

## MY LAST REPORT

By Christopher Branda

For ten or twelve years, I have been involved in experimenting with various methods of using glass beads on shuffleboard courts. As I reported in the 1969-1970 Preview, my discovery of the possibilities came about because I was in the manufacture of mineral wool, and one of the by products was glass beads.

For about ten years, I maintained a laboratory at my home in Ormond Beach, and made hundreds of experiments in various forms of concrete, designs of disks, waxes, beads, etc. etc. And during this time, I had many visitors, including Omero Caton, Duke Christensen, Robert Nidy, Sam Allen, and many others, and conducted a correspondence with hundreds of others.

I became more and more interested in the possibilities of the uses of glass beads. One method that I believe may be the best, is to use glass beads in the top half inch of the surface of a court, and by the use of limestone aggregate, to be able to expose new beads as and when the top of layer of beads became scratched or damaged. Another method used Portland Cement with a special latex accelerator in order to imbed beads on the top of a court. I estimate that fifty or more courts have been treated in this manner, and it has certain advantages. Still another method is to use a varnish, such as poly urethane or epoxy, in which to imbed beads on the top of court. Each of these methods has its advantages, and its disadvantages, and only time will tell which is better suited to shufflers.

Then, of course, there is the method of using loose glass beads. This is so simple and economical, that this method is being used more and more. The main rule in this, is to use the smallest beads possible that will still project above the top surface of the concrete, and thus provide a slick surface.

I am seventy-seven, and recently sold my house (with the laboratory) and because of declining health, have curtailed my activities in shuffleboard. However, I am available to you all, for any information that I may be able to give.

Recently, I was asked by Duke Christensen to cooperate with him in the design of a court on his property at Avon Park. The first idea was to make a court with beads imbedded in the concrete, as above described. However, there was a mix-up, and Duke went to the idea of using epoxy to hold the beads on the top surface, and further, to use a mix of epoxy and beads to level the court (it was not quite level). I did contribute 400 lbs. of beads to Duke to make these experiments, but I was disappointed that he did not stick to the original idea of using beads in the concrete.

I believe that a coat of epoxy holding the beads on the top surface of a court, has good possibilities, but I do also believe that trying to level a court with this kind of a mix has its difficulties. I wish Duke well in his efforts, and must admit that he is a determined character, and one who will stick to the job.

When I review in my mind the efforts of the past twelve years, I am surprised at the lack of recognition that I have obtained. Individuals have told me that I was doing a good job for shuffle-

board, but only a few here and there. When I first came out with beads, the opposition was terrific. Opinions were that beads would injure eyes, would get into the inside of a person and cut his insides, would give silicosis, etc. and by some, I was looked upon as almost a potential murderer. It took years for some of these fables to disappear.

In time, the use of loose glass beads spread all over the country, and with experience, we became more expert in using the right size beads, and in distributing them efficiently on the surface of the court. I have in mind that as courts become smoother (and they will in time, because of the smoothing action of the beads) we may soon come up with courts that will be almost as smooth as a sheet of glass. The result will be that glass beads on a very smooth surface will give a rolling action, like ball bearings, and the courts may then become too fast.

Practically all courts on which loose glass beads are not used, are rough to the extent that the beads tend to be anchored in the holes and troughs in the concrete surface. The result is, that the disks ride on the tops of the beads, and the action is one practically of sliding, with only a small amount of rolling action.

I have experimented with beads on a very smooth concrete surface, and I do believe that it is possible for courts to be worn smooth to such an extent that they will be too fast. There is a simple method, however, of correcting the condition of the court, and that is by the use of muriatic acid. About a gallon of this acid brushed on a court, will eat away some of the Portland Cement, and provide a roughened surface. I have yet to see a court where this has been necessary, but I believe that the time will come in the near future.

Quite a few shufflers have asked me why I did not make a report in last year's Preview. This was partly because of a health condition, and partly because I was not solicited. This rather surprised me, because I have been paying full price for the space in the Preview, and with this page, this amounts to \$600 that I have paid for Preview space. I have also been asked why I do this, and why I have experimented for years on shuffleboard problems, and the answer is that I am a curious person, and that I want to know the answers.

This will undoubtedly be my last report to the shuffling fraternity. I owe a debt of gratitude to the game, because of the fun that I have in playing, and also because of the many friendships I have made. And I hope that my work will in some measure pay the debt that I owe to shuffleboard.

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P. S.

From latest reports on some courts that Duke Christensen has coated with his special brand of epoxy, I believe that his method of using a thick coat of epoxy, heavy with beads, may be a definite improvement over my early method of a thin coat of epoxy with a light coat of beads.