

2019 55+ BC GAMES – KELOWNA

September 11-14

The 32nd annual 55+ BC Games were hosted by the city of Kelowna, in the beautiful Okanagan Valley. This was the second time that Kelowna hosted the Games having first hosted it in 2000. The weather was good with mostly sunny skies for the four days of competition. There were a total of 30 sports/activities, from archery to whist, included in this year's Games. Track and field was held in the Apple Bowl Stadium and the 10K road race was a 2-loop out and back course which started near the Apple Bowl. The meet was very well organized and ran on schedule.

There were 238 athletes registered to compete in track and field but due to the implementation of the “less than three” rule which forced the cancellation of events which had less than three entries in their age category, many athletes were denied the opportunity to compete. This rule affected about 100 events for about 70 athletes. Unfortunately this rule was not applied evenly for everyone. In some cases the athletes were still allowed to compete in their age category but were not allowed to win medals. In other cases the athletes were put down into a younger age category. But most of the affected athletes had their events cancelled. A few athletes withdrew from the Games in protest. This rule caused an outrage among the athletes and with the support of a few swimmers, about 50 people voiced their opposition to this rule in writing and had their quotes included in an email letter sent to the BCSGS. At the zone coordinators' meeting, Paul Kinghan, the vice-president of the BCSGS, stated that there will be a resolution to this rule.

The athletes established 46 new 55+ BC Games records, 14 new BC Masters provincial records and 5 new Canadian Masters records. Myrtle Acton was the star of the meet by breaking 4 Canadian records in the W85 Throws Pentathlon, hammer, weight and discus. Myrtle also broke the BC W85 record in the shot put and set a new standard for the BC W85 1500m race walk. Keith Taylor broke the 5th Canadian record in the M85 high jump.

Lynn Thompson broke two BC Masters records in the M80 300m hurdles and 80m hurdles. Breaking one BC Masters record were: Naomi Moriyama (W65 80m hurdles), Linda Rondeau (W70 1500m race walk), Larry Chalmers (M90 hammer), Gerda Crosthwaite (W80 shot put), Karl Mey (M80 pentathlon) and Monica Pomietlarz (W60 shot put). Monica added two more 55+ BC Games records in the high jump and pole vault.

Home-town athlete David Guss (M55) amazed the crowd with his excellent running, breaking three 55+ BC Games records in the 800m, 1500m and 5000m. The only reason that David did not break any BC or Canadian records was because he had already broken these records. Christa Bortignon, who holds several world records, broke three 55+ BC Games records in the W80 50m, 100m and long jump, and would have broken the Games record in the triple jump but the wind reading was too high by only 0.1 m/s. Don Currie also broke three 55+ BC Games records in the M85 50m, 1500m and 5000m power walk.

Breaking two 55+ BC Games records were: Suzanne Sharp (W65 1500m race walk and 5000m power walk), Michael Deady (M65 shot put and discus) and Nancy Smith (W55 hammer and weight).

The athletes greatly appreciate the hard work and dedication by all of the officials and volunteers. Special thanks to Brad Heinzman who acted as the meet director, the officials, the Okanagan Athletics Club and all of the volunteers who gave up their time for the four days of competition.

Next year the 55+ BC Games will be hosted by the city of Richmond from September 15-19.