



NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES

National Competitor Profile

Raymond Trevino – Blind Golfer Feels He Has the Advantage

When it comes to golf, Raymond Trevino believes that he has a major advantage over other competitors – he just doesn't get nervous about his game because he can't see the water hazards or the sand traps. Since he can't see how difficult the shot may be, he doesn't experience the stress that sighted golfers can feel.

A 69-year-old Army veteran who saw duty in Korea and Japan, Trevino now receives medical care at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Seven years ago, Trevino, from Hollilister, Calif., experienced a retinal detachment caused by diabetes and resulted in most of his vision loss. Now, he functions with severe tunnel vision. He speaks highly of the comfort and care he found from other blind veterans at the VA Western Blind Center in Palo Alto, where he stayed for four months. While there, he learned from his instructors and caregivers, who encouraged him to not be afraid to ask for help. Now, in his spare time Trevino volunteers as a cook at the Western Blind Center.



An unknown donor provided \$68,000 to care for and train Trevino's dog, Thorn. He says that Thorn has been a great companion to him for several years, and has been even more helpful to him since his wife passed away in January 2007. Thorn's understanding of commands such as "bank," allow the dog to gauge traffic at intersections en route to the bank, so he and Trevino can safely navigate the streets while running errands.

He believes that the Golden Age Games are a wonderful experience, and that the camaraderie among his fellow veterans is absolutely unbelievable. "If there are 600 of us at the Games, we can make 599 friends," he says. He hopes that his participation will inspire fellow blind veterans to participate in coming years. Trevino also competes in dominoes and nine-ball.

"Preparing for the National Veterans Golden Age Games has taught me there are still things that I can do," Trevino said. "I like getting involved with a team that focuses on working together. I love to travel and my blindness does not stop me from competing. I am really excited that my best friend and guide dog, Thorn, will be right by my side all week long – especially as he competes."

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