

REASONS WHY WE SHOULD TAKE ANOTHER GOOD LOOK AT OUR SHUFFLEBOARD PLAYER SETUP

1952 could well be called a milestone in the history of the Florida Shuffleboard Association. That year we elected I. McKay Pinkney our president. We are sure he well knew the true meaning of Article 3 to be "the objectives of the Association shall be to promote a FRIENDLY interest and play in the game of shuffleboard."

We say this, advisedly, because we know Mr. Pinkney to be a kindly man who, in his talks, would stress fair play, good sportsmanship, and the art of building long-lasting friendships through shuffling.

In 1952 he conceived the idea of, and promoted, our Preview in shuffleboard's 25th, or silver, anniversary year. In doing this he has left the members of this association a heritage for which they are humbly grateful. In doing this, he has also built for himself an image that will live as long as shuffleboard.

Our first Preview showed less than 30,000 members, yet our president would very proudly say shuffleboard was growing by leaps and bounds, and it was, too. He would also say we officers had to be ever alert so we might keep up with, and not retard, progress.

We should never forget our responsibilities to our members far surpass any self-aggrandizement we might seek, or personal preferences we might have.

A few years later we had added more than 8000 new members to our association. We had also run into trouble. Our better players were saying, "Do something with these beginners; we have to play five or six matches before we reach any real competition". Our beginners were just as unhappy being forced to compete in these one-sided games, while our spectators would walk away in disgust.

Hence, in 1956, the Central District scheduled its first amateur tournament. In 1957 our first state-wide "State" Amateur Tournament was played. It is not necessary to call your attention to its popularity and progress, except to say we soon were having almost as many amateur as expert tournaments.

We have, today, 19,000 more members than in 1952. And we are in more trouble. Because our game is becoming more technical each season, many of our players are complaining they are not competitive with the better amateurs, or the experts, either. We tried to remedy this situation several years ago with Rule 8-2, or, "two firsts in amateur and you are an expert." Result: the players made a farce of the game. Last season we changed this rule to read "any four wins in amateur and you are an expert", with no better results.

Therefore, that we may truly create a friendly interest and play in the game of shuffleboard, we humbly ask your consideration of a new player setup along the following lines: an Expert division, an Amateur A division, and Amateur B and C divisions.

Let us protect our top bracket players from those who are not competitive. Let's make our players earn their way up the ladder. We believe it will be a thrilling challenge for a player to know that, in order for him to be classified as an expert, he must first show two wins in that division. This rule is to apply in all other divisions as well.

In the name of all our members who think of shuffleboard in terms of progress, in the name of 600 people whose names are on our petition, in the name of a number of you fine officers, including our president who concurs with us in this matter, we ask your consideration of this new player setup.

THANKS — J. H. WOODALL, Past President