

AGELESS

Continued from Page 36

throws immensely since he first began competition.

“There is a little different philosophy among throwers,” he said. “If they see you are doing something wrong they will help you. For example, a man I know from Louisiana pulled me aside at one meet recently when I was struggling and told me what the flaw in my form was. After that, I was throwing six feet farther once I’d corrected myself.”

Marion and Jim won’t see each other for most of the meet because Marion will be putting her skills to use on the track. She’ll compete in the 100-, 200-, and 400-meter sprints and cherishes the competition she’ll be part of.

“Competing keeps me exercising,” she said with a chuckle. “I need a little extra edge. (Competition) gives me a goal.”

Marion’s husband got started in track and field competition in high school, but she wasn’t able to begin competing until much later in life. Title IX was not in place when she was a student, so her high school did not offer her full access to its athletic programs.

She said that competing in Masters races mean a lot to her today for a variety of reasons, including finally giving her that chance to compete on the same track as men.

“Some women my age, mostly in smaller towns, had access to women’s sports, but I went to high school in Dallas and we had no girls’ sports,” Marion said. “I would have loved it. I was a great intramural player. But we have a great time with this group. It has a real family type of feeling and we’ve branched off a lot. We even have a women’s book club. I also think its really healthy to have younger friends when you get older. It gives you a broader picture of the world.”

Another athlete who will compete at the Lions Club Championships this weekend has already had a chance to get that broad picture of the world.

That man is Jim Gerhardt, who competed in the triple jump at the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki. Gerhardt qualified for the high school state meet in three different events in 1946 and had the opportunity to train with legendary coach Clyde Littlefield as a graduate school student at the University of Texas.



Donna Lawrence, a 100-meter national champion in the women’s 35-39-year-old classification, sprints to victory in Hawaii. Trailing Lawrence is Sarah Boyd, who won the triple jump in the same division. Both will compete at the Lions Club Charity Track and Field Championships Saturday.

He then spent 40 years away from the sport, but a flyer his wife found one day put him back on the track, and then once again, in the field.

“My wife picked up a flyer about a senior games,” he said. “I was doing speed walking and entered race walking in that event. I was really impressed by what good shape these people were in and that really was an inspiration. I decided to try throws and it’s been a real blast since then.”

Gerhardt also pointed to camaraderie as the best part of his racing life, but just like Jim and Marion Carney, he has plenty of competitive spirit left in the tank. He’ll be looking for a strong showing, but knows that plenty of other athletes will be as well.

“You get to a point where you relish the early part of your age group,” he said. “When you’re 70 in the 70-75 age group you’re a baby.”

Gerhardt praised meet director Seth Brower for the outstanding job he’s done over the past several years of running the race. The event is usually held at Lake Travis High School, but was moved to McNeil this year because of construction at Lake Travis High.

Brower said that he’s looking forward to getting back to Lake Travis, where the meet has been held for the last three years, but that the spirit of the race will be unchanged during this one-year relocation.

“The excitement and determination of the older athletes is the best part to me,” Brower said. “They are truly making this a sport for life.”

MEET SCHEDULE

TRACK EVENTS

- 8 a.m. – 5,000-meter Run-Walk;
- 9 a.m. – High hurdles;
- 9:20 a.m. – 4x100-meter relay;
- 9:40 a.m. – 800-meter run;
- 10 a.m. – 2x200-meter relay;
- 10:20 a.m. – 100-meter run;
- 11 a.m. – 2x400-meter relay;
- 11:20 a.m. – Intermediate hurdles BREAK
- 12:20 p.m. – 200-meter run;
- 12:50 p.m. – 2x100-meter relay;
- 1:10 p.m. – 400-meter run;
- 1:30 p.m. – 4x200-meter relay
- 1:50 p.m. – 1,500-meter run;
- 2:10 p.m. – 4x400-meter relay.

FIELD EVENTS

- 9 a.m. – High Jump (Flight A – Starting height: Below 4’6”);
- 10 a.m. – Javelin A, Discus B, Shot C, Weight D, High Jump (Flight B – Starting height: 4’6”), Long Jump (Flight A – Age 12 and under);
- 11 a.m. – Javelin B, Discus C, Shot D, Weight A, Long Jump (Flight B – Age 13 and above), Pole Vault (Flight A – Starting height: Below 10’);
- Noon – Javelin C, Discus D, Shot A, Weight B, Pole Vault (Flight B – Starting height: 10’-11’-11”), Triple Jump;
- 1 p.m. – Javelin D, Discus A, Shot B, Weight C, Pole Vault (Flight C – Starting height: 12’-13’-11”);
- 2 p.m. – Hammer E, Superweight F, Pole Vault (Flight D – Starting height: 14’ and above);
- 3 p.m. – Hammer F, Superweight E.

Throw Flights (Javelin, Discus, Shot): *A: All women; B: Men 60-plus; C: Men 30-59; D: Men 29-and-below*
Hammer, Superweight flights: *E: Women and men 49-and-below; F: Men 50-plus.*