

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

I AM now 75 years old, and it is only reasonable to assume that any opportunities for my future annual reports will become less and less, and less.

As previously reported, I have been experimenting and observing in connection with shuffleboard, for the past ten years. I have made hundreds of experiments in my laboratory, and examined hundreds of shuffleboard courts. Briefly, here is what I have found:

1. The finish of a concrete court should be fairly smooth, and the danger of having a suction surface is, to say the least, greatly exaggerated. I have yet to see a court where I could observe any suction. Theoretically, suction would only result if an almost perfectly smooth court (like plate glass) was played on, using a perfectly flat and smooth disk. Practically speaking, this is almost impossible.

2. If wax is used, this should be a hard wax, and evenly and sparingly applied, on a clean court. The wax should have a softening point of over 140 deg. F., since there is the danger of sticking because of the softening of the wax under the sun's heat. I have known of cases where paraffin wax was used, and since paraffin has a low softening point, this resulted in sticking, and some shufflers thought that this was suction. Two common faults on waxed courts are 1.) the lines tend to hold back the disks; 2.) the sides of the courts are slower than the middle.

3. Glass beads are being used more and more. There are a number of ways of using these; the most common method, of course, is to distribute the beads loosely over the court. To me, this seems to give far better all round results than waxing. In the first place, the cost is less, both for material and labor. All the courts of a club can be made fairly uniform in slickness, so that one court is similar to all the others. And, on a single court, the sides of the court and the middle are far more uniform than with waxed courts. Further, the court is more resistant to changes in temperature, humidity, and dust conditions.

My association with glass beads came about quite naturally. One of the products of the Refractory & Insulation Corp. (of which I was Vice President in charge of Production) is mineral wool, and a by product is glass beads more or less round in shape, which are shaken out and screened, and rejected in making granulated wool. An accidental look at some of this mineral wool shot came about, and I started to experiment with glass beads. I later found out that a number of companies were engaged in the manufacture of glass beads as such, and obtained samples of their product, of different sizes and grades. I must acknowledge my thanks to the Microbeads Division of the Cataphote Corp. of Jackson, Miss., for sending me samples of different sizes and grades of beads for my early experiments.

The use of glass beads is spreading all the time, and justly so. It is only natural that new methods must overcome old habits and prejudices, but this takes time. It is a continual source of wonder to me that men who can accept travel to the moon, resist technological improvements in shuffleboard.

The latest development in the use of glass beads is to incorporate them directly into the top coat of the concrete. A number of courts made in this manner have been made in the past year or so, and required no breaking in period, and no wax or sealer, and were slick immediately, and uniform. This method looks very good indeed. Actually, it costs less than preparing the wax for waxing, and then, in addition, saves the cost of sealer and wax, indefinitely.

I have one more interesting set of experiments and observations to report. Some years ago, I observed courts in various parts of Florida that needed only infrequent waxing, and some were even fairly slick with no wax. I examined these, and found that the aggregate used in these was limestone; and accordingly made some concrete slabs in my lab using limestone both as the fine and coarse aggregate. I found that this form of concrete was slick without any wax, and that when waxed, the results were very good. Further, I found that this kind of concrete has a sort of a natural affinity for wax, and that the wax treatment had a longer life.

One more situation on which I must comment, and that has to do with rumors that I derive some kind of a financial benefit from my connections with shuffleboard, and my reports and comments on same. The facts are that I have spent the following:

Over \$5,000 in equipment and materials

\$500 for advertisements in the Preview

Over 5,000 hours of work on experiments.

all to find out better methods of making and maintaining shuffleboard courts. I hesitate to bring this to your attention, but feel that the situation warrants a clear cut explanation. I have received many letters thanking me for advice and information, and these have encouraged me to keep on working (and spending money and time). My spirit is willing, and as long as my body holds up (and my purse) I'll keep on working.

At a recent meeting of the National Shuffleboard Association, I brought up the subject of a Manual of some kind, that could be published by the Association, giving information on how to organize clubs, with cost estimates, specifications, etc. Herbert K. Smock, President of the Association, said that he had many calls for such information, and designated me to write up a Manual, and to submit this to the Association for editing. I have done this, and the Manual is now in the editing stage, and I hope that it will soon be ready for distribution. It was necessary for me to restrict information to only the presently held, and accepted practices, in order to meet the approval of the National Shuffleboard Association; and it is evident that the Association could hardly be expected to subscribe to some of my rather revolutionary ideas. I believe that no one person's views in shuffleboard would be acceptable to all, and therefore, the Manual will be a conservative view, and my above remarks in this Preview, can be interpreted as new and progressive, and to some extent, unproven methods.

CHRISTOPHER BRANDA,

Rt. 1, Box 12, Ormond Beach, Fla. 32074
Summer address: 1502 N. Spartanburg Hwy.,
Hendersonville, N. C. 28739.

(This page was paid for by Mr. Branda—Editor).