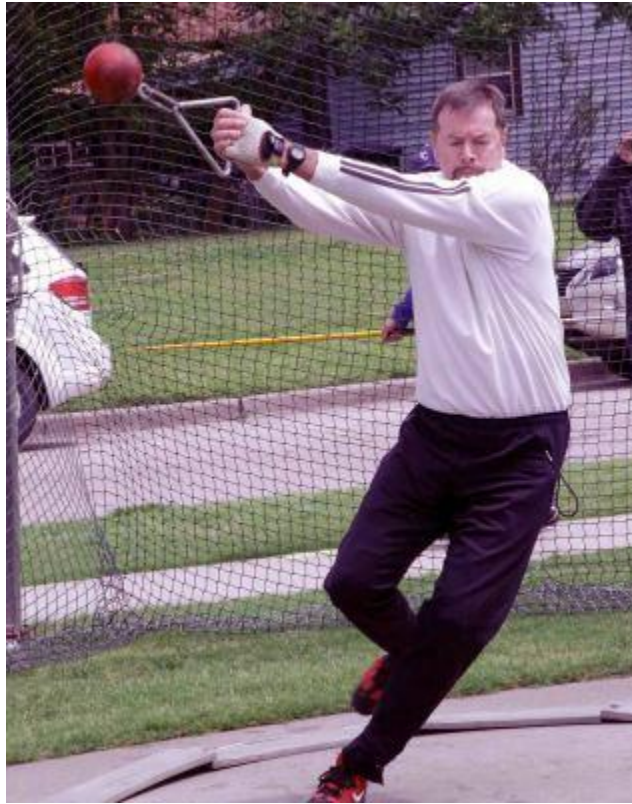


KEN ELLIS



Three knee surgeries, a battle with cancer and shoulder surgery caused Ken Ellis to reexamine his priorities.

The 61-year-old Edmond resident has been through a lot in the past decade, but instead of giving way his ailing body, Ellis finds motivation in the difficult times.

“You rethink things when you’re not sure if you’re going to wake up in the morning,” Ellis said. “When it’s something that you love, like life and track, and the possibility of doing those things is taken away from you, it just makes you want to take advantage of that even more.”

Ellis was an athletic kid competing throughout high school and eventually went to college on a track and field scholarship. After graduating from the University of Central Oklahoma, then Central State University, Ellis continued to train in hopes of competing at the Olympic trials. A leg injury deterred, but didn’t diminish, his athletic goals.

As a school teacher, Ellis found less and less time to train and compete, but when he turned 50 his competitive nature found a new outlet in the Oklahoma Senior Games. Ellis competes in track and field, and basketball events across the state and has placed at the National Senior Games in Houston and San Francisco.

Now retired, Ellis has more time to focus on discus, hammer throw, shot put and javelin competitions. He has given up competitive running due to his bad knees. He travels the country competing, despite a slew of injuries and health battles that aren't keeping him down for long.

"It seemed like every time I'd get back into the groove, something else would go wrong," Ellis said. "I listen to my body more now and when it tells me to take a break, I'll do it."

It has been two years since his last surgery and he felt confident going into the National Senior Games in Albuquerque this summer. He posted a 3rd place finish in the discus. He finished 6th in the hammer throw, 8th in the javelin and 13th in the shot.

Oklahoma Senior Games competitions occur annually in September and October. This year, competitions will be held in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Shawnee, Norman, Yukon and Warr Acres.

Events include three-on-three basketball, track and field, golf, swimming, water walking, 5K and 10K runs, 5K power walk, 5K race walk, bowling, tennis, table tennis, golf croquet, shuffleboard, cycling, cornhole, badminton, archery, pickleball, racquetball, softball and triathlon. Participants age 50 and older will compete in categories by age and gender.

Oklahoma Senior Games qualifies athletes for National Senior Games competition held every two years. About 300 athletes who qualify in 2020 will represent Oklahoma in the National Senior Games competition November 5-18, 2021 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

For more information visit www.okseniorgames.com or call (405) 821-1500.