

# National Veterans Wheelchair Games



## Athlete Profile (Local)

### Russell Worth – Feeling 60 at 83!

Winning three gold medals in 1993, his first year of competition at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, set the tone for Russell Worth for years to come. "I just couldn't wait to get there and do something athletic again," he said. A World War II Navy and Army Air Corps veteran, Worth, 83, of Brown Deer, Wisconsin, had always been active in softball and bowling prior to his injury in a 1991 car crash in St. Louis. After the injury, he returned to his hometown of Milwaukee to be closer to his family. A paraplegic, Worth has been a longtime competitor at the annual Games and is always looking for a new experience when he attends.



The fact that Worth will be one of the oldest veterans at the Wheelchair Games this year doesn't seem to faze him. "I feel 60 years old – 20 when I am skiing downhill in the winter," he said, referring to his frequent attendance at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in addition to the Wheelchair Games. He's willing to try anything once.

"The National Veterans Wheelchair Games bring out your competitive spirit," said Worth. "I gain confidence from my ability to participate in sports, and each year I try to improve from last year's performance." One way that Worth does that is trying new events, adding handcycling and wheelchair curling to his competition repertoire this year. "I have participated in the Ride for the Arts in Milwaukee for several years and used a handcycle, so it is just natural for me to want to compete in this event," he says. "I am interested in any sport, so when I saw that curling was being added as a new exhibition event, I wanted to try it." Worth will also compete in the 100, 200 and 400-meter track events, as well as table tennis. Too much for an 83-year old? Hardly. He would also like to compete in the 800-meter track event but would need a special racing wheelchair as dictated by the rules of the event. "I could still do it, even with my regular chair, I know I could," he insists.

"The National Veterans Wheelchair Games are a big part of my life," Worth said at the Games last year. "Preparing physically to compete is very challenging, and it is quite rewarding to be given the opportunity to participate at my age. Meeting old and new friends at the Games is a great experience."

Back at home in his spare time, Worth enjoys watching his grandchildren play softball and hardball. He quickly overrides the idea that they must be very proud of him by saying how proud he is of them. At 83, welcoming the challenges that new competition presents, he is a shining example of how physical activity is not only good for the body, but for the soul as well.