



Senior citizens enjoy their own ‘Summer Olympics’ Annual games provide both competition and camaraderie

BY GARY CURRERI
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Al Perlman showed his all-around athletic abilities as Abbey Delray South recently hosted its own “Summer Olympics” extravaganza.

The 82-year-old Perlman, of Delray Beach, won the broomball and darts events and finished runner-up in shuffleboard en route to being named the Men’s Division overall champion as part of the senior community’s annual event featuring Olympics-style games.

Nancy Gunther, 85, took the Women’s Division overall title for a third time, having also won in 2012 and 2013.

There were six events – pickleball, broomball, darts, golf putting and golf driving, and shuffleboard. All of the contestants, ranging in age from 75 to 95, enjoyed the camaraderie as well as the competition.

Perlman smiled in explaining that his experience with the broom around the house paid dividends.

“It is good for your ability and agility and coordination. You have to keep your eye on the ball,” Perlman said. “Thankfully it is a big ball. If it was a small ball, we’d all be in trouble.”

Jim Burns, the executive director at host Abbey Delray South, said the senior athletes have definitely

caught the Olympic spirit from down in Rio de Janeiro.

“It is amazing to see how active they can be,” Burns said. “You think 80- or 90-year-olds sit on the couch or in wheelchairs, but that’s not the case. They do their own events and make up their own activities, so in the excitement of the Olympics, they decided to do this.”

Fifty seniors over the age of 75 participated in the events. This marks the fifth year that Abbey Delray South has hosted such a gathering.

Fitness Director Mike Schmidt says the summer games in Rio helped entice seniors to participate, and they’re embracing the Olympic spirit. The top three in each event received medals and overall winners were crowned.

Schmidt said the Olympic-style competition is generally held in March, however it was pushed back this year to coincide with the Summer Games. He said pickleball was added this year.

Kathy Leonard, 77, has lived in the Abbey Delray South community for just one month.

“I think it’s great,” Leonard said. “We are in the middle of the Olympics and we are all Olympians. It is not important to win a gold medal. I just want to make a lot of friends.”

Roberta Hyman, 80, said it wasn’t for bragging rights,

it was more about self-satisfaction.

“We are playing with and against our friends, peers and our fellow players,” she said.

Arlene Mendozza, 81, won the golf putting competition. Mendozza and Ann Heller tied for second overall.

The husband/wife duo of Elizabeth and Herb Sainio both said they looked forward to the competition.

“This is way more fun than I thought it would be,” said Elizabeth, 76. “I’ve never done it before. I was looking forward to this very much. It is a challenge to do things I have never done before and maybe I will like them and want to do them again.”

“I am not that athletic,” said Herb, 87, who used to run the Wii bowling in the community. “I try to participate in as much as I can. This is something to do.”

Ann Heller, 81, battled to a silver medal in her favorite event – pickleball.

“This is a lot of fun,” Heller said. “I love it. I am more excited about the real (Olympics), but this is fun. This is very competitive - without question. You play to win. You have to stay active if you want to stay young.”

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Delray Beach's Al Perlman, 82, competes in the broomball event as he joins other senior citizens in the annual Olympics-style games at host Abbey Delray South. Perlman emerged as the Men's Division overall champion.