

# People

## GOIN' FOR THE GOLD



### Senior athletes gear up for State Games

By ROBIN BARKSDALE  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Louise Davis doesn't plan to be left out of the quest-for-gold euphoria over the next few weeks. Just like the Olympians headed for Seoul, Mrs. Davis has spent several months preparing for her own quest for the gold and a place at the winners' podium.

Mrs. Davis, along with other Twin City winners, are headed to Raleigh to compete in the North Carolina Senior Games State Finals. There they will face four days of Olympic-style competition, entertainment and fellowship. Mrs. Davis, a past winner, will compete in at least three events and more if her schedule permits. She wasn't always interested in athletic competition, but now, at "70-plus," she says she has fallen in love with the idea of competing.

"I had never tried any competition so I thought it would be nice to try," said Mrs. Davis, describing her initial involvement with the Senior Games. "It's always a challenge for me to try something new."

Now, three years after her first exposure to competition, Mrs. Davis is the proud owner of more Senior Games medals than she can count or keep up with. She has won literally a basketful of medals in her sports: speed walking, broad jump, softball throwing and shuffleboard. Mrs. Davis said she first entered the walking event because she walks regularly for exercise and didn't think that it would be too much of a departure from her normal routine. Encouraged by her success in the event after winning a first-place medal, Mrs. Davis decided to branch out and try other events.

"I tried walking at first. It was my first event and I did rather well," she said. "Sometimes, it can get a little bit strenuous, but I enjoyed it and I won a medal, so I think I did well. Then, I decided to try something else to see what it was like."

Louise Roberts will be one of the city's representatives in the bowling events in Raleigh. Mrs. Roberts, who also bowls in a winter league, said the games are a good source of exercise for her.

"I need the exercise," said the 81-year-old Mrs. Roberts, who captured a bronze medal in local bowling competition. "Bowling is one of the events that is not too strenuous. It's just a lot of fun and I enjoy it."

Both Mrs. Roberts and Mrs. Davis said competing in the Senior Games have provided them with an additional opportunity to meet and fellowship with other senior citizens who are committed to maintaining active lives. And it also is something in which they take great pride. Ask Mrs. Davis about her sports and she is happy to engage you in a conversation about several of the games she has competed in, her techniques and "the thrill of victory."

"It's a fun thing with us," she said. "What makes it interesting is that you're competing with people in your own age bracket so I compete with other people



Louise Davis, qualifier for the state Senior Games: "I'm just going to keep on keeping on."

who are '70-plus.' We get to meet a lot of new people. And then we have cheerleaders too. I remember when I was competing in one of the walking events and I was coming up the track and I had my cheering section on the side. They were jumping up and down and screaming, 'Go, Lou! Come on Lou! Hurry Up!' So I just started moving and it was so much fun. When I won my first medal, I was elated. I thought it was the greatest thing in the world."

Since becoming champion in several of the games, Mrs. Davis said that she has had requests from other competitors that she let up a little and give them an opportunity to share in the collection of medals. But Mrs. Davis, fierce competitor that she is, said not putting forth her best effort simply wouldn't be the sporting thing to do. Not to mention the fact that she enjoys winning as much as the next person.

"Sometimes some of the other people tell me, 'Lou you've already got some medals. You should let me win some because I've got grandchildren and they want to see me win,'" said Mrs. Davis, grinning proudly as she shuffles through her collection of awards. "But this is competition. And I tell them I can't let them win. I want to win, too. I love to compete and I can't just let them win."

Mrs. Roberts, too, said that the competition can be tough at times. "When I first started, it was just a few of us in it and I was almost in it (bowling) by myself. It was quite easy," she said. "Now, it's a bunch of people in it and it's harder."

Conversation seems to come as easily to Mrs. Davis as the medals she has earned competing and, judging from her quick smile as she speaks, she enjoys both conversation and competition. She eagerly shares techniques, training routines and recollections from races past.

And just like any competitor, Mrs. Davis keeps her body fit for competition. She exercises daily and makes sure she eats the right foods. In the hallway of her home is a stationary bicycle, a Christmas gift from her family. On days when the weather keeps her inside, Mrs. Davis climbs aboard the bicycle and pumps out several miles. When the weather is nice, Mrs. Davis takes off on foot from her home on Martin Luther King Drive to the downtown area, although she admits that her family reprimands her for taking such long jaunts. But, Mrs. Davis said, it's the exercise that keeps her going.

"My family hates for me to go walking downtown, but I enjoy getting out. That's what I like to do and it doesn't bother me, but they don't think I should be doing it," she said. "I don't want to sit around here all day looking at these four walls. I'd end up climbing them if I sat around here all day. If you sit around you feel sorry for yourself, so I just keep on keeping on and then I don't have time to think about all my little aches and pains or to feel sorry for myself. I'm quite active and I think that's what keeps me going."

Mrs. Davis said she likes to walk downtown and go "window-wishing" at the

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### Olympic Quest

A busload of Twin City qualifiers will travel to Raleigh for the North Carolina Senior State Finals. Winners at the local level Louise Davis, top left, and Louise Roberts, bottom right, both will join more than 1,500 senior athletes who will be competing in more than 45 events at state finals at Lochmere Country Club.