

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**December 11, 2016**

**Contact: Nick Gandy, (850) 322-3404 or [ngandy@flasports.com](mailto:ngandy@flasports.com)**

**Navarre's John Hurd sets three Florida Senior Games Track and Field Records in just over a minute**

**CLEARWATER** - On the final day of the 2016 Florida Senior Games, Navarre Sprinter John Hurd ran for just over a minute Sunday at Clearwater High School and set three 85-89 age group records. He ran gold-medal winning times in the 50 Meter Dash in 9.12 seconds, the 100 meter in 17.68 and the 200 meter in 38.68.

Hurd's Florida Senior Games legacy is well established. Since 2003, he has won 29 consecutive sprint races at the Florida Senior Games and National Senior Games. He also holds the 80-84 age group 50 meter dash record and his times in the 100 and 200 meter dash broke records set in 1999.

Overall, 14 age group records were set and a new all-time best run in the Women's 800 meters was turned in by Susan Cooke, of Odessa. Her time of 2:45.01 established a new record in the 55-59 age group and topped the previous all time best by more than a second. She finished 16 seconds ahead of the silver medalist in her age group.

Setting records that stood for more than 20 years in the 75-79 age group were Lionel Bonk, of Lake Mary and Sandy Scott, of Seminole. Bonk ran the 400 meters in 1:15.61 to break the 75-79 age group record, set by John Anoka, of Maitland in 1995. Scott crossed the finish line in the 1500 meter run with a time of 6:24.40, three seconds ahead of Dundee distance runner, Gordon Johnson's previous record from 1995.

After setting Long Jump and Triple Jump records on Saturday, Brian Hankerson, of Hollywood, turned in the fastest 100 meter time of the day with a 12.46 for a gold medal in the 55-59 age group. Hankerson, who did not start competing in track and field until the age of 45, also won gold medals in the 50 and 200 meter dash.

As was the case in 2015 when he won two gold medals and a silver, Cape Coral's Robert Welter was one of the final Pickleball players to leave the Long Center Gymnasium. He and his men's doubles partner, Daryl Noble, of Fort Myers, once again squared off against Gary M. Miller, of The Villages and Steve Wojcik, of Downer's Grove, IL in the championship match.

It was déjà vu all over again as Miller and Wojcik defeated Welter and Noble for the gold medal. Miller and Wojcik won game one 11-9 and were down 4-2 in the second game before scoring the next nine points to win the second game 11-4 and bring the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Florida Senior Games to an end at 10:19 p.m.

One of the premier Pickleball players in Florida, Deb Harrison, of The Villages, upped her gold medal winning total since 2004 to 31 with a women's doubles gold medal in the 65-69 age group, teaming with Nancy Nowak, also of The Villages. Harrison teamed with Ernie Tomlinson, of The Villages, to win the Mixed Doubles gold medal on Saturday.

Over three days of Pickleball, Harrison played in 11 combined matches in singles, mixed doubles and women's doubles and did not lose a game, winning all 11 matches in straight sets.

In Billiards competition, held at Stroker's Sports Bar and Grill, Ray Rupertus, of Winter Haven, won his third medal of the weekend, teaming with Thomas Weaver, to win the 60-64 Eight Ball Doubles Gold Medal.

During the nine days of action in Clearwater, a total of 2,670 athletes competed in 24 sports. A Florida Senior Games Softball Qualifier in August with 220 athletes competing brings the 2016 number of total athletes to 2,890. It is the highest participation number since the 2004 Florida Senior Games, a qualifying year held in The Villages, which had over 2,900 athletes.

Athletes from 379 Florida cities and 41 states, besides Florida, were represented. Athletes also came from Puerto Rico, Canada and The Bahamas.

Results and daily wrapups of each day's competition since Saturday, December 3, can be found at <http://www.flasports.com/result/2016-fsg-results/>

With the turn of the calendar to the 2017 year, Florida Senior athletes can start planning and training for the 2017 Florida Senior Games Series Qualifiers beginning with the Destin/Emerald Coast Senior Games starting on January 28. Following the Destin/Emerald Coast Games, 11 more series qualifiers follow through April.

The 2017 National Senior Games will be held June 2-15 in Birmingham, Alabama and the 2017 Florida Senior Games return to Clearwater and Pinellas County, December 2-10, 2017. The 2018 Games will also be held in Pinellas County.