



# NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES

## Competitor Profile (Local)

### Bilal El-Amin – Games Have Opened the Door to Healing

Bilal El-Amin began his active lifestyle during his military service in the U.S. Air Force. He worked base operations with the 33<sup>rd</sup> Technical Air Command and 16<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron. From 1968 to 1972, El-Amin traveled all over the world and says that life in the fighter squadron instilled “a certain pride about yourself.” He also takes pride in being a Vietnam veteran, but admits that the experience had dramatic and lasting effects on his life.

At age 58 and residing in Livingston, Texas, El-Amin has been looking forward to visiting Houston and the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center – but this time for fun. Four years ago, he retired from his position in recreation therapy at the facility, where he worked as a coach for other veterans.

In that job, El-Amin used to be the one who helped veteran competitors develop their skills and be competition-ready for national programs such as the National Veterans Golden Age Games. Now, as a first time competitor himself, he’s looking at the events from the other side. Signed up to participate in the half mile bicycling event, shuffleboard, nine-ball and bowling, his goal is to bring home the gold in all of them – although he thinks his best chances are in bicycling and nine-ball. El-Amin believes that his commitment to the Games and his preparation to compete have helped him open the door to healing.

“I am very excited about the opportunity to compete with fellow veterans,” El-Amin said. “I have been practicing on a daily basis. I couldn’t wait to turn 55 to be able to qualify.”

When he’s not busy preparing to compete, El-Amin enjoys reading about religion, he runs every day and takes care of his 2.5 acres of land.

