

## 2013 BC SENIORS GAMES - KAMLOOPS, AUGUST 21-24

The 26th annual BC Seniors Games were hosted by Kamloops, from August 20-24. The 2013 Games included 25 sports which were held in various venues around the city. Track and field was held at Hillside Stadium on the campus of Thompson Rivers University. The 10Km run and 10Km walk were held on MacArthur Island on the North Shore. A strong contingent of 221 athletes over the age of 55 registered to compete in track and field. The weather conditions were great with hot, sunny conditions for the first two days and then the weather cooled off for the last two days.

The schedule was changed slightly from earlier years, with track events scheduled all day Wednesday and with no track events scheduled on Saturday morning. More time was given for the throwing events and this allowed the throwing events to run much smoother than the year before. A few athletes had conflicts with scheduling but mainly because the athlete entered numerous (jumping throwing and track) events.

The hurdles events, sprint and intermediate, were included for the first time. There were 7 entries in the womens' events but only 4 participated. The mens' hurdles had 21 entries but only 9 participated. The question was asked, "should the hurdles be included next year?" One World record and 3 BC records were broken in the hurdles.

The events in the men's pentathlon were changed to include the 200m and discus, replacing the 100m and shot put. With the changes, the mens' pentathlon now conforms to WMA, CMA and BCA standards. One BC and Canadian record was broken in the men's pentathlon. Next year the women's pentathlon might also be changed to include the proper WMA events, that is to add the hurdles and high jump to replace the 100m and javelin.

There was concern that a few athletes were not properly prepared to compete in their events. In the 5Km power walk, for example, all three events took over an hour to complete, waiting for the last walker to finish. Also in the 800m and 1500m races, a couple of competitors walked most of the race. A question was raised "how much of the race should a competitor be required to run ... or face possible disqualification?"

Overall, the track and field meet was very successful. The athletes commented about the "first-class" facilities and wished that their own communities could have something similar. The Kamloops Track and Field Club, their organizers, officials and volunteers did an excellent job. There were also about a dozen officials from BC Athletics who travelled to Kamloops to assist.

The athletes responded by setting many records; 61 BC Seniors Games, 24 BC Athletics, 10 Canadian and 3 World records. All three world records were set by 76 year-old Christa Bortignon who competes in the 75-79 age category. She set new world standards in the 100M (15.82), 400M (1:19.53) and 80M Hurdles (17.44). The old world records were 15.91, 1:22.39 and 17.71. Christa has now broken outdoor world records in 6 different events this year.

Ninety-year-old Harry Thompson broke 2 Canadian records in the M90 200M (51.88) and 800M (5:07.40). This gives Harry five Canadian outdoor records this year. Bakhshish Dhillon broke the M75 Canadian record in the Weight pentathlon (3455 points) and BC records in the Hammer (34.97m) and Weight (13.83m). Cheryl Closkey broke the Canadian record in the W65 Weight (11.68m) and a BC record in the Weight pentathlon. Victor Njume now holds Canadian javelin records in 3 different age groups after breaking the M70 Javelin record (44.30m). Barry Adams ran an excellent 1500m on his way to breaking the M70 Canadian record in the Pentathlon (2919 points). The team of Urith Hayley, Lori Graham, Elaine Whidden and Marie Johnson broke the Canadian W55 4x100M record (1:05.53).

BC records were broken by Kathy Brand in the W70 Hammer (25.80m) and Weight (9.76m), Margaret Rhebergen W55 Triple jump (8.51m), Betsy Rollins W60 Triple jump (7.85m), Daphne Sullivan W60 Sprint hurdles (17.14), Lynn Thompson M70 Sprint hurdles (18.98), Keith Taylor M80 High jump (1.15m), Joe Giegerich M80 Pole vault (1.82m), Karl Drahorad M85 Javelin (18.70m), Marg Radcliff W70 Weight pentathlon (3246 points) and Ken Townsend M65 Weight pentathlon (3146 points).

There are too many BC Seniors Games records to mention all of them. However, Marek Glowacki, Harry Thompson and Christa Bortignon each set 5 new BC Seniors Games records.

Olga Kotelko who turns 95 next year, won 11 gold medals. Harnek Toor M65, also won 11 medals but only 4 of those were gold.

Next year the Games will be hosted by Langley from September 9-13.

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