

Looking back at the last 30 years  
of Shuffleboard in  
Zephyrhills and the Central District  
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In 1982, our Central District consisted of 54 Clubs and 9,378 members. Zephyrhills Shuffleboard clubs, included the Zephyrhills Tourist Club with 925 members and 19 courts. Betmar, 170 members and 24 courts, Winters had 218 members, 16 courts and Oakside 247 members with 10 courts. Other Zephyrhills Central District Clubs were: Bahr's Mobile, Bakers Acres, Beacon Hill Colony, Hillside Mobile, Pinecrest, Sleepy Hollow Mobile, Sleepy Hollow1, Sleepy Hollow2, Tree Lane Village, and Zephyr Mobile Park, totaling 705 additional members and 46 courts.

1982 - 1983 was the 55th year of the Florida Shuffleboard Association and the 31st year of the "Preview" publication.

The Zephyrhills Tourist Club hosted the Statewide Amateur Doubles Jan. 13 - 15, 1983 and was sponsored by the Zephyrhills News.

Betmar hosted the District Amateurs Any Doubles Nov. 11 - 13, 1982 and was sponsored by Arnold's 66 Service.

Winters Park sponsored the District and State Doubles Dec. 9-11 on their 16 outdoor courts.

Some results of the 1981-1982 season tournaments included:

St. Cloud - District Amateurs Nov. 5-7.....Jim and Thelma Springer was 4th in Main.

Betmar - Any Doubles Nov. 13-15.....Don Darwin and Ed Arnall(Betmar) captured 1st in Main.

Lake Wales - District Amateurs Ja. 13 - 15....Jim and Thelma Springer won 4th in Consolation

Avon Park - District Amateurs Mar. 3-6....Jim and Thelma Springer won the Consolation event.

Notice that these Amateur tournaments were scheduled for 3 days and usually had 60 to 80 teams.

The Central District listed 90 Pros in 1982, none on our current ZSC roster. Don Darwin and Thelma Springer were listed in the District - State Amateur division.

Eight years later In 1990 - 1991, the Central District grew to 72 Clubs, but the membership declined to 8,819 players. In Zephyrhills; American Condo, Happy Days, Palm Tree Acres, Palm View Gardens, Rainbow Village, Settlers Rest, Sunnyside, Sweetwater RV, Tree Lane Village and Wood Dale joined the District and increased the Zephyrhills Club's to 24. The Zephyrhills Tourist Club membership decreased to 425 members. Betmar increased to 235 members with 30 courts and 12 being covered. Winters dropped

to 140 members and Oakside to 160.

According to the '90 - '91 "Preview", the '89-'90 tournament season started with the Tourist Club hosting an Any Doubles tournament, Nov.9-11.

State Amateur Don Darwin & Al Verheeke(Oakside) won the tournament with District State Amateur George Darwin & Pro Howard Workman finishing 3rd. Howard, Amateur Dale Williams (Oakside), George and brother Don Darwin, were winning or placing in many of the Men's District tournaments. Howard won 4 District titles in the 1989- '90 season and placed 3rd in the District Pro Masters. Thelma Springer was now one of the top Lady Pros.

District Amateurs, Wilda Groves and Dale Williams both won 2nd place in their respective divisions in the March '91, Reiny Schleier tournament. Doyle Maxey and Kelly Bowser were State Amateurs and Jack Grant was an upcoming Pro. New ZSC member, State Amateur Paul Prescott, was the District 3rd VP in 1990.

In 1990 -1991 the Zephyrhills Tourist Club held the "KICK OFF" tournament, sponsored by the First National Bank and Silver Oaks Golf Club. The 19 courts located on 7th Street, now had 8 under roof. The Central District Pro count increased to 194.

About 10 years later in 1999-2000, District membership dropped even further to 3,990 members in 72 Clubs. Unfortunately the individual Clubs membership numbers were not listed for this year.

The Pro ranks continued to swell though with some of our current ZSC members being included in the 408 listed Pros. Art Vogel, Thelma Springer, Pete Romano (deceased 2010), Ralph Younkens, Howard Workman, Jack Grant, George & Don Darwin(deceased 2009) and Elmer Cox were included. State Amateurs included Earl Ball, Jack Emery, Doyle Maxey and John MacLennan.

Don Darwin tied for 1st place in the 1999 Men's Pro District Masters while Thelma Springer finished 5th in the Women's tournament. Earl Ball won the Reiny Schleier at Betmar and John MacLennan was the alternate. Pete Romano was the '98-'99 District 1st V.P.

The 1998-1999 Preview had a cost of \$4.95 posted on the cover.

2010.....another 10 years have passed and many rules and players names have changed.

Some Clubs have disappeared, including tournament sites: Auburndale, Woodalls and Kississmeee.

The Central District membership has been reduced to 2,967 with 48 Clubs in 2009-2010. Betmar now has the largest membership with 298 members. Our ZSC currently has 138 very active members.

The Zephyrhills area consists of 15 Clubs with 937 members.

New Clubs include: Forest Lake Estates, Forest Lake RV, Tropical Acres and Zephyr Shores, while 9 others have dropped out.

More than 1/3 of the District's membership now reside in Zephyrhills.

The 2009-2010 "Preview" edition, 58th volume, now costs \$1 and was devoted to the Central District.

The Zephyrhills Shuffleboard Club has 48 Pros of the 279 listed. Many are the very top players in the District and State.

Because we are now the only member owned club in the State and possibly in the World, our membership should continue to grow.

It's now OUR turn to enjoy this great game, create our own history and make sure that shuffleboard continues in Zephyrhills and the Central District for the next 10 years and well beyond.

2012..... update....48 Clubs continue to make up the Central District although membership is still declining with 2690 members this year; a loss of 277 members in the past two years.

Zephyrhills (all clubs) membership increased by 100 members and 1 Club even though Betmar showed a loss of 48 members (250).

ZSC now has 142 members with 52 Pro's listed and 7 listed in the District HOF.

Our Club also boasts the FSA Central District President and ISA Secretary (David Earle), District Treasurer (Mike Seyfer), District 1st VP (Bob Marshman), State Delegate (Earl Ball), FSA 1st VP and CNSA 2nd VP (Henry Strong), 3rd VP CNSA (Glenna Earle) and NSA President (Gus Bondi).

Next year (2013) is the 100th anniversary of shuffleboard in Florida. It would be nice if there were some ideas presented by our leaders and members to halt this downward trend, and increase membership for the upcoming Centennial year.

2016.....update.....The FSA is now in it's 89th year and the 65th volume of the Preview still cost \$1.

The Central District now boasts 56 member clubs,an increase of 8 clubs with a total membership of 2921, a net increase of 231 members since 2012. Very good news as these numbers have been declining recently.

As of the 2015-16 season our Club had 158 members and as of this writing we are on track to at least hold that number for the 2016-2017 season. Betmar continues to lead the District with a membership of 250.

At ZSC we now have 70 active Pro's. Eight ZSC players and three Past Presidents have now been inducted into the CD Hall Of Fame located in Winter Haven.

Mike Seyfer is still serving as the District Treasurer and Jim Chandler is now the 2nd VP.

ZSC members have enjoyed many improvements at our facility since I originally wrote this article in 2010. Because we are a member owned club and rely on our generous members donations to make these improvements, we all have a lot to be proud of.....Next update 2020!!

Chuck Moulton