

Top 10 Moments of the 2005 Florida Senior Games State Championships December 3-11, 2005 – The Villages

Trio Continues Streak of Medal Winning

By winning gold medals at the 2005 Florida Senior Games State Championships, Doris Prokopi, of Land O'Lakes, John Shultz, of Inverness, and Seymour Duckman, of Daytona Beach, extended their streak of winning medals to 13 consecutive years. They are the only athletes on record having won medals in the State Championships from 1993 through 2005.

Prokopi, a 70-year old swimmer and 1994 Florida Senior Games State Championships Female Athlete of the Year, won six gold medals in the two-days of swimming competition. She claimed the top spot in the 200 yard backstroke, 200 yard individual medley 100 yard butterfly and the 50, 100 and 200 yard breaststroke. She set records in the 50 and 200 yard breaststroke and is now the State Games record holder in three different age groups for the 50 yard breaststroke; 60-64, 65-69 and 70-74. With her six medals at the 2005 Games, she increased her total to 77 since 1993.

Shultz, a 69-year old table tennis player, had his work cut out for him winning a singles medal in 2005. He lost an early round match to Ray Look, of Dunedin to drop him into the loser's bracket. He made his way to the championship match and defeated Look twice in the finals. En route to winning the gold medal, Shultz played eight matches, after having double knee replacement surgery 15 weeks prior to competition. Shultz previously won men's singles titles in 1993-94, 1996-97, 1999-2000, 2002 and 2004 in the 55-59, 60-64 and 65-69 age groups. He now has won 11 gold and three silver table tennis medals since 1993.



Duckman, the 1997 Florida Senior Games State Championships Male Athlete of the Year, won five gold medals in the high jump, shot put, discus throw, 100 and 200 meter dashes and took the silver in the long jump and javelin throw. His high jump of 3 feet, 4 inches established a new record in the 85-89 age group. He also holds the high jump record in the 80-84 age group and the javelin throw record in the 75-79 age group with a throw of 90 feet, 10 inches in 1995. Duckman, 86, has won 69 medals since 1993.

Seymour Duckman in the 200 meter dash

16 participants over the age of 90

The 2005 Florida Senior Games State Championships featured 16 athletes over the age of 90. Two of the athletes, Kenneth Cross, of The Villages and Roger Gentilhomme, of Dunedin, competed in more than one sport.

Cross, 91, won a gold medal in mixed doubles pickleball with his partner, 79 year old, Millie Fey, of The Villages and also took a gold medal in horseshoes. Cross also won gold medals in each sport at the 2004 Florida Senior Games State Championships. Gentilhomme, 96, dropped a two-set match to 85-year old Edmond Heisler, but still won the gold medal in the 95-99 age group, being the lone competitor. He also won his age group in singles bowling with individual game scores of 89, 101 and 106 for a three-game total of 296.

At the Men's Golf Competition, the all 90-plus foursome of Jay Morris, Walter Littlecott, Claude Howell and Edward Ricca combined for a total of 370 years of life between them. Littlecott, 91, of Merritt Island, had the top score of the bunch shooting a 90 and setting a new record for the 90-94 age group.

90-year + athletes at the 2005 Florida Senior Games State Championships

Peggy Futrell, The Villages, Road Race, 90 – won age group gold medal with time of 1:01:51

Don Long, Merritt Island, Bowling, 90 – won gold medal in age group with a three game score of 415 (144, 146, 125 single game scores)

Jay Morris, Lakeland, Golf, 90 – won age group silver medal with a score of 99

Eleanor Young, The Villages, Bridge, 90 – registered but did not compete
 Kenneth Cross, The Villages, Pickleball and Horseshoes, 91 – Won age group gold medals in Pickleball and Horseshoes
 Walter Littlecott, Melbourne Beach, Golf, 91 – won gold medal with a score of 90 and set new 90-94 age group record
 Brian McGrath, St Petersburg, Cycling, 91 – registered but did not compete
 Loretta Wise, Lakeland, Golf, 91 – registered but did not compete
 Claude Howell, Lake Wales, Golf, 92 – won bronze medal in age group with a score of 125
 Carl Laubach, Palmetto, Bowling, 92 – won silver medal in age group with a three-game score of 414 (120, 144, 150 single game scores)
 Carl Lindstrand, Leesburg, Swimming, 94 – won five gold medals in five events (50, 100 & 200 yard freestyle, 50 & 100 yard backstroke) and set four age group records.
 Alice Taylor, The Villages, Bowling, 94 -- won singles gold medal in age group with a three game score of 397 (137, 136, 106 single game scores)
 Roger Gentilhomme, Dunedin, Bowling and Tennis, 96 – won age group gold medals in bowling and tennis
 Opal Huddleston, The Villages, Shuffleboard, 96 – won age group gold medal in singles shuffleboard.
 Edward Ricca, Apollo Beach, Golf, 97 – won gold medal in 95-99 age group shooting a 100
 John Donnelly, Sun City Center, Table Tennis, 99 – won gold medal in age group

20 and 40K Road Racers Brave the Elements

Thursday, December 8, turned out to be a miserable day for outside activities. The rain began in the morning and continued throughout the day with temperatures barely reaching the 50s. That didn't deter a group of cyclists who braved the elements in the 20 and 40K Road Races.

Of the 94 registered athletes for the 20K Road Race, that began at 9:00 a.m., only 43 competed. The totals for the 40K Road Race that followed dropped even more drastically. A total of 80 cyclists were registered for the 40K race but only 19 competed.

"I give those competitors that rode a lot of credit," said sport director Jim Mount. "The wind was blowing and the rain was coming but they rode like champions. The average speed in that weather was over 20 miles an hour and the final sprint was over 35 miles an hour. You just have to admire people like that. They came to ride and they stayed through everything. Even the volunteers and staff workers stayed right until the end."

Three cyclists upped their 2005 Florida Senior Games State Championships cycling medal total to four in the bad weather as Dixie DeVry, of Tampa, Mary Smith, of Lady Lake and Kurt Eickelman of Spring Hill won a pair of road race medals. Each won two medals at the 5 and 10K Time Trials as DeVry won in the 50-54 age group, Smith won in the 55-59 age group and Eickelman won in the 70-74 age group.

Al Oerter's Speech at the Celebration of Athletes

Four-time Olympic gold medal winner in the discus throw, Al Oerter, and honorary chairperson for the 2006-08 Florida Senior Games State Championships, addressed the athletes who marched in the annual Celebration of Athletes. His message to them was inspirational to say the least. The only four-time gold medal winner in the history of the Olympic Games surely had those in attendance working toward future competitions with his message.



"I'm in awe of these men and women," Oerter said at the Celebration of Athletes. "They're all forward looking. There's always something for them in the future, the next day, the next competition. Here in Florida, where there are a lot of people with a few years on their bones, the conversation is often about medicine, their physical ailments or their latest hip replacements.

Al Oerter at the Celebration of Athletes

“These athletes – and they are all true athletes – aren’t content to sit around and let the aging process get the best of them. We all get older, but if we’re lucky, we have a say in how that goes.

“You can’t let anyone set your limits. You might be surprised at what you’re capable of. I think the Senior Games shows there are a lot of people who’ve gotten that message and I salute them.”

Ceremonial Firsts

On the opening day of competition, Saturday, December 3, the seven sports kicking off the Games held ceremonial firsts, presented by long-time participants of the Florida Senior Games.

At the Archery competition at The Villages Polo Field, C.R. Northcutt, a National Senior Games gold medal winner from Hernando, shot the first arrow. The first serve of the Badminton event, at The Villages High School, was sent over the net by USA Badminton South Region Representative and 2005 National Senior Games medalist Dave Zarco, of Miami. The first ball in Bowling at the Fiesta Bowl was rolled by Joseph and Dottie St. Pierre, an 80-plus year old couple from Pinellas Park who hold the mixed doubles records in 80-84 and 85-89 age groups. The first serve of the Pickleball competition was put in play by 91-year old Kenneth Cross, of The Villages, at the Chula Vista Recreation Center.

The 2003 Florida Senior Games State Championships Female Athlete of the Year, Madelaine “Tiny” Cazal threw out the first pitch of the softball competition at the Saddlebrook Recreation Center. Long-time men’s volleyball player, Walter Deal, of the Clearwater Aces, launched the first serve over the net at Lake Sumter Community College and the first shot of the Shooting competition at Robinson Ranch in Dunnellon was taken by multi-year medal winner Ed Courtemarche.

Perfect Performance at Basketball Shooting

Dennis McDonald, of Palm Harbor, recorded only the second perfect 30 score in State Games Free Throw Shooting history, hitting three sets of 10 shots in the 65-69 age group to win the gold medal. It was the first perfect score at the Florida Senior Games State Championships since Andy McGuffin accomplished the feat in 2001. “I just happened to have one of those good days where everything was falling in,” said McDonald after the competition. It was his first gold medal in Florida Senior Games State Championships Free Throw Shooting competition. His previous best finish was in 2002, when he won a silver medal in the 60-64 age group.

Popularity of Pickleball

Prior to the 2003 Florida Senior Games State Championships, Pickleball was a little-known sport with a funny name played in a few areas around the country and in The Villages. In its debut year in the State Championships, 200 players signed up to compete. In 2004, registration jumped to 270 and in 2005, more than 300 participated.

In 2004, pickleball players from Arizona came to the Florida Senior Games State Championships. Showing the growth of the sport in Florida, in 2006 six Local Senior Games competitions will offer pickleball as well as the State Games in Lee County.

Grandparent/Grandchild relay

A new event was added to the 2005 Florida Senior Games State Championships Track & Field competition in the Grandparent/Grandchild relay. Even though only three teams registered and two were on hand at competition time, it will be an event in the State Games for years to come.



Held at the end of the running events, each participant ran 50 meters. Lionel Bonck and his granddaughter Ellie ran along with Chester Fromm and his grandson, Ryan. Joining in the fun at the last minute was Vivian Murray, wife of track & field officials director, Chris Murray, with their granddaughter, Skyler.

While Bonck, the men's record holder in the 400 meter dash in the 60-64 age group took the early lead in the grandparent leg of the race, the Murrays came from behind to win the overall race. Medals were presented to all competitors and smiles were on the faces of all involved following the race.

3-year Participation Totals for The Villages Era

During the Florida Senior Games State Championships three-year run in The Villages, more than 7,900 of Florida's Finest Senior Athletes came out to play. In 2002, in Polk County, participation topped 2,000 for the first time and a new standard was set from 2003-05 in The Villages. The 2004 Games, a qualifier for the 2005 National Senior Games, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, marked a new all-time high with 2,982 athletes competing. While attendance is usually down in non-qualifying years, participation rose in 2005, up from the 2003 totals.

2003 – 2,387 participants

2004 – 2,982 participants

2005 – 2,575 participants

3-year total – 7,944

Futrell's Road Race Finish

While Charlie Futrell, of The Villages, competed in over 20 events during the week of the 2005 Florida Senior Games State Championships in swimming, cycling, road race and track & field, he managed to spend some time with his wife, Peggy. During the 5K Road Race, the couple of more than 59 years, each won gold medals in their age groups. Charlie's gold medal came with a time of 45:32 in the 85-89 age group and Peggy's time of 1:01:51 earned the gold in the 90-94 age group. Once Charlie crossed the finish line, he made his way back to where his wife was on the course and finished it out with her, veering off to the side at the last minute so she could cross the finish line.



Peggy Futrell crosses the finish line at the 5K Road Race

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