



Let the games begin: Jeremy Farnan of Mount Pleasant lights the torch during the opening ceremonies for the Summer Games.

STAFF PHOTO BY JERRY ZOLYNSKY

County's Special Olympic participants shine

Children and adults with mental retardation from Oakland County and all over the state congregated at Central Michigan University last week to compete on the track, in the pool, and on the field.

The occasion was the 1993

Michigan Special Olympics Summer Games, which offered approximately 80 different arenas of competition for over 3,400 Special Olympians.

This year's competition marked the 25th anniversary of Special Olympics. The organization was

created in 1968 to allow the mentally retarded to experience the joys of athletic competition.

Which is exactly what those who attended last week's games did, between the torch-lighting ceremony on the first evening and the victory dance that concluded

the events, athletes sweated their way through competition in a wide range of activities, including volleyball, bowling, handball, track, swimming and the latest addition to the competition — golf.

One of the more striking as-

pects of Special Olympics is that it is funded and staffed almost entirely by volunteers. The organization receives no government funding, and over 13,000 volunteers throughout the state help keep the games going.

The volunteers who coached

and staffed the Summer Games remained, like the competitors, fairly cheery despite the sometimes gloomy weather. While the athletes had come to compete, they had also come to enjoy themselves, and none of them were prepared to allow a little rain stand in their way.



You did it!: Steve Keros of West Bloomfield is rewarded with congratulations from coach Lisa Parr after taking third place in the softball throw.

A ribbon for an athlete: Connie Grice of Southfield receives her ribbon for placing fourth in the shot put event.



Thumbs up: Shannon Morrison, of West Bloomfield, a winner in the balance beam competition, gives a thumbs up sign during the awards ceremony.



They are the champions: Melissa Morehead, center, of Rochester, celebrates after taking fourth place in the softball throw.