



David Vradenburg revs up like a race car in anticipation of the start of the 100 meter race.



Accuracy was the name of the game as Tim Smith tosses his Frisbee through a hoop.



Todd Van Fliteren eyes the finish line, sizing up the distance he has to go to win a medal.

Determined!

Winning isn't everything — but it means a lot to Special Olympians

Life's prizes are not won by those who are endowed with nature's gifts. They are won by those with a will to win.

Determination.

You could see it in their faces as 1,300 youths competed in the annual Special Olympics track and field competition Saturday at Troy High School. Every medal and ribbon was coveted

as youths with a wide range of physical and mental abilities ran track, threw softballs, tossed Frisbees or horseshoes and raced wheelchairs. Most left with four or five awards to their credit. And all left with a feeling of accomplishment.

"It's a very good feeling" to see the youths compete in the events, said Bob Moran, who chaired the competition. Saturday's events offered the ideal combination of good weather and plen-

ty of volunteers to help out, he said. More than 450 people volunteered their assistance with the 10 different events in several age categories, and many others had lent a hand previously by contributing to the Oakland County Special Olympics fund.

The competition is financed entirely with private contributions, noted Moran. And costs keep rising.

To take the 211 finalists and 80 chaperones to the state Olympics at Cen-

tral Michigan University next month is expected to cost \$30,000, he noted.

Among the schools participating in Saturday's competition were Stiles Elementary from Avondale; Bingham Farms Elementary, Harlan, Adams Junior High and Groves High school from Birmingham; Wing Lake Developmental Training Center from Bloomfield Hills; and Kenbrook Elementary, Warner Junior High, East

Hills Middle, Farmington High and Farmington Training School from Farmington.

Also competing were North Hill Elementary and Van Hoesen Junior High from Rochester; Southfield High School; and Morse and Schroeder elementaries from Troy. The Oakland County Mental Retardation Center and Jewish Vocational Services participated along with several group homes from the area.

Staff photos
by John Stano



John Tracy (above) readies for a dramatic performance in the long jump competition. At right, Bill Green starts off the 100-meter race with a prayer.

