Seniors strut their stuff in Olympics



Katherino Polenz shows her prize-winning form as a participant in the table tennis competition at the recent Senior Clympics.

Senior citizens are said to be living their golden years. But to Betty Van-Dorpe, one of many active Farming-ton-area seniors, the mention of gold brings to mind athletic trophies won,

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VanDorpe, representing the Mercy Center, went for the gold — and won—Sunday at the fourth annual Sentor Olympics at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmian IIII.

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One of 890 seniors aged 80 to 92 to participate in the meet, VanDrope earned her gold medal in table tennis.

"You can tell we're old — we still: call it Ping Pong," said VanDrope with a laugh during a gathering of Mercy Center's athletes Monday. "I almost didn't enter because I didn't see Ping Pong listed."

Her husband, Roger, was a member of Mercy Center's volleyball team, which finished second at the olympics. Another Mercy Center can earned a third place in the volleyball competition.

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"It was tiring," said Roger Van-Dorpe. "We had to play five matches. We started at 10:30 in the morning and didn't finish up until 4:30 in the after-noon."
All told, 61 seniors from Mercy Cen-ter entered the olympics.
"And we did it well," said Roger VanDorpe. "We had about 60 people and maybe half of them carned medals."

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SENIORS COMPETED in events like the 50- and 100-yard dashes, tends (best of three sots), mile run, mile walk, putting, Frisbee toxs, softball pitch, hit and run, bocce (lawn bowling), swimming and diving, shuffle board, back-gammon, horseshoe pitching.

For the more sedate, there was a baking contest.

The meet, co-sponsored by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan and the Michigan Recreation and Park Association, was run by 150 volunteers from parks and recreation departments in southeast Michigan.

"The purpose (of the olympica) is to foster the awareness that senior citizens have the potential to participate in athicts activities a well as an of the Cakland County Parks and Recreation Department, which supplied some of the equipment and personnel used.

"It gives them (the seniors) a sense of achievement and self esteem," Stencia self.

Mary Miller, who sits on the Older Persons Commission in the Rochester and exercise. But older people have to learn about this, and events like this cre excellent teachers."

If age is no handleap, then neither are intirmities to some athletes. Mercy Center's Angle Tucker, who is legally being the practice," he said. "I aware't played for about 30 years."

Lecla Rammel of the Mercy Center's angle Tucker, who is legally being the mile walk event, and teammate Stan Fiol participated in swimming and volleyball despite have swimming and volleyball despite have

achievement and self esteem," Stencil sald.
Mary Miller, who aits on the Older Persons Commission in the Rochester area, added: "We're all geared up for the healthy longevily through nutrition and exercise. But older people have to learn about this, and events like this are excellent teachers."

If age is no handicap, then neither are infirmities to some athletes. Mercy Center's Angie Tucker, who is legally blind, won the mile walk event, and teammate Stan Fiol participated in swimming and volleyball despite having only one leg.



Frisbee tossing has become something of a rage among senior citizens. Leola Rammel has taken advantage of the game's popularity by starring in the recent Senior Olympics.



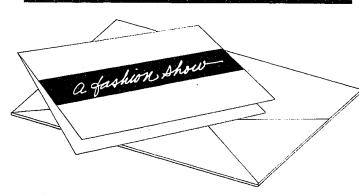
RANDY BORST/staff photograp



Baking and bouncing

Different strokes for different folks is the byword at the Senior Olympics. While some persons, such as Ken Hill and Roger Van Dorpe (at left), went in for the more strenuous activities, other entrants went in for more subtle activities, such as cooking and baking. This was the case for (above, from left) Florence Nissle, Edith Gurizzia and Stella Murphy.

AN. INVITATION



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