

Local teacher directs sport at Special Olympics World Games

Davis has almost 30 year record of service as Olympics volunteer

Sandy Davis, a teacher at John A. Holmes High School, is not a stranger to volunteering his time and energy to Special Olympics. With over 28 years of volunteer service to the games, Davis will this year serve as assistant director of the sport Bocce (lawn bowling) at the Special Olympics World Games to be held in Raleigh, NC June 26 through July 4.

Davis and longtime friend Rob Holmes, a former John A. Holmes graduate, became involved in Bocce when they were contacted by Special Olympics International to help introduce a new sport to the games. Together they began a statewide training school for coaches and players in Nags Head, NC. Due to the success of the training school, Bocce has been officially added to the World Games Sports events list and will debut this summer in Raleigh. Davis and Holmes have dedicated two weekends

each month since the summer of 1998 to the Bocce training school.

Approximately 300 athletes from 37 countries will be competing in Bocce this summer at the Special Olympics World Games. Over 7,000 athletes from 150 nations, including the 50 American states, and United States territories, will be competing for medals during the games. Special Olympics is 31 years young. The first World Games took place in 1968 with only 1,000 athletes from the U.S., France and Canada participating.

"Being a part of the World Games is a dream fulfilled," said Davis. "I have been very blessed and fortunate to be a part of it. It has made me a better person for having participated."

Davis attended his first World Games in 1981. Since that time he has served as a soccer and track coach at World Games in 1984, 1987, and



John A. Holmes High School teacher Sandy Davis will serve as an assistant director at the Special Olympics World Games in Raleigh, NC this summer.

1988. According to Davis, "The best part is spending time with the athletes." He added that

each athlete who competes in the Special Olympics World Games goes through a rigorous

training process similar to the training schedules of high school and college athletes.

"There's an opportunity to win that gold medal for everyone. This is what athletics is all about...it's for the sheer enjoyment of the sport. These athletes give it their best shot every time," Davis remarked.

"Getting involved with my first Special Olympics really did something for me," he added. "It's just been really great to see these athletes become mainstreamed."

Having dedicated 28 years as a volunteer and six additional years as a field director for Special Olympics covering 32 counties, Davis understands and is an advocate for local games.

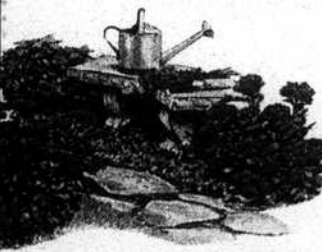
"Local games are the most important. There you have 100 percent participation of athletes. Some progress to state games, and a few progress to world games. The local games represent a total commitment from the entire community. Sponsors, volunteers, and community members are all an important part of Special Olympics," he said.

The Games' opening ceremonies will be televised live on North Carolina Public Television (Channel 2) at 7:30 p.m.

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