

National Veterans Wheelchair Games



Athlete Profile (Local)

Mark Linqvist – Camaraderie is Most Important

Mark Linqvist, 43, of Omaha, served in the Army Reserves as a cavalry scout from 1982-1988. He was attached to the training battalion at Syracuse, Neb., where he was born and raised. Injured in a car accident in 1993, Linqvist is now a paraplegic. He earned an associates degree in engineering from Metropolitan Technical College and is employed by HOME Medical Equipment as a customer service representative.



The National Veterans Wheelchair Games are a big part of Mark Linqvist's life. As President of the Great Plains Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Linqvist has encouraged all local Chapter members to register for the Games and compete in as many events as possible. Linqvist first attended the Games in 2003, making this his sixth consecutive year competing. He has a collection of winning medals to show for it, and this year will compete in the field events (discus, shot-put and javelin), as well as nine-ball and bowling.

Linqvist became interested in the Games through the Great Plains PVA Chapter, co-host of the event this year with the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System in Omaha. "Sitting around in a wheelchair, I had to do something to get active," he said. He describes the event as "awesome," and feels compelled to encourage his fellow veterans to participate. Linqvist also participates in the Nebraska Barron slow pitch softball team, winner of the national title three of the last five years.

Linqvist said, "I keep coming back to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games because of the competition and the camaraderie. I was very competitive before my accident and the Games let me be competitive once again." This year, his goals are to continue winning, of course, but he also enjoys the opportunity to meet new friends and participate in Kids Day. Now in its eighth year at the Games, Kid's Day provides local children with disabilities an introduction to the world of adaptive sports and recreation, and a chance to interact with the veteran athletes. "I like being a mentor (at Kids Day) and showing the kids they can do it if they want to," Linqvist said. "These Games are great because they are the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. The competition is nice, but even more important is the camaraderie." More than 500 veterans participate in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games each year.