

Spirit of the Games

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By Tim W. Jackson

Phil Rosenberg encourages other paralyzed veterans in the true spirit of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

Longtime National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) participant Phil Rosenberg gets a positive outlook from the Games and works to help give other paralyzed vets that same feeling.

The U.S. Army veteran has taken part in 31 of the 32 Games and earned the Spirit of the Games award in Richmond, Va., this past June for his exemplary competitive desire, sportsmanship, and character.



Phil Rosenberg (right) is congratulated by former Spirit of the Games winners Charles Allen (far left) and Tim Davis. (Photo by Mark Cowan)

“This is the hardest part of the Games,” Rosenberg said with tear-stained cheeks after accepting the award. Humble and thankful, Rosenberg offered thanks to many and a challenge to the group, especially those of the Vietnam era, to keep the Games going and be mentors to the newly injured.

Injured in an auto accident in 1974, Rosenberg says his work with Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and participation in the Games give him an “I can do anything attitude. I might do it differently and it might take longer, but I can do whatever I used to do.”

He enjoys imparting that same attitude to those with new injuries.

“I try to help the younger guys,” Rosenberg says. “You have to get over that fear of what it’s going to be like in public. When I was first injured, they (Veterans Affairs therapists and counselors) really encouraged us to do things. I think it’s good to get back in the community as quickly as possible.”

As much as Rosenberg loves guiding the younger guys, the competitive fire still burns in him. He took home gold medals in trapshooting, table tennis, bowling and discus in this year’s Games.

The competition is what first brought him to the Games.

“I was competitive in sports before I was injured,” he says. “I was excited to get involved in the

Games. It opened a whole world of opportunities for me. I learned a lot here. It helped me a lot.”

Following his injury, Rosenberg says, he used to get angry, especially as a veteran, that there were places he couldn't go and things he couldn't see. So he got more involved with PVA in Wisconsin.

Rosenberg went to school to get a counseling degree and used that degree for 30 years as an employee of the Milwaukee VA Medical Center before retiring last year.