

Downtown comes alive with athletes, spectators ... even Telus pickets

"It's just like being in a real city."

It's a refrain you hear over and over these days, as you walk down Jasper Avenue, through Old Strathcona, or around the university campus.

Everywhere you look, there are people on the streets, chatting, laughing, simply wandering and admiring the sights. Edmonton feels animated, cosmopolitan.

And it's a damned fine feeling. I'll admit, when the city first put in a bid for the World Masters Games, I snorted. What, I wondered, was the purpose of going after such a truly amateur sporting event?

Who on earth would come to watch a bunch of washed-up second-raters golf, bowl, or play canoe-polo?

My mistake. I'd utterly missed the

Masters Games are helping bring a big-city feel to lift our self-esteem

point. The purpose of the World Masters isn't to sell expensive tickets. It's for the competitors and their personal cheering sections to have a great time.

Top-calibre elite athletes who attend marquee sporting events don't usually leave themselves time to shop at West Edmonton Mall or nosh on green papaya salad and chocolate-dipped strawberries at a Taste of Edmonton or tipple in the pubs of Whyte Avenue.

They're too busy huddled in some athlete's village, obsessively doing push-ups. The Masters competitors, bless them, are out there every day, buying souvenirs, eating in restaurants, fuelling our economy, and giving this Cinderella city a



Paula Simons

Wander around downtown these days and you feel and see a refreshing new urban spirit. The weather has been admittedly wonky, sunny and hot one minute, cold and wet the next.

Nonetheless, crowds have been braving the winds and the intermittent showers to fill up Churchill Square and Rice-Howard Way.

It's not just the visiting athletes and their supporters, of course. There are Klondike fun-tub racers, grande dames in full faux-1890s regalia, plenty of downtown shop and office workers buying tickets for samples from Edmonton restaurants — not to mention the families and day care groups splashing in the

badly needed injection of self-esteem.

The gift of these Games goes beyond the plethora of inspirational feel-good stories about mature athletes, beyond the economic spinoffs for our tourism and hospitality sector.

City Hall wading pool and Churchill fountain.

Even the striking Telus workers are adding — ironically enough — to the carnival-like atmosphere, filling a usually barren stretch of Jasper Avenue with vibrant street life, cheering and hooting and waving their placards every time a car horn honks in solidarity.

"I feel like I'm in New York," laughed a young colleague of mine, a recent Columbia graduate, as he returned from a downtown lunch break.

Not a sentence you hear about Edmonton every day.

The joke, of course, is that our out-of-town guests think our city is like this all the time.

The joke on us, is that it could be.

See SIMONS / B2

JULY 28, 2005

21,285 Athletes Take Part in 6th

World Masters Games in Edmonton, Canada

By AL SHEAHEN

"Passion Qualifies You," "Sport for Life," and "The Challenge Never Ends," were the mottoes of the World Masters Games in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, July 22-31.

The sixth quadrennial event drew an astonishing 21,285 participants from 84 countries, each of whom plunked down an entry fee of US\$150 (CAN\$185) to compete in one (or more) of the 27 sports. Track and field was the largest sport, with 3050 competitors from 52 nations. Soccer (2591), ice hockey (1772), basketball (1433) and swimming (1411) were the next most popular events (see chart).

Competitors in this multi-sport event ranged in age from 24 to 96. Twenty-three percent of the athletes were from Edmonton; 24% from the rest of Alberta; 20% from the rest of Canada; and 33% were international, including 1974 from the USA, 1442 from Australia, and 408 from Russia; 58% were male; 42% were female.

An additional 2000 companions, coaches, and managers joined the Western Canada festivities, bringing total number of participants to well over 23,000.

The successful event was sponsored by the International Masters Games Association (IMGA), which staged the first WMG in Toronto in 1985 with 8305 participants. Next came Aarhus, Denmark in 1989 (5500), Brisbane,

Competitors included former world-class athletes like Olympic high-jumpers Debbie Brill, 52, and Robert Zmelik, 36; hockey Hall-of-Fame goaltending legend Grant Fuhr; Olympic swimmer Gary Hall, 52; and ex-NBA basketball stars Greg Kite, Fred Roberts, Mickey Johnson, and James Donaldson.

The Games also included Albertan John Berg, 70, in the 100m. Berg had never run a competitive race in his life. But he was as enthusiastic as anyone, saying hello to fellow competitors in the "call room" before his race. When a runner false-started in the previous race, Berg asked: "Why two gun shots?" Others gently explained the false start rules and the "on your mark, set, go" formalities to him. He was as welcome in the Games as any Olympian or world champion. He didn't qualify for the 100m finals, but, hopefully, he enjoyed his new experience.

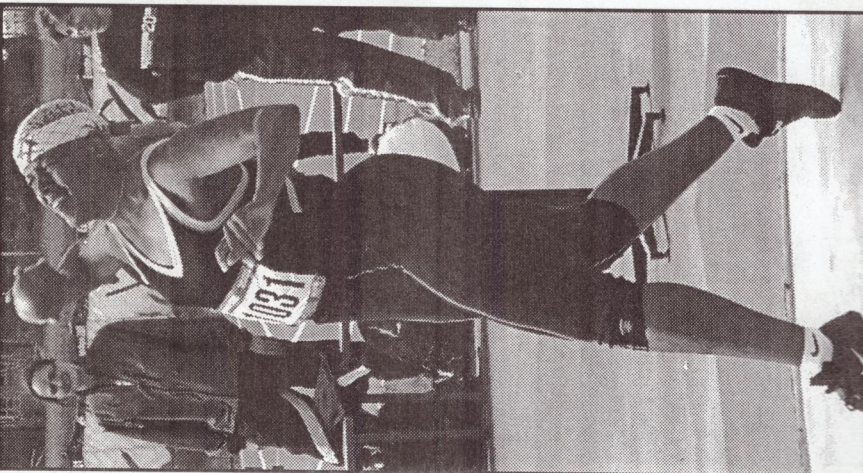


ROBIN HERRON
Myrle Mensey, W55 shot put winner, WMA Games, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

kept charging over the finish line, one after another. It was beautiful."

Media Coverage Abundant

Newspaper and television coverage was abundant. Both the Journal and the Edmonton Sun had a daily page-one story and photo. The two local TV stations had cameras and reporters at most



pared for each sport, giving the venue addresses, rules, procedures, medical info, etc. Each participant received a quality 19"x15" backpack.

The Games' organizers produced a daily eight-page summary - in English and French - of the previous day's activities. A shuttle bus service funneled athletes from the venues to the downtown hotels. Free public transportation was available.

One of the best examples of the camaraderie of the Games came on the slow-pitch softball field. The Moscow Teapots were a team composed of Russian university professors of modest means who scraped together the funds to make the trip to Edmonton. When a Canadian player realized the team didn't have any cleats, he spent \$900 of his own

Continued on page 18

2005 World Masters Games Athletics

Country	Meet Entries	
	T&F	Total
Argentina	1	8
Armenia	2	6
Australia	103	329
Austria	3	9
Bahamas	1	5
Barbados	1	2
Belarus	1	2
Belgium	5	14
Bermuda	1	2
Brazil	21	73
Bulgaria	2	8
Canada	2238	4096

OR in 1998 (11,000) and Melbourne, Australia in 2002 (25,000).

Organization Excellent

Most of the 27 events seemed to go smoothly. It was a testament to the professional Edmonton organizers, who have done this sort of thing before - from the Commonwealth Games in 1978 to the World Track & Field Championships in 2001. But the numbers in those events paled in comparison to the magnitude of this 10-day extravaganza.

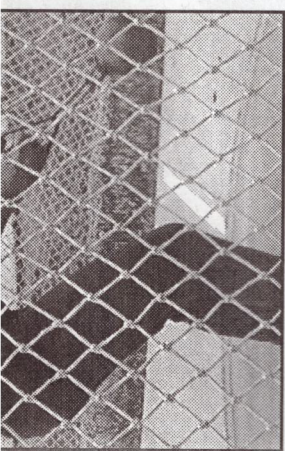
Except for a lack of parking at the University of Alberta, the track and field events went virtually flawlessly. Brian Keaveney, Canadian Masters T&F Coordinator, worked with the organizers for a year to make sure they got the technical details of the T&F competition right. They did.

Equally amazing as the number of participants was the number of volunteers. "We had 6000 applications," said Morley Scott, Media Coordinator of the Games. "As the Games approached, we had to turn people away."

Volunteers and over 1000 officials were uniformly gracious, friendly, knowledgeable, and a credit to the city of Edmonton. And virtually none of them got paid.

Participation is Key

The dominant mood of the Games was clearly participatory rather than competitive. Oh, there were hot spots of fierce competition, but mostly everyone seemed just happy to be healthy and participating. Times, marks, and scores were secondary.



ROBIN HERRON, George Mathews, WMA Games, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Dan Bulkley, 88, Phoenix, Ore., was amazing. On Monday afternoon, he ran the 2000m steeplechase. The next morning, he won a singles match in badminton, then drove to the track in time to run the 300mH final. Then he took off to get ready for a badminton doubles match that afternoon.

A few age-group world records were set, but the announcers and the local newspapers didn't seem too interested. Jim Stookey's M75 WR of 54.98 in the 300-meter hurdles went unnoticed. No age-graded marks were compiled or reported.

"Let's not sugarcoat things, there was not a lot of world-class speed on display during the umpteenth 100-meter sprint finals," wrote Jim MacKinnon in the Edmonton Journal. "Happily, there was a refreshing absence of the all-world attitude, trash talking, pouting, preening and testosterone run-amok that accompany the sprint events at, say, the Olympics. Instead, Foote Field was awash in inspiration and the kind of pure joy only intense sports competition can provide. Feel-good stories

venues. As usual, the media focused mainly on former Olympians and the age 80+ participants. But, Keaveney said, "Any publicity is good publicity." The oldest participants were swimmers Jarling Timmerman, 96, of Winnipeg, and Margo Bates, 95, of Australia.

Debbie Brill

Debbie Brill, 52, is a giant in Canada. Despite withdrawing from her W50 high jump with a sore Achilles, she was mobbed by the local TV, radio, and newspaper outlets, who interviewed her and sister Connie, 51, for 30 minutes. She was the lead story on that night's TV broadcasts, and was the front-page story and photo in the next day's Journal.

"It's the first time Connie and I have competed together since high school," the friendly Brill said.

Connie cleared 1.40 meters (4-7). Debbie, who leaped 1.96 (6-5) in 1979 and holds the W50 WR of 1.60 (5-3), was set to enter the competition with the bar set at 1.45m (4-9), but her Achilles wouldn't cooperate.

"My style has changed but I still love high jumping," she said. "It makes me happy and gives me self-satisfaction." The mother of three manages a physician's office near Vancouver and, along with her husband, owns and manages a detox center.

Opening Ceremonies

More than 35,000 athletes, visitors and spectators attended the elaborate opening ceremonies, featuring nationally-known performers, pyrotechnics, and aerial displays. It ended with an on-the-field dance party to live music.

A 20- to 40-page booklet was pre-

Czech Republic	31	103
Denmark	1	3
Estonia	6	13
France	2	4
Germany	26	83
Great Britain	19	56
Greece	1	5
Guam	1	2
Guatemala	1	2
Hungary	12	39
India	73	126
Indonesia	1	2
Israel	4	10
Italy	4	5
Jamaica	7	12
Japan	30	109
Latvia	9	18
Lithuania	5	7
Mexico	19	53
Mongolia	2	3
Nepal	1	1
New Zealand	37	107
Nigeria	11	13
Norway	2	7
Peru	1	3
Poland	7	14
Russia	39	128
Slovakia	4	12
Slovenia	6	19
South Africa	1	1
Spain	1	5
Sri Lanka	6	13
Sweden	5	9
Switzerland	3	5
The Netherlands	9	25
Trinidad & Tobago	1	2
Ukraine	12	31
United Arab Emirates	1	1
United States	267	728
TOTAL	3050	6341

World Masters Games

Continued from page 17

money to buy a pair for each player.

Medal Ceremonies

Medals still mattered. Overall, Games organizers distributed 15,481 medals over the 10-day event. The track and field medal ceremonies were professionally done. About 30 minutes after a final, the announcer directed the fans' attention to a spot near the



Rick Becker, here winning the M50 8K XC race (28:48), 2005 World Masters Games, also won the 5000 on the track (16:15).

finish line where three medals were awarded. Olympic style. Medal

events were plentiful. Covering 48 city blocks, the West Edmonton Mall is the largest shopping and entertainment complex in the world.

Following the meet, many athletes and their guests explored the stunning scenery of Jasper, Banff, and the Canadian Rockies.

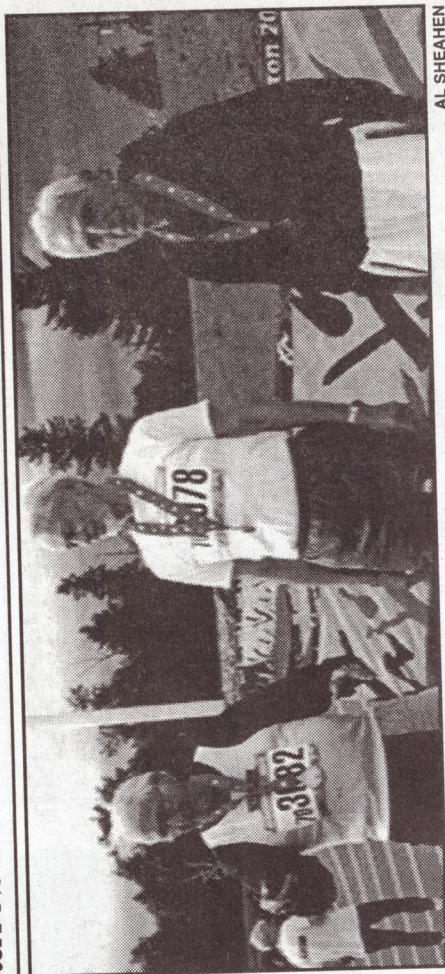
Weather

Some travelers flew in on a propeller-driven airplane from Seattle over the snow-covered Rockies. They came from a U.S. heatwave to find temperatures of 57F (high) and 43F (low) in Edmonton. Athletes huddled indoors as they waited for their events to be called, and lined up alongside officials and spectators for hot coffee.

"I should have brought my gloves,"



Medalists in the M85 100m, 2005 World Masters Games (l to r): Champion Goldy, USA, second (18.48); Ralph Maxwell, USA, first (17.17); and Fred Thompson, USA, third (19.51).



AL SHEAHEN

showers, which softball teams just played through. Players and volunteers pitched in for six hours to remove 1.25" of water from softball fields after one torrential rainfall.

Favorite Part of Games

A poll by the Journal asked "What was your favorite part of the World Masters Games?" "Competing" (26.8%) ranked first, closely followed by "The people I've met" (24.4%), "The city of Edmonton" (24.4%), "Spectating" (17.1%), and "Volunteering" (7.3%).

Closing Ceremonies

Nearly 8000 people came out to the closing ceremonies on a sunny Sunday night after a week of intermittent rains. Flags were marched in to the field in alphabetical order. The Chinese Taipei Olympic flag flew for the first time, replacing the Taiwanese flag that was

meet as their world championships.

Some are wondering if WMA should hold its world championships in conjunction with the WMG? It would seem logical, but maybe not. The mind-set of these Games would change. "We're a hybrid between participation and competition," said Tracy Bednard of the press office. "The emphasis is not on winning but on just being here and having a good time."

It's also about US\$25 million (CAN\$31 million). That's what the Games brought to Alberta in the form of money spent on hotels, restaurants, souvenirs, tours, etc., according to Economic Development Edmonton.

Indeed, the entry fees alone accounted for more than US\$3 million (21,285 x US\$150). The sanction fee paid by Edmonton to the IMGA was US\$1 million.



TPS SPORTS PHOTOS
Jeanne Daprano, W65, won the 800 and 1500, World Masters Games.

said one Californian. "It was 109 when I left Los Angeles and 45 when our plane landed last night."

But the weather warmed up to the 70s as the week went on. And the near-frost drove off all the mosquitoes. Conditions were generally good, except for daily late-afternoon thunder

ORIGINALS THIS EDITION.
The track and field announcing was inconsistent. Athletes were introduced. All races were called. Some broadcasters identified the country of each runner; others did not. World records were rarely mentioned.

One downside to the planning was the lack of a list of competitors' numbers in the program. Spectators were unable to identify who the athletes were.

Sightseeing

Edmonton is at 53.5 North latitude, about the same as Amsterdam, so it stayed light until 10:30 p.m. Social

****NEW REVISED EDITION**** **The Complete Guide to RUNNING:** **How to be a Champion from 9 to 90**

By Earl Fee

Earl Fee, holder of 40 world records in masters running events, from 300H to the mile, has updated his highly successful previous edition to include many action photos, new chapters on plyometrics, additional information on weight training, new magic supplements, best treatments for injury, effect of age on stride length and frequency, new training workouts and more....

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AL SHEAHEN

Volunteers line up behind the starting line, waiting to whisk the athletes' baskets to the finish line, at the World Masters Games.

marched in during the opening ceremonies, prompting a protest from China.

Taiwanese soccer players boycotted the closing ceremonies to protest the ban on their controversial flag. China considers Taiwan a renegade province. Most nations severed relations with the democratic island off China's coast in the 1970s. China's Nationalists and Communists split amid civil war in 1949, when the Nationalists fled Taiwan.

"Best Games Ever"

Kai Holm, president of the IMGA, called the event "the most perfect Games ever." He said Edmonton proved to be the perfect-sized city for the Games. After the 2002 WMG in Melbourne, officials said they'd felt the event got lost in the city of three million people.

Should WMA Hold Championships with WMG?

Only two of the 27 sports – orienteering and weight lifting – used this

Sydney in 2009

On June 13, 2004, Sydney was chosen by the 10-member IMGA Board of Governors to host the 2009 Games over bids submitted by Shiga, Japan, and Copenhagen, Denmark. The IMGA General Assembly is composed of representatives from each of 17 core sports. Each organizer is allowed to include 10 additional sports, depending on local interest. But, unlike WMA, no vote on anything is ever taken of the participants.

Bob Adby, director of the New South Wales Department of Tourism in Australia, expects 30,000 to come to Sydney (pop. 4.3 million) from Oct. 10-18, 2009. "These games fit into the concept of sports for all and provide a general social value and well being. And, of course, the tourism value is obvious." □

(For more information, go to www.2009worldmasters.com and www.imga-masters.com.)

City wins gold with World Masters Games

Economic impact of \$36.4 million more than double predicted for last summer's spectacle

Keith Gerein

The Edmonton Journal

Saturday, January 14, 2006

It began as an event few people had heard of and ended as one of Edmonton's greatest success stories.

Last summer's World Masters Games proved to be a pecuniary powerhouse, generating an economic benefit that far surpassed even the most optimistic projections, a beaming group of organizers announced Friday.

According to research conducted by Deloitte and Touche, the Games were responsible for pumping \$70.3 million into the Canadian economy last year, including \$36.4 million that went to the Edmonton region.

Initial estimates were for less than half those amounts: a \$31-million benefit for Canada and \$15.4 million for Edmonton.



CREDIT: Larry Wong, the Journal, File
St. Albert's Alan Waldie waves to spectators during the start of the half marathon at the World Masters Games on July 31, 2005.

"Absolutely staggering," Mayor Stephen Mandel said of the numbers.

"The impact from \$70.3 million is pretty spectacular. Four years ago, when we were planning this, I don't think anybody would have had the nerve to predict that."

Mandel said the economic boon from the Games was likely one of the largest in Edmonton's history, surpassing the totals generated by other recent sporting events, such as the 2005 Brier, the 2004 Canadian figure skating championships, the 2002 U-19 women's world soccer championships and the 2002 Grey Cup.

Only the 2001 World Championships in Athletics may have had a greater financial impact on the city, he said.

"This proves yet again that Edmonton and Alberta are winners in the area of international sport," said Gary Mar, provincial community development minister.

"The World Masters Games was the premiere sporting event in Alberta's centennial year. It was a feast of sport and culture that brought thousands of people to our province and allowed thousands of Albertans to celebrate with them."

Mar said the economic benefits were tremendous considering that the Games were put on with a relatively small operating budget of \$15 million.

Billed as the world's biggest multi-sport festival, the 10-day event held last July saw 21,600 non-professional athletes competing in 27 different sports. About 7,300 of the participants were from other countries.

Although local hotels, restaurants and shops were the major beneficiary of those guests, many of the overseas visitors wound up taking extended holidays to other parts of Canada.

Both Mandel and Mar said the Games' success can be used as a selling point to attract other major international events. While there was no talk of immediately bidding again for the World Masters Games, Mandel said the city is excited about being a host for the 2007 U-19 men's soccer championship and hopes to land an LPGA event and the 2011 Universiade Games.

"You can't have these things every year," Mandel said. "It's expensive and takes an incredible commitment. There's only so much you can feasibly do and do effectively. The last thing you want to do is have a poor event."

Mar suggested that Edmonton's stature as a moderately sized city may be one of the reasons why it has such a strong track record of hosting big competitions.

"When you have an event like the World Masters Games in a city the size of Edmonton, everybody in town knows about it," he said. "If you take it to a city of many millions of people, the impact of it, and the municipal involvement, would be greatly diluted."

kgerein@thejournal.canwest.com

BY THE NUMBERS: WORLD MASTERS GAMES

- Benefit of Games to Canadian economy (original estimate): \$31.1 million

Benefit of Games to Canadian economy (actual): \$70.3 million

- Benefit of Games to Edmonton economy (original estimate): \$15.4 million

Benefit of Games to Edmonton economy (actual): \$36.4 million

- Operating budget for Games: \$15 million

- Number of participants in Games (original estimate): 16,000

Number of participants in Games (actual): 21,600

- Athletes from Canada: 14,267

- Athletes from United States: 1,973

- Athletes from other countries: 5,360

- Average number of nights Games participants stayed in Edmonton: 9

- Percentage of athletes from other countries (excluding U.S.) who extended their stay in Canada to pursue other travel and tourist opportunities: 55 per cent

- Average expenditure during these extended holidays: \$6,000

- Number of countries represented at Games: 89

Estimated economic impact of other recent sporting events:

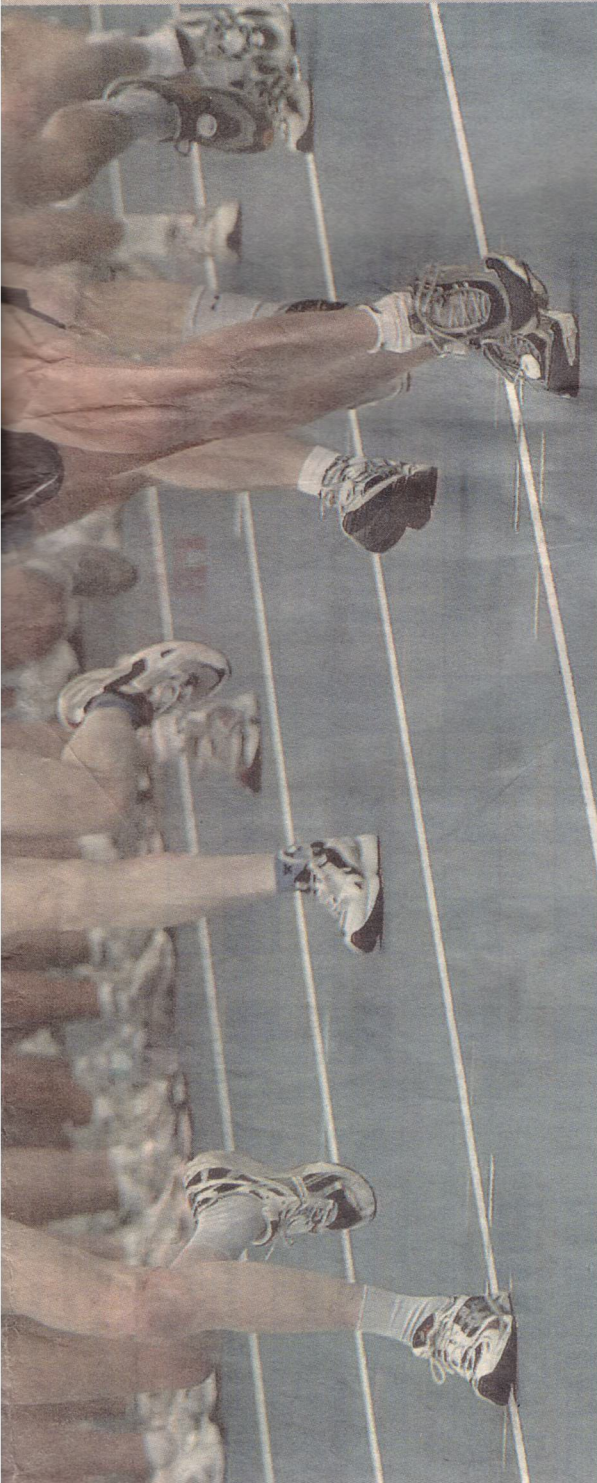
- The 2001 World Championships in Athletics: \$157 million to Edmonton.

- The 2004 Canadian figure skating championships: \$7 million to Edmonton

WASTEPAPER

World Games 10 days of heart-warming moments / D3-4



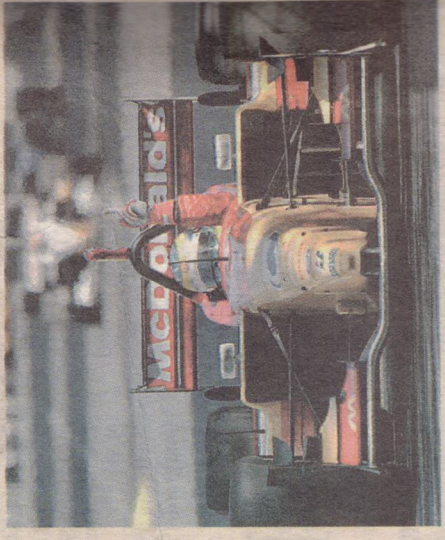


LARRY WONG, THE JOURNAL
 Alan Waldie of St. Albert waves to spectators in the stands as the World Masters Games half-marathon gets underway at Foote Field on Sunday.



LARRY WONG, THE JOURNAL
 Edmonton's Sandy Jacobson is the first woman across the half-marathon finish line.

Singh cruises to victory in Buick; Jang wins Women's British Open / D9



Back in the swim

Red Sox stand pat

Bourdais leads

MASTERS GAMES

No age limit to sportsmanship



John MacKinnon

It was the 88-year-old sprinter Champion Goldy who probably put it best: "Heck, I can do that."

Let his jaunty words stand as the credo for the 2005 World Masters Games, as heartwarming a sporting extravaganza as Edmonton has ever staged, which is saying a lot.

Like many of the more than 21,000 Masters participants, Goldy took up athletics as a 70-year-old retiree to keep fit, and stay active. He got hooked and now boasts that he wants to "run the 100 when I'm 100."

If you met him, you wouldn't bet against him fulfilling that pledge. Nor would you gainsay many of these spirited men and women who train and compete to test themselves, live full lives, have fun and see the world.

Sport tourism, some call it, and why not? If you can join the swim club and see the world, where's the downside, if you can afford it?

Take Peter Crombie, a 60-year-old sprinter from the Sydney, Australia club.

World-class event produced more than its share of competitive spirit and memorable moments

■ Games raise the bar / D

University professors of modest means who scraped together the funds to make the trip to Edmonton. Ill-equipped on diamond, however, they were bowled over when an opposing team shelled about \$900 to outfit the Teapots in ball spikes.

The Masters was an event that featured 95-year-old swimmers, a 94-year sprinter and a canoe-polo team called The Honeys, a group of Japanese women who spoke no English but who had a wonderful time in Edmonton nonetheless.

Sure, there was some whinging about a slipshod rowing event, a Chinese woman flag flap and a paucity of good concessions at just about every venue. But if you could attend even one Masters event and come away unmoved, would you have a heart of stone?

Maybe the essence of the Masters was most poignantly illustrated by Don Jones of Atlanta, Ga. The 1,500-meter bronze medalist was about 20 meters from the finish line in the men's 800-meter final Sunday, a silver medal in his grasp. Then he staggered across the line.



e the world, where's the downside, if you can afford it?

Fake Peter Crombie, a 60-year-old winter from the Sydney, Australia suburb of North Narrabeen, who came to Edmonton, won the sprint triple (100-, 300- and 400-metres) and reunited with his 26-year-old son, Steve, who's in the midst of a five-year motorcycle trip around the world. He cycled up from Nile for the Games.

"I hadn't seen my dad in two years," Steve Crombie said. "And I had never seen him compete in one of these Masters Games, so it was a great bonding experience."

David Kelley of Sacramento played baseball with the Downunders, a team of J-something Aussies at the 2002 World Masters in Melbourne, and liked the lads so much he joined the team. Now he connects with them at events such as the 005 Masters. You meet some good teammates, you stick with them.



RICK MACWILLIAM, THE JOURNAL

Hazel McClarty of Camrose shows off the bronze medal she won in the race walk event during closing ceremonies for the World Masters Games Sunday night at Telus Field.

Sixty-seven year-old Tom Verth of Paris, Ont., and Wally Henne of Sarnia, 70, met at a masters swim competition in Brantford, Ont., some years ago, became fast friends and have been travelling to masters meets together ever since. The camaraderie of friendly competition is the attraction for Verth, a former collegiate swimmer at Indiana University.

"I was a crappy swimmer in college, but

it got me through dentistry," said Verth. "When university was over, I had a 33-year layoff."

"But in masters swimming, you can make it as competitive as you want it to be. It's fun. And you don't get injured much in swimming."

Connie and Debbie Brill thought it would be fun to compete together in the high jump and would have, too, but

Debbie, one of the best in the world at the discipline in the 1970s, tweaked her Achilles tendon moments before the competition began. She had to watch her sister jump — and win — in the 50-54 age group, a slightly bittersweet, sisterly moment. But memorable nonetheless.

The Games produced countless unforgettable. Like the Moscow Teapots, a slo-pitch team composed of Russian

Locals Jacobson, Colburn the swiftest by half

80-year-old Australian heads home with a handful of medals

JOANNE IRELAND
Journal Sports Writer
EDMONTON

One by one, they crossed the finish line — those who managed to muster enough getup to go out with a kick at the finish, and those who just got a kick out of finishing.

A slew of joggers, runners and walkers set out Sunday morning to tackle the 21-kilometre course laid out for the half marathon of the World Masters Games. It was one of the final events contested in the final day of competition and it proved to be one of the most popular.

ton Marathon at the end of August. "At the elite level it's sometimes so intense that you don't have a chance to embrace all of that."

"But for some of us, it's a matter of just trying to make it to 60 or 70 or whatever the number is, but to be race walking at 96 years old or doing the 100 metres at 95 is what's inspiring to me."

No one had to look any further than 80-year-old Roger Churchward of Australia for inspiration. The oldest competitor in the field of half-marathoners finished in an impressive time of 2:22:10.

Hebel, 65, dropped in from Gympie, Australia, and says he is about to run 700 kilometres through 23 countries over two years, beginning in October.

"Each country has to fly me to the next," Hebel said. "It's called the chain of co-operation, and if someone breaks one link, my world record is over."

Draped in a fake fur shawl affixed with a big button that read Don't Hurry Be Happy, and still in his Apache moccasins, which he wore while running the course, Hebel noted that he was missing the annual sword he often carries, sporting a Mohawk haircut and a variety of tattoos, including a pair of



tre final Sunday, a silver medal in his grasp. Then he staggered once, twice and, finally, down he went. He got up, stumbled and belly-flopped again.

"I heard somebody say, 'Get up, you can still finish third!'" said the 74-year-old Jones, gracious and cheerful in his obvious disappointment. "And I did get up." He sure did. But this time, Jones proudly walked across the finish line — in fourth place — to a rousing ovation. Like so many of the 21,000 Masters athletes, Donald Jones kept going, and because he did, his competitive spirit lifted ours just a little.

As sporting spectacles go, the 2005 World Masters Games was charmingly, profoundly and accessibly human. Day after day, Goldy's simple eloquence resonated: "Heck, I can do that."

Yes, you can. We all can.

Thanks for coming, Masters. Hey, maybe see you in Sydney in 2009?

jmacinnon@thejournal.canwest.com

enough setup to go out with a kick at the finish, and those who just got a kick out of finishing.

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More than 1,100 left the starting line at Foote Field, making it the most contested individual event of the Games.

Dennis Colburn, a prominent local runner, was the first to cross the finish line, stopping the clock at 1:14:28. It earned him gold in the 30-49-year-old age category and capped a week of firsts. Colburn started out with a victory in the 10-kilometre run on Day 3, then went on to win the five- and eight-kilometre events before setting foot on the half-marathon course.

Marathoner Sandy Jacobson, another of Edmonton's fleet-footed athletes, was the fastest woman, finishing in 1:26:18. She not only took home the gold in her age group, but also inspiration from the 10-day competition.

"It wasn't only the joy that comes from competing but the camaraderie that went with it," said Jacobson, who will lace up her shoes again for the Edmonton

ever the number is, but to be race walking at 96 years old or doing the 100 metres at 95 is what's inspiring to me."

No one had to look any further than 80-year-old Roger Churchward of Australia for inspiration. The oldest competitor in the field of half-marathoners finished in an impressive time of 2:22:10.

He will fly home with gold in the half-marathon, the 10-kilometre road race and the 5,000. He also finished second in the 1,500 and fourth in the 100 metres.

"The older you get, the less competition there is," said Churchward, who started running at the age of 50, all because his son challenged him to go in a fun run.

"I beat him, but then that started me off."

He now runs 10 to 15 kilometres once a week and enters the half-marathon only in Masters Games.

"The funniest thing was that at the last Masters in Melbourne, I came eighth in the 800 metres and my son said, 'How many were in it?' 'Eight,' I responded.

"He said, 'Well, in your age group, you're the slowest man in the world.'"

No one stood out like Carl Hebel, who was a quite a sight with quite a story to tell.

of co-operation, and if someone breaks one link, my world record is over."

Draped in a fake fur shawl affixed with a big button that read Don't Hurry Be Happy, and still in his Apache moccasins, which he wore while running the course, Hebel noted that he was missing the samurai sword he often carries. Sporting a Mohawk haircut and a variety of tattoos, including a pair of feathers on his right cheek, he said he had grabbed a beer along the route from one of the residents.

"I said to him, 'Irishmen don't run on petrol, they run on beer.' I'm an Irish-Aussie running for Canada because my grandmother was an Indian from near Toronto. She's a full-blood Mayan Indian."

Hebel, a Vietnam vet, sees this as his peace mission, and said he intends to continue his preparation by walking to Calgary. Before that, however, the 120-pounder said he was planning to swing by McDonalds for 10 Big Macs and a milkshake.

Many other runners were just thankful they were able to go the distance.

"Oh, God, I finished," gasped one of those who pulled in after three hours.

"It is something to be able to complete a marathon," said Churchward.

jireland@thejournal.canwest.com

LARRY WONG, THE JOURNAL
A.J. Rankel of Edmonton cools off in a wading pool at Foote Field after finishing the half-marathon at the World Masters Games on Sunday.

Thanks to you everybody was a winner.

ATCO sends its appreciation to all of our employees who had the passion to compete in the 2005 World Masters Games and the spirit to serve as volunteers. We thank you for your community support.

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