

Ringers

Women enjoy horseshoes competition

EAGLE — When women in Eagle get angry, they don't throw fits, they throw horseshoes.

Darlène Bagley, newcomer to the Eagle Womens' Horseshoe League, said it's much better to have points in your favor after throwing than a hurt husband.

Sponsored by the men's league, the women's group started pitching in the early '70s. Mary Burton, Eagle, a stalwart of the league and now, through her business, a sponsor, said pitching in the village park is excellent exercise and a good way for newcomers to meet neighbors.

Chris Sankey, league secretary, has a special way of remembering when play began. She says it was before 1973 because that's the year she was married and she started pitching as a single lady.

Every Thursday evening, from May through August, the sound of iron hitting stakes resounds from the nine pits cut through Village Park.

Two teams contest in each pit. Each one has two people, so membership is limited to 36 ladies.

Margaret Curler, league president, says each year reflects changes as sub-division residents move out. About 10-11 new pitchers join each season, but Curler said, "this is what keeps the league young."

Most pitchers steadily improve. Their percentile average of ringers at the start is determined by pitching 50



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shoes. The number of ringers is then multiplied by two and provides the personal percentage. "Presently," Sankey says, "the averages range from 3 to 33 percent."

At the start of the season, teams are made up of top pitchers paired with the bottom and so on until the middle pair finds women with similar averages.

The pitching begins at 7 p.m. Thursdays. Each team must pitch three games a night so at the end of the season there will be 51 games to determine who receives the trophies.

"Right now," said Sankey, "the teams are so close in scoring there's only a half point between second and 11th placing and only three games separating them."

Statistics show Char Kieck, Eagle, with the highest average of 33 percent. She is pitching with Debbie Maske, Eagle, as her partner. They have 17 wins to their credit giving them a tie for second place. The top teams, as of mid-July, is Mealy Furniture with Liza Chapman, 26 percent and partner Darlene Bagley, 8 percent with 22.5 wins.

Dort Gottgetreau, Eagle, is perhaps the most determined pitcher, said Curler. "She has proven what determination can do. In 1989, she hurt her right hand and couldn't pitch but she practiced in the back yard with the left and came back with a 33 percent as she presented her other side."

In addition to Thursday evening pitching, some of the league members will compete in the 16th Annual Eagle Open Horseshoe Tournament Aug. 3-5 in the Village Park.

The league event that in particular promotes good feeling between player and promoter is the annual banquet. After the dinner, trophies are presented to the top three teams and sponsors. Linda Hein, treasurer, says many of the sponsors have been with the league since the beginning. Eagle business names such as Kreston Food, Mealy Furniture, B & H Lumber, Sassos' Inn, JJ's Diner and Chapman Oil are there. Other companies that back teams are from Little Prairie, North Prairie and Waukesha.

The Eagle women's league surely shows how the ladies are in their pitching, at least every Thursday night. An invitation is extended to come watch the exciting end on Aug. 23 or 30. "If the rain comes on our night, as it usually does," says Curler, "August 30 is the rain date."

(Joan Holman is a Kettle Moraine Life correspondent.)



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Mary Burton pitches a horseshoe during recent competition.

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