



National Senior Games Association

Post Office Box 82059 ★ Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70884-2059
225-766-6800 ★ Fax 225-766-9115 ★ nsga@nsga.com

★ www.nsga.com



Personal Best "Class of 2013" Athlete

Kay Glynn, 60

Hastings, Iowa

Beating the Odds

Kay Glynn loves to move – acrobatics, dancing, sports, you name it. She still can't resist doing handstands to warm up before track and field events, which she took back up at the age of 48. Her senior games career has seen much success, including six gold medals and a new pole vaulting world record for her age in Houston at the 2011 National Senior Games Presented by Humana. Kay was eager to do it all again in Cleveland two years later.

But there's been a hitch-actually a hip-thrown into her plans. A total hip replacement is looming in her future, but by carefully adjusting her training, medication, and therapy, Kay is finding a path and the determination to return to the games in July. The motivation isn't to return to golden glory, it's to overcome the obstacle and have another opportunity to hang out with old friends and make new ones in the special atmosphere that permeates the National Senior Games. Follow her story each month and see how she inspires those around her.



History

Have you always been active?

Yes I have. I've been dancing and doing acrobatics since I was four. I still can't resist the urge to do handstands when I'm warming up! I started track and field in junior high. I quit sports when I was 18 and didn't take it back up until I was 48. The kids all did sports and I followed them around. But I kept moving other ways. I kept dancing, I love to tap dance. I ran my own dance studio for over 20 years before I got back to doing track for senior games. So while I was dancing I was really cross training for track all those years. (laughs) Seriously, when I retired from teaching dance it gave me more time to work on myself.

All of my kids ran track and competed at the state level at the Iowa Games for years. After a while they asked me why I didn't do it too. I had been so busy helping them I hadn't thought about trying it again. But I noticed some of the older people getting involved and enjoying it, so I finally decided to run the 100 and 200 and do the long jump when I was 48. I won all three, even though I didn't even train for the events. Then, about three days later I dropped my car keys in the store and I couldn't even bend over to get them. A little old lady picked them up for me. (laughs) The next year I started training a month ahead. Since then I haven't stopped working out and training. I don't ever want to be that sore again!

How did you get involved with senior games?

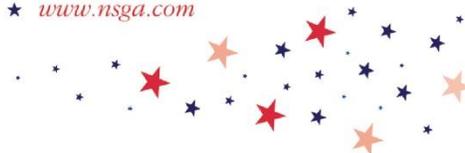
In 2004, when I was 51, I found out there was such a thing as senior games and qualified for several events. But I had a big recital for my dance studio at the same time so I had to back out for the 2005 games. I learned my lesson and have worked my schedule around to make the National Senior Games every time since then.



National Senior Games Association

Post Office Box 82059 ★ Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70884-2059
225-766-6800 ★ Fax 225-766-9115 ★ nsga@nsga.com

★ www.nsga.com



Kay Glynn Personal Best Profile

Page 2

In Louisville (2007) I won pole vault and long jump, I won those again in Palo Alto (2009) and I don't remember what else. Then several gold in Houston. I've won medals every time I've gone, I'm sure of that. I don't really keep count.

I will compete this year in all of the field events – pole vault, high jump, triple jump, discus, shot put, hammer throw and javelin. I wasn't able to qualify in the running events because of my hip situation.

This time I enter a new age category, so I guess I'm the baby again! It should be an advantage to be at the bottom of my age division, but there are several girls that I've been competing against in the same events who also turned 60 this year. They are all really good, so I don't know if being the baby will do me any good in Cleveland.

When did you realize you had a medical condition to deal with?

After I did so well last summer, I took a couple weeks off and when I got back out to jog I noticed it hurt in a new way. I tried to fix it myself - I rested it, went and got some therapy done - but I finally gave up and got a diagnosis in January. The doctor at the Mayo Clinic told me I needed a total hip replacement. I was born with dysplasia which makes me prone to getting arthritis. I had bone-on-bone arthritis and a couple of cysts in my right hip. I did some research and tried to get them to do anything but that. I got a cortisone shot but they said there was no other option.

I went to Omaha for a second opinion. I had to take an elevator instead of walking up the stairs to the doctor's office. I couldn't lift my leg high enough to step. I got medication to control the inflammation and they allowed me to exercise again. When I worked out I found that my muscles along with the medication compensated for the arthritis in my hip. I still can't run well and I changed my workout to one hour a day instead of my usual four hours. So that's what I've been doing to adjust.

Is that the only time you've had a physical obstacle?

A couple of years ago I had rotator cuff surgery on my right arm and shoulder. I think it came from all the years of spotting the kids in gymnastics – I always used that arm and shoulder to catch and flip 'em over. They told me it was almost torn in two, and that's when I realized I have a high threshold for pain. (laughs) I was worried about how I would fill in my time since I have been so much into training and competing. But getting therapy on the shoulder took up a lot of time so I just had to wait until I could get back to doing the fun stuff.

Motivation and Inspiration

It sounds like winning medals isn't really your main motivation for competing.

No, it's important but for me it's the icing on the cake. I'm always competing against myself, trying to do it a little better. I enjoy all of the people I meet there. If I missed going to the National Senior Games it would be the people I would miss, not the medals. It's a good incentive for keeping physically fit but also good to be with my old friends and new friends.

But you must have a competitive spirit to do so well for so long

My goal, first and foremost this year, is to be healthy enough to compete so I can be there to hang around with everybody.



National Senior Games Association

Post Office Box 82059 ★ Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70884-2059
225-766-6800 ★ Fax 225-766-9115 ★ nsga@nsga.com

★ www.nsga.com

Kay Glynn Personal Best Profile

Page 3

Who or what else inspires you?

I guess I'm a little strange because I've always been self motivated. Even as a kid I just enjoyed how movement made me feel. But I have always said music is my motivator. The song I like most is "Old Time Rock and Roll." I used that for my last dance recital. The song came to my mind when I first found out the games were going to be in Cleveland, with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame there. I get busy with my competition but I always try to make some time to look around when I go to the games. In that way the National Senior Games are a good excuse for a vacation. Traveling around, hanging out with people who are happy and active, doing some sports...and you can still be in bed by 9 O'clock! (laughs)

Who have you inspired?

I get to compete at some colleges where they allow people whose eligibility has run out to compete unattached, and they let me come join in. Sometimes the kids sit there mesmerized when I tell them my story and how I got going. I like to think that I'm showing them that just because you get out of college and start a family you can still get out and be active. I hope they do.



People ask why I keep doing all of this. My answer is simple – I've never not done this, that's why. My favorite expression is one I heard at the Senior Games. "You don't quit playing games when you grow old. You grow old when you quit playing games." Really, I just go out and play like a kid. When I go out to play with my kids (and now my grandkids) I don't just watch, I play with them.

Training & Preparation for Competition

How have you usually trained in the past before adjusting to your hip condition?

I normally train every day, I seldom take a day and do nothing. It may be a half hour or as much as three or four hours during the summer. That includes taking videotape of what I'm doing to check technique. But I mix it up – one day do a running workout and some pole vaulting, then the next day do some running and practice high jump. Then a couple of other field exercises the next. So that keeps it from getting too routine.

When I can train outdoors I have high jump and pole vault pits in the back yard. I do my running at a cinder track about two miles away. It's the same track I ran around in high school so that's really neat.

I always feel like I'm in a disadvantage in the winter time because people on the coast and in the south can work outside. I have to be really inventive to keep up a good workout in these Iowa winters. I do my best at the end of summer because I've had time to go outside.



National Senior Games Association

Post Office Box 82059 ★ Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70884-2059
225-766-6800 ★ Fax 225-766-9115 ★ nsga@nsga.com

★ www.nsga.com



Kay Glynn Personal Best Profile

Page 4

The only time I get to pole vault in the winter is to go around to some of the colleges in the state and join in on their indoor meets. They allow kids who have graduated and want to continue with their sports to come participate as "unattached athletes" so I've been able to join in with the college kids. I don't think I ever got first at one of those, but I never got last either! (laughs) They say stuff like 'I wish my mom would come do this' and 'I wish I can look like you when I'm a grandma!' (laughs again) But you know, we're all trying to beat the bar. We all speak the same language when it comes to pole vaulting.

Since you have to be careful with your hip, how are you adjusting your training and competition this year?



Early this year in practice, I could only go four steps in the pit with pole vault so I worked on my arms and my technique. At the winter meets I had to run farther, and people say it looked fine, and it felt fine. But I know I can't do that every day or it will hurt. The doctor says 'this isn't something I would do, but if you can do it and not hurt, then do it if it's working for you.' I just cleared another four month checkup so I think I've managed to put off any operation until after the National Senior Games.

Pole vaulting causes me the least stress of anything I'm doing right now. It's the only thing that doesn't ever hurt so I know I will be doing that at the Nationals. And as long as I keep the cardio going, do my stretches, weights and hip exercises I should be able to do more. I've found that it works for me to limit my time and not do too much out there. The high jump gives me the most trouble so I just don't do much practicing on it now. As long as I'm doing things to stay flexible I don't really need to do every activity every week.

Fitness & Nutrition

How do you work out?

I do my cardio and fitness work out in my basement, especially in the winter and I'll always start with music. Funny thing is if I'm listening to the radio I notice they vary the pace from slow to fast, slow to fast so I follow the pace. When I want to work the elliptical or treadmill for ten minutes I don't clock it, I just go for three songs. Or I can put on a CD and I don't have to think about how many times have I done this or repeats I have left. I just know that when the CD is done I'm done!

Do you see a time when you won't be in competitive sports?

I don't think I'm weird to be doing these sports at this age. When I go to meets and see older people that are just starting it I'm amazed and inspired. A lot of women are doing this for the first time because they didn't have the opportunity. They are motivators for me.

If I had to take time off, even if it was five years for rehab or whatever, I would always go back. It doesn't matter how old I am. I was totally inspired watching Harry Peppers, the 100 year old athlete who lit the flame in Houston two years ago.



National Senior Games Association

Post Office Box 82059 ★ Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70884-2059
225-766-6800 ★ Fax 225-766-9115 ★ nsga@nsga.com

★ www.nsga.com



Kay Glynn Personal Best Profile

Page 5

He has so much attitude and was so fun to watch. I talked with him afterwards and he said he used to do track and field, but when he got older there weren't so many out there so he starting cycling. Then he said there weren't so many to compete against in his age group so he moved over to bowling. Well, I'll just be like Harry. Maybe I'll swim or cycle. There's always going to be something out there for me. That's a great thing about senior games, they offer so many different sports and you can find something to do.

You're never too old or too young to start living a healthy lifestyle. Working out doesn't need to be work. It can be fun.

I had a bone scan done ten years ago and another one three years ago. It showed that my bone density had increased greatly. I'm in much better shape now than ten years ago because of my activity. I know weightlifting is good for bone density but I don't do a lot of that. Doing acrobatics does the same thing. I walk on my hands and do cartwheels all the time. By working against my own weight I don't think it causes as much injuries as sometimes happens with weightlifting.

How do you approach your diet?

My diet has changed. I'm healthier. I don't go on crazy diets- you hear about these weird diets and three years later they find it causes cancer. I just eat a little bit of everything, nothing is forbidden. A little margarine, a little butter. But I don't eat fried foods at all. I take fish oil, Omega XL. I had knee pains about five years ago and started on that. The pain never came back.

I like to eat every two to three hours. I just feel better not eating three big meals a day. I like to get up from eating and feel like I can go out and run. A lot of people talk about eating so much they need to take a nap. I don't ever want to feel like that.

Epilogue



(Photo by Miriam Creach/ Brooks Institute © 2013)

Kay is never at a loss for words, regardless of how her competition goes. The good news is that she won gold in long jump and bronze in triple jump. The bad news: she "no heighthed" in her premier event, the pole vault. But the experience was drama in sport at the highest level.



National Senior Games Association

Post Office Box 82059 ★ Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70884-2059
225-766-6800 ★ Fax 225-766-9115 ★ nsga@nsga.com

★ www.nsga.com



Kay Glynn Personal Best Profile

Page 6

We witnessed a tremendously courageous effort given her hip condition and that Kay went "all or nothing" in her vault strategy. You see, she wanted to set a new record for her age level and could only endure a few approaches- jumping and landing was no problem, it's the running that aggravated her hip. So Kay set the bar at a still-challenging 7' 8" with the notion that she could make that on first try and then move it up a couple of notches to go for the record. She had cleared that first setting many times in practice and surely could get over in three tries. But it was not to be.

She could have set the bar lower and guaranteed herself a medal. But the competitor in Kay Glynn would not allow for her to take "the easy way out." We applaud that fearless effort, Kay also stole the show at our Personal Best Tour event in Cleveland during the Games. Asked if her hip condition would prevent her from doing her signature warm-ups of cartwheels and handstands at the track, Kay defiantly launched into a 3 minute "Old Time Rock and Roll" acrobatic dance routine that delighted the gathering. Click below to view.



In Kay's words:

OK. I felt like Marlo Thomas at the games-people would point and say, "Are you.....THAT girl?" I loved visiting with the tons of people who immediately made me feel like we'd met before. They said they'd followed my story and wished me well. I heard nothing but good comments about the whole NSGA experience. It was a class act. Cleveland rocks!

It was exciting and so cool to be associated with the first event in the new convention center- I loved my dancing experience in the Personal Best show! It was so great to have the representative from the President's fitness council there to see and feel what the NSGA is all about. She surely had to be impressed by such a huge event that is geared to promote physical fitness for us baby boomers and others.

Pole vaulting: It was definitely a "coulda, woulda, shoulda" day. I was confident with my plan as I entered the games, but given all the circumstances that I had not foreseen, I should have taken a different approach. I just wanted it all. No heighting was a first for me, and in the vaulter's world, we all feel for the no heighter, no matter what their age. But an experienced world record holder and good friend, Gary Hunter, watched me and knew what I was feeling. He took me by the shoulders and said, "Hey. It happens. We've all done it. You just have to learn-that's all. We did...and you will, too." I will never forget those words.



National Senior Games Association

Post Office Box 82059 ★ Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70884-2059
225-766-6800 ★ Fax 225-766-9115 ★ nsga@nsga.com

★ www.nsga.com



Kay Glynn Personal Best Profile

Page 6

It didn't take me long to understand what those words meant, and I put it to use in the high jump only 18 hours later as the sun came out and the rain clouds left. I started at a lower height than I ever had before and didn't worry about how long my hip would hold out. I cleared a bar. I had a medal. Then, I just kept playing! Two weeks before, my hip had given out after only four jumps, but I was lucky to be able to take seven as I climbed to break the meet record. I thought it was so cool that the three of us left in the high jump had all won our own age divisions, but we just kept jumping to see how high we could go-just for the sheer joy of it! They helped keep the rotation and rhythm going and the camaraderie was part of my success!

People have wondered what I would do after surgery, especially those first 6 months when I can't do any jogging. I tell them that I will be busy. I have never been bored in my life. The procedure went well and I'm already getting off the crutches. I am living by my new motto:

"It's impossible!" said the Doubt.

"It's dangerous!" said the Fear.

"It's unnecessary!" said the Reason.

"Try it anyway..." whispered the Heart!

[Continue Reading about Kay Glynn](#)

[More Personal Best Profiles at www.NSGA.com](http://www.NSGA.com)

For more information:

Del Moon, NSGA Communications and Media

DMoon@NSGA.com

225.202.5719



National
Senior Games
Association®