

2013 MARKS 100 YEARS OF SHUFFLEBOARD IN FLORIDA

The Florida Shuffleboard Assn. is celebrating this significant Anniversary of our sport in the state of Florida. We hope that our members will lend support to the activities and thereby realize the maximum benefit. Share YOUR enthusiasm for Shuffleboard with a friend!! Phil Rebholz, FSA President.

Shuffleboard began in England; in its earliest form the game was played by alternate shooting of silver coins on a board. Near the end of the board and parallel to the end, a line called a "deuce line" was drawn. It was toward this line that the coins were slid to make scores. If the coins passed the line, but did not go off the end, it scored two. If the coin not only passed the deuce line, but projected over the end without falling off, it was called a "ship" and scored three. When neither opponent shot a coin to pass the line then the nearest coin to the line scored one. Only one score was counted each round. This game was played during the reign of Henry IV (1399-1413) in England, and it's possible that this game was played earlier than this. It had quite a few names at that time, due probably to the manner in which it was played in different parts of England. The game of shuffleboard was introduced as a deck sport on board ocean liners in the early 1800s. It has always been a very popular game on ocean liners and it is to this form of shuffleboard that we owe the present game now played on land.

Shuffleboard first became a land game in FL in 1913 when it was played on an improvised court at Daytona, FL. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ball who had seen the game played shipboard, marked out a court on the sidewalk in front of their Lyndhurst Hotel so that their guests might entertain themselves. The game at once became popular and a number of the players subscribed the necessary funds to build the first cement court (then called a lane) near the Burgoyne Casino in 1915. This court, on the bank of the Halifax River in Daytona became the forerunner of countless shuffleboard courts now found scattered throughout practically all of the cities of FL as well as in many other sections of the United States, especially in MI, WI, CO, & CA. Shuffleboard courts rapidly spread across the entire country in the 1930s and 1940s. F.D. Roosevelt's Works Projects Administration (W.P.A.) built shuffleboard courts on playgrounds in many public parks.

In 1922 Mr. W. N. Britton of Rochester, N.Y., who had been a tourist at Daytona and who had become interested in shuffleboard there, came to St. Petersburg to spend the winter. While here he suggested to the city officials the advantages of the game to attract and entertain the tourists, and he offered to finance and build a court in Williams Park where other games were being played at the time. Plans were made to build a court there but objections were made by citizens to adding more games in Williams Park and the plan was dropped. Early in 1923 Mr. P. T. Ives of Meriden, Conn. who had played shuffleboard shipboard, came to St. Petersburg as a tourist to spend the winter, at once saw the possibilities of the game and urged the Park Board to build a couple of courts in Mirror Lake Park. So enthusiastic was he in regard to the value of the game to the city that after some investigation, and much urging on the part of Mr. Ives, it was decided to build the two courts, which was done in the fall of 1923, just in front of where the new two story club house now stands. On January 24, 1924 the club was organized, thus becoming the very first organized Shuffleboard Club in FL. The Club was called the Mirror Lake Park Shuffleboard Club. Mirror Lake continued to lead the way during this period and in the early 1940s the Club Membership exceeded 5,000. That same year, 1924, the St. Petersburg Club established the rules that would become the standards of the game. The St. Petersburg Club was also the impetus behind the formation of the National Shuffleboard Association in 1931. In 1931 the first national tournament was held for men only. The first national shuffleboard tournament for women took place in 1932. The International Shuffleboard (ISA) was formed in March of 1979, held its very first tournament in 1981, its third in St Petersburg in 1983 and will host the 32nd ISA (International) tournament in October of 2013 with seven nations participating.

The FSA was formed at St. Petersburg on December 12, 1928; the first Preview published in 1952; State President at that time, Mr. I. McKay Pinkney believed shufflers would not only find the Preview interesting, but that it would become a history book of sorts. The Committee established by the FSA to celebrate the 100th Anniversary hopes that our contribution has made a difference and that readers will want to retain this 2012-2013 issue of the Preview as their personal historical document.

Stan McCormack, Chair. HAPPY ANNIVERSARY AND THE BEST OF SHUFFLING!!