

DORIS HARRIS



Doris Harris attended a small high school in Northeast Oklahoma in the 1970s when there were few options for athletic women like herself. But 50 years later, the Oklahoma City resident is making up for lost time.

Harris, 63, manages and captains two basketball teams made up of women ages 50 and older. And she is already recruiting for a third.

Despite the lack of options for girls when she was growing up, Harris has always been athletic. She was a cheerleader when that was the only option for girls, and played volleyball, softball and intramural sports in college and throughout her young adult life. So, when her sister suggested joining the senior games, Harris didn't hesitate.

She finds teammates everywhere she goes, recruiting friends, co-workers, even tall, athletic-looking strangers at the grocery store. And those who are too busy or not old enough to join the team often become opponents for weekly scrimmages.

"We do so much more than play ball together," Harris said. "We recognize birthdays and teammates going through hard times. We pray for each other and try to get together at least once or twice a year to just have dinner. It's more of a family atmosphere."

That togetherness is why, when the Oklahoma Senior Games began to falter, Harris joined the board that revived the competitions in 2016. Harris said the games promote healthy lifestyles and provide encouragement to aging adults who often need support later in life.

Harris looks to her teammates for support as she struggles to balance a busy schedule teaching students with learning disabilities, caring for her husband who faces challenges with his health and practicing self care.

Harris hopes the bonds created among teammates will translate to the court as one of her teams, Angles USA, prepares to compete in the age 50 and up, three-on-three basketball competition at the Oklahoma Senior Games.

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.