

Competitor Profile

Louis Henderson: Long-time Bowler Makes a Strike for 2006 National Veterans Golden Age Games!

When Louis Henderson picks up his bowling ball, you just know that something special is about to happen. An outpatient at the Martinsburg, W.Va. VA Medical Center, Henderson has amassed a number of winning medals at the National Veterans Golden Age Games, which include a gold in bowling at last year's event. Why does he keep coming back? "The therapeutic value is beyond measurement," he says. "I like the general spirit of the Games. It brings out the best in people – even your competitors try to help you!"

Sports, especially bowling, are nothing new to this 69-year-old Korean War veteran, who served as an anti-aircraft artillery and radar specialist in Korea. As a teenager in Bridgeton, Nebraska, he worked as a pinsetter at a local bowling alley and started bowling himself while stationed at Ft. Richardson, Alaska. After his discharge from the Army, he joined several local bowling leagues and competed in regional, district and local tournaments in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

Henderson came to the Martinsburg VA Medical Center in 1990 as a patient in an extended aftercare program. During that time, he bowled on both the patient bowling team and the Bowlers for Victory League. Now receiving outpatient care, he is active in the facility's compensated work therapy program, and continues to bowl for the patients' league as well as the Martinsburg VA Employee League.

At past Games, Henderson won gold and bronze medals – in bowling, of course! This year, he will also try out horseshoes, shuffleboard and nine-ball, when he isn't knocking down the pins (and the competition) at the bowling competition.

Like many of the competitors at these Games, Henderson relishes the relationships he has made with the other veterans over the years. "At the Games, I have made many friends and I look forward to seeing them all when we get to Hampton."

