



Seniors Are Off to the (Road) Races

by Andrew Ruffing

Athletes participating in the 10K Road Race event were some of the first out of the starting blocks for the 2015 National Senior Games presented by Humana.

Seniors from across the country woke up early Saturday to meet and race each other at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds in St. Paul, beginning at 8 a.m. Some had simple goals for the race. Joe Barger, 90, from Austin, Texas said he had one simple goal: “Finish.”

The competitive spirit was evident. Wanda Gau, 53, from Little Falls, Minnesota said this is her first time being in The Games. She said she has been running for 10 years and said, “I’d really like to see how I stack up against the others in our country.”

Some seniors had their own goals and motivations to participate in The Games. Triathlete and Road Racer Karen Newman, 54, of South Burlington, Vermont, said The Games are an “Olympic movement for seniors.” She said they’re an opportunity to keep getting better and challenge themselves despite their ages. A cancer survivor who will speak at The Games’ Personal Best Empower Hour on Monday, Newman said, “We all have so much courage, we just need to be tapped and then find out how brave we really are.”

Minnesotan Polly Frank, 68, said she was “honored to run with these people.” She said she originally started running because she was an alcoholic and running helped her stop drinking. She said “if it wasn’t for running, I’d be dead.” One of her goals was to make her grandson proud of her.

Frank had something to say to younger people to motivate them in the future: “Love yourself enough to take care of yourself so that you can run in a race like this. You only have this life.”