



CONTACT: Anne Warner Cribbs  
2009 National Senior Games Local Organizing Committee  
PHONE: 650.856.3200  
E-MAIL [anne@annecribbsandcompany.com](mailto:anne@annecribbsandcompany.com)

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**2009 SUMMER NATIONAL SENIOR GAMES – THE SENIOR OLYMPICS –**

***Announces 2006 Bay Area Senior Games to be held in March***

STANFORD – January 17, 2006 – As a first step on the road to the 2009 Summer National Senior Games – The Senior Olympics – organizers today announced the creation of the first annual Bay Area Senior Games. The inaugural Bay Area Senior Games will begin with 5 sports – an 8 K road race, a 5 K race walk, track and field events, table tennis and swimming. Future plans include the expansion of the Bay Area Games by at least five sports per year until 2009.

The Bay Area Games will be held in cooperation with Palo Alto-based Fifty-Plus Lifelong Fitness 22nd annual Fitness Weekend, March 10 – 12, 2006 at Stanford. Both organizations support the same mission, extending vitality and promoting healthy lifestyles for seniors through education, fitness and sports.

Road races include the Paul Spangler 8-Kilometer road run, 5-Kilometer fitness walk, and competitive race walk. The Paul Spangler Memorial 8K Run hosts the Pacific Association/USA Track & Field 8K Championship. The race, which draws the top senior runners in the country, has produced multiple U.S. age-group records. In fact, for 2006, PA/USATF awarded the race a championship for *all* of its adult age divisions. To retain its “seniors” flair, the 8K (just under 5 miles) will be conducted in two sections: one for participants ages 50 and over, the other for all other runners.

Bay Area Sports Organizing Committee (BASOC)  
2450 Agnes Way, Palo Alto CA 94303  
Phone 650.856.2234 Fax 650.856.6816 [www.basoc.org](http://www.basoc.org)



The Bay Area Senior Games has created partnerships with various sports organizations who have expertise in their respective sports, to put on the other sporting events. For example, the track and field events, at Stanford's Cobb Track & Angell Field, will receive expert management from Pacific Association/USATF who will also provide certified track and field officials. Swimming will be conducted with the help of 2006 FINA World Masters Championship Local Organizing Committee member Bill Grohe.

Dennis Davis, head coach at the Palo Alto Table Tennis Club, and former National Coaching Chairman of USA Table Tennis, will direct the table tennis competition. City of Palo Alto Recreation and Jack Hoover of the Redwood City Seniors Softball Club will oversee the Bay Area Senior Games softball tournament at Palo Alto's Greer Park Complex. Note that the softball portion will be held May 20 and 21.

Race Walking coach and Pacific Association/USATF Race Walking Chair Art Klein will manage the competitive race walks.

Ray Purpur, Senior Associate Athletic Director adds, "For those who don't see themselves as national-caliber senior athletes? No sweat. There are no qualifying requirements for the Bay Area's local Games. All seniors can enter and take part, however, in some cases, depending on your sport, entry as part of an organized team may be required."

"The debut of the Bay Area Senior Games, and return of the 8K championship for the Fifty Plus Fitness Weekend, demonstrates a commitment to promote active aging for senior adults," said Anne Cribbs, President of BASOC and the 2009 National Senior Games. "But the positive message associated with a physically active lifestyle is critical for all ages."

The beautiful Stanford University campus will serve as the hub for the weekend's activities. The Fifty-Plus partnership with the Senior Games, however, will extend venues for the various new events to other locations around the San Francisco Bay Area.

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The renovation of Stanford Stadium, where Sunday’s fitness activities traditionally culminate, will be in full tilt. However, the construction will not affect the quality of the weekend experience. In fact, it has inspired race organizers to design brand new courses for the 8K runs and 5K fitness walk. At press time, plans included a new USA Track & Field certified 8K course through the Stanford campus—even faster than the previous course. But you don’t have to be a runner, or even a dedicated athlete, to participate.

“This year’s Fifty-Plus Weekend combined with the Bay Area Senior Games should offer a sport or activity for just about everyone,” said Mike Collins, the Weekend’s Director. “And, we’ll be adding even more sports each year as we work towards the Senior Olympics in 2009.”

Sponsors for the Bay Area Senior Games include Catholic Health Care West (CHW), Stanford Hospital, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Classic Residences by Hyatt, and the City of Palo Alto.

Full details about the Fifty-Plus Lifelong Fitness Weekend and Bay Area Senior Games, plus entry details, are available online at [www.50plus.org](http://www.50plus.org) or [www.2009seniorgames.org](http://www.2009seniorgames.org).

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