

Photography

# 'You go, Grandpa!' Masters track meets feature competition and camaraderie



Originally published August 24, 2019 at 6:00 am | Updated August 24, 2019 at 9:47 am



---

**“We’re all trying to recover our youth as much as possible,” says an 82-year-old javelin and discus thrower. Watching the competition, it appears that they are succeeding.**

By [Alan Berner](#)

There’s plenty of talk about muscles and aging body parts at the Northwest Masters Track and Field Championships.

About calves, hamstrings, Achilles, knees and weak glutes — they’re the three muscles in the buttocks: *gluteus maximus, medius and minimus*.

These runners are lean, trim and ready to give it their all, but as they are crouched and ready to burst forward, this is also a dangerous time.

Not life-threatening, but potentially injury-inducing.

The starter’s pistol sends the runners forth in the 100-meter dash, their veins prominent and muscles flexing.

There’s good form and symmetry as the runners — this particular heat is for ages 65 to 69 — leave the starting blocks.

John Harris, 65, is in lane 7. Earlier in the month at an all-comers meet in Burlington, one of the competitors was “an 87-year-old woman. I smoked her in both the 100 and 200. But, her 67-year-old husband beat me.”

Today, Harris says, he could have used her in this race. He finishes fourth with 15.96 seconds, three seconds behind the winner from Burnaby, B.C.

Daphne Scott, 59, is warming up beside the track preparing for the 80-meter hurdles.

Scott, a math professor at Western Washington University, started participating in Masters Track & Field 12 years ago.

Keenly focused, she practices her approach to the hurdles over and over.

She’ll have just two competitors in this race — another runner and the clock.

She’s won national championships in the 100, 200 and 400 meters and decathlon, plus world championships in the 400 meters, pentathlon and pole vault. She’s been named best women’s athlete of the year in her age group by USATF Masters Track & Field, which sanctions the master’s events along with some 8,000 other competitions.

Scott clears the hurdles with a form reminiscent of Edwin Moses, the great Olympian who defined the sport. She waits for the other runner to greet her at the finish line. To compete and finish is often its own goal.

She says she simply “wanted exercise that was fun to do and get out of here healthy.”

Scott’s looking forward to turning 60 so she can be the youngest in the next age group. “I’m happy to be alive.”

Around the high-jump pit there’s the encouragement, “You go, Grandpa!” every time Robert Bethke takes his turn. He’s 87.

Charles Milliman, a year younger, waits to jump. He’s run more than five dozen marathons.

Last year on his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday he ran 85 miles. It took a day and a half. “My goal is to run 90 miles on my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.”

He ties with Bethke in the 85-89 age group with a jump of just under a meter.

Howie Kellogg, who is not competing, is giving a little coaching advice to Catherine Huhn of Wilsonville, Ore. Huhn, 57, is struggling with her form in the discus. She has one more throw.

“Lead with your hips,” says Kellogg. They work out the motions repeatedly. She’s using arms and not enough body.

Stepping into the ring, she lets it sail.

It’s a personal best for the day and first place. Smiles, hugs and high-fives await her.

Kellogg says, “we’re always helping each other. (Just) get involved and get off the couch.”