

Competition F In 29th Annual Wheelchair Eve

By PAT CUNEO

EDINBORO — The shattering of 12 track records highlighted the final day of the 29th annual National Wheelchair Games at Edinboro University Saturday.

Cindy Gettinger of Bradenton, Fla., added three more gold medals and three more records to her impressive list of accomplishments in Class 1C women's competition, and Candace Cable-Brooks of Huntington Beach, Calif., won three golds and set two new Open Class records.

Despite windy and rainy conditions, which spoiled several record-breaking attempts, the athletes emerged smiling from the grueling five-day competition.

Thomas Foran of Glastonbury, Conn., won two gold medals in Class 5 competition, heading a list of impressive performances. Pete Trabucco of Santa Barbera, Calif., also won two golds in Class 1B, as did Joe Ray of Alabaster, Ala., in Class 3 and Dwight Goodman of Houston in Class 1C.

An athlete's classification is based on his disability, with lower numbers indicating a more serious disability.

Susan Lault of Jamestown, N.D., captured three golds in Class III, and the double gold winners included Laura DeMare of Southfield, Miss., in Class 1A, and A. Cody in Class II.

George Murray, who unofficially broke the four-minute mile during Friday's competition, also took the 100-meter dash in Class 3 on Saturday with a time of 17.7 seconds.

Murray was clocked for the mile in 3:59.4 during an exhibition race, and, once the newly constructed Edinboro track is certified in the next few weeks, the time will become official.

During other competition Saturday, 15 new records were set in swimming, 11 in shot put, nine in air gun events, and one in weightlifting. Three records were also set in field events, which were staged Friday and Saturday. Archery, Slalom and Table Tennis also concluded Saturday, but they are first-time events so all marks are considered records.

"These Games were just an incredible experience," said Dave O'Dessa, an Edinboro administrator who chaired the '85 Games. "I didn't really know what to expect but everything's been tremendous. We're so

proud to have been a part of it. "The thing that impressed me most was the quality of the athletes — as competitors and as individuals," O'Dessa continued. "As bad as the weather was, it never dampened the spirits of the athletes."

Athletes, nearly unanimously agreed that the four-man challenge to break the four-minute mile on Saturday was the highlight of the Games. "The atmosphere was electric," O'Dessa said. "George Murray was able to break it and now we have the track certified so it will have an official time."

"I've never seen anything like this and (Edinboro track coach) Dwight Watts said he's never been so excited at a track performance. And I've seen some great performances from his people," he added.

More than 1,000 volunteers helped make the competition a great success, and O'Dessa said he's grateful. "Individuals and groups heard we needed help and they really rolled up their sleeves and worked tirelessly," he said. "People from Mead to Erie and all parts in between came to help. We even had volunteers from Pittsburgh."

Andrew Fleming, national director of the National Wheelchair Games, agreed that the event was a great success.

"The athletes really enjoyed themselves and the entire Games went very well organized," he said.

Fleming, himself confined to a wheelchair, will soon join the Paralyzed Veterans of America organization after serving as director of National Wheelchair Athletic Association for three years.

"It's been a very rewarding experience," Fleming said. "I think we've come a long way from being an ad hoc volunteer, maverick organization to a well-structured, organized group."

The '85 Games come on the heels of a commitment from the United States Olympic Committee to fund the NWAA more than \$1.4 million toward the development of programs.

And the events at Edinboro are a testament to the sweetness of becoming a team force in organized sports for the disabled.



TIMES-NEWS Photo By Joe Comstock

Twenty-eight-year-old David Wear of Houston, Tex., heaves the iron ball on the way to a gold medal in the shot put competition at the National Wheelchair Games Saturday afternoon. Wear was the easy winner among Class III participants. Athletes are divided into nine classifications based on their disabilities. The lower numbers indicate more serious disabilities.

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