed her highest state tournament average in 1993 with a 64.9% tournament. Barbara has four Women's State Doubles titles with her long time friend Sissy Lewis. Barbara pitches a single flip with Cal-Flip horseshoes and resides in Lebanon Junction, KY.

## Sally Mullins #6

Sally Mullins' game took a little while to get going in her march to two consecutive state titles in 2011 & 2012. Sally had finished second to Becky Kemper three years in a row prior to making the leap to State Champ. Sally had three straight solid years with state averages of 57.3%, 58.7% and 57.0%. It was what Sally accomplished during the 2012 World Championships that



commands respect on this list. In the 2012 World, Sally would win the Women's Class C with an average of 62%. This would qualify Sally for the Women's World Championship Class in which she continued to improve, averaging 67.5% and finishing in 10<sup>th</sup> place. Sally had a high game of 82.7%. Sally pitches the Mustang Flip shoe and resides in Middlesboro, KY.

## #7 Trina Wallace



Trina Wallace is a 3-time Women's Kentucky State Champion; 1976, 1979 & 1982. Trina has proved to be a steady 50-60% pitcher through the years and broke above the 60% barrier twice in state tournament competition. In Trina's 2006 comeback she had her highest State Tourney to date at 62.2%. Trina was the runner-up that year and has five Women's

State 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes. Trina is currently 2<sup>nd</sup> on the all-time Women's wins list. Trina pitches a flip shoe and resides in Waddy, Ky.

## Shirley Moore #8

Shirley Moore pitched in the Association during the early 1980's, qualifying for the State Championship Class three times. In the 1982 State tourney Moore eclipsed all other competitors ringer averages by more than twelve percent but lost one key game that cost her the title. Moore averaged 59.6% that season but would return to taste victory in 1983 to become the Women's State Champion with a 61.1 ringer percentage and an undefeated tournament. Browsing through her tournament stats during this period, Moore proved to be a solid 50% plus pitcher and broke over the 60% mark on multiple occasions. At one of her better tourneys, Moore averaged 63% in the 1982 Christine Kelley Memorial tournament. Shirley is from Tollesboro, Ky.



## #9 Doris "Sissy" Lewis

Sissy Lewis has to be considered the best Kentucky women's player never to have won a state singles title. Sissy qualified for the Women's State Championship seven consecutive seasons from 1990-1996 finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> twice and 3<sup>rd</sup> the remaining five years. The opposition was tough during these years as Sissy was competing against Lois Webster & Sue Snyder!

Sissy consistently averaged in the mid to upper 50's with a state best of 62.6% in 1994. Sissy was a 4-time Women's State Doubles Champion from 1990-1993 and was also the Women's World Class F Champion in 1990. Sissy pitches an Imperial horseshoe utilizing a single flip style and resides in Elizabethtown, KY.



## Comments...

If you compare positions 5-9 on the list, you will find that these ladies are fairly equal in skill level. Each was primarily a high 50% average pitcher and was able to break head into the low 60's on occasion. These numbers could easily be interchangeable. I have given Elliott credit for consistent pitching, Mullins for the high level of World play in 2012 and Wallace for capturing 3 state titles.

## #10 Norma Harrod

Looking for a player to fill the #10 Slot, I chose Norma Harrod. Norma is a 2-time Women's Kentucky State Champion, winning it in 1969 & 1978. Norma's highest state average came in 1986 at 55.9%. Norma qualified for the State Championship 15 times from 1969-1991 and also competed in the World Tournament on occasion. From 1985-1988, Norma pitched her average above 50% for those 4 years. Norma pitches A flip and resides in Frankfort, KY.



## Closing Comments...

Other players deserving of consideration for the #10 slot were 2-time champ **Mable Hornback**, **Sandra Clevenger**, who had one standout season and title win at 56.3% in 1991, and **Mary Steinhauer** who qualified for 3 Women's World Championship Classes and averaged in the low to mid 50's. I also cannot finish this list without a giving a final mention to Christine Kelley. Kelley won five consecutive state titles from 1970-1974 and went undefeated the final four years. Kelley was a champion that knew how to win. She did break just ahead of 50% in two of those titles but her career was cut short with her passing in 1977. She was the best women's player in her Ky. era!

