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Team Portland

*A lot of average people becoming better
than average sports stars*

B Y M O R G A N

Does the idea of getting up at 4 am to down six raw eggs, drink 32 ounces of water and then run five miles before you have your eyes open appeal to you? Thought not.

This is not necessarily all of Team Portland's idea of a great time either. Some of them have other things to do—like fielding 140 members to Celebration '90: Gay Games III to be held in Vancouver, British Columbia the first week of August. Team Portland is our community's hope in what will be one of the biggest sporting events to be held anywhere in the world this year.

Just who are these people? Tall, sun-burnished Olympic contenders? Not exactly. While it is true they have all participated competitively or actively in most have taken an early retirement due to sports-related injuries or other health problems.

Bev Mickelson, co-chair, is an exercise physiologist. She was forced into early retirement due to a rare bone disease. "Gay games and cultural events are an extremely positive aspect of our community. In 1986, we had 70 people registered... we doubled our draw. This shows how the interest has grown. Celebration '90 will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Team Portland is ready to exhibit its pride!"

Registration coordinator, Tyler Cole's major hobby is competing with the slugs in his garden for the tomatoes. A former runner and triathlete, he was diagnosed with bone spurs in his heels. He switched to swimming a year and half ago. Still active in Frontrunners, he helps with organizational activities and recently worked on the Stonewall Run team.

Dave Corral, fundraising chair, was a volleyball participant in the 1986 games in San Francisco. He has been side-lined by a pulled patella tendon in his left knee. Tennis is what he plays now.

"The reason I got involved with Team Portland is that I felt it was time to give back to the community. I enjoy sports tremendously. I think the whole idea of a gay athlete is such a stereotype-breaking, iconoclastic kind of thing. After the games I'd like to see Team Portland continue and, hopefully, one day host our own gay games festival in Portland."

Jay Dobson, team coordinator, was at the 1982 Gay Games in San Francisco but didn't compete. "I had the notion that only the great athletes would be there. I was intimidated. I went down there and watched. I realized there were a lot of average people there."

In 1986, there were a lot of positive aspects which came out of those games that didn't get a lot of publicity. There was a lot of networking and organizing as a result.

I went in the triathlon because I'm not good enough to compete individually in any of the sports. It was a great way to meet a lot of different, really nice people from all across the country.

Richard Brown, co-chair, played tennis in the '86 games. "There were two of us, my doubles partner and I. I went down there not knowing too much about the games. And I discovered this marvelous experience. It was just thrilling to be there with twenty or thirty thousand gay fans in the stands cheering."

"The competition was fun. It didn't mean anything. I played in two events and won one match in doubles. Given that the games are in Vancouver this time, more people should be able to attend."

All of the members of the organizing committee were found in 1989 with networking, either by phone or by ads in the newsletter from the Summit Athletic Club.

The Gay Games is founded on the



Second and third place winners respectively, Amy Valentine and Karen Fong are the martial arts team and members of the Festival Chorus.

principal of participation, of doing one's individual best. It doesn't have anything to do with competition. There are no qualification standards for any of the sports. Anyone can enter.

Team uniforms have been provided for the athletes by a variety of fundraising events and activities. Athletes are training both independently and in teams led by volunteers. Participation and realizing one's personal best are the goals of competition.

Team Portland wishes to thank all of the people and corporations that have supported them. Bridgetown Realty was the first of the major sponsors to join the team. Other sponsors are: Cascade Therapy Associates, PC, TV Host, 310 Hair Design, Jelly Bean, Hobo's and *Just Out*. The rosters for the teams are all filled out. The fundraising efforts of Team Portland have been successful. All that remains is the Games themselves. Do go, if you get the opportunity to do so. The next Games will be held in New York or in Sydney, Australia and both of those places are a good hike from Portland. Makes Vancouver seem right around the corner. Team Portland is hoping to keep up the good work in the interim between this year's Games and any upcoming ones. They plan on continuing activities here at home, and hope to be able to form an umbrella group for all sporting events in the gay and lesbian community. The dream is to some day sponsor Portland's own Gay Games.

Jim Gambrell: The exception that proves the rule

Although the majority of Team Portland ranges from rank amateurs to those somewhat involved in one sport or another, Jim Gambrell is the exception.

He has a very ambitious goal for 1990 and has entered the marathon, triathlon and several swimming events. In 1986 he won a gold in the triathlon, a bronze in the marathon and eight medals in swimming for a total of 10 medals.

His training revolves around preparing for the triathlon. He runs three days a week, swims three days a week and bikes back and forth to work. When his schedule permits, he works in a long bike ride of 20 to 40 miles.

When asked which event he enjoys the most, Jim said "swimming. The team aspect of everyone pulling for each other is great!" Good luck, Jim.

-- Bev Mickelson