

Profile of RON DOMBROWSKI
Reprinted from the Norwich Bulletin
By Roger Zotti

In the News: For the fourth time in his running career, Ron Dombrowski, 59, has qualified for the 2003 Summer National Senior Games, which will be held May 26-June 9 in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Background: Dombrowski, a lifelong resident of Norwich, began running in 1978. A member of the Mohegan Striders running club since 1980, Dombrowski trains year-round. "I'm on the roads five days a week, even in bad weather," he said. "Of course, because of the snow and ice this year I'm extra cautious."

Qualifying: Dombrowski qualified for the Senior Games by his performances in three local competitions. Last June, he competed in a 10k road race in Niantic. He finished fourth in his age group. On August 3 he took part in the track and field competition held at the Coast Guard Academy in New London. He qualified in the 200, 800, and 1500 meters, finishing second in each event. "That was a first time the Coast Guard sponsored the track and field qualifiers," Dombrowski said, "and they had a little trouble with the logistics. We were there from nine in the morning and didn't run until five in the evening. During the day the heat was up to 105 degrees. It was a killer. People were under tables trying to get away from the sun. When it was time to run, the heat had zapped everyone. We all ran slower than usual." The next day, Dombrowski ran the 5k Sailfest road race in New London. He finished first in the 50-59 division. Of the 250 runners, he was 21st overall. "I got two gold medals and that was a thrill," he said.

Influence: Dombrowski credits Madison's Jerry LeVesseur, a veteran runner, with introducing him to the Senior Games. "I wouldn't be competing in the games if it weren't for Jerry," Dombrowski said. "He introduced me to them several years ago." Like Dombrowski, LeVesseur has qualified for the 2003 games. They will be traveling to Virginia together to compete.

Critical: Dombrowski is disappointed that Connecticut doesn't back its athletes who compete in the Senior Games. "The state wants you to wear its uniform," he said. "I don't. I run in the Mohegan Striders colors." He'd like to see Connecticut emulate New Mexico. "New Mexico gives each of its

participants new shoes, a complete running outfit, sweats, plus one thousand dollars for expenses.”

Quotable: Dombrowski enjoys both the competition and camaraderie of the Senior Games. “The competition brings out the best in me,” he said. “At the same time, it’s a terrific experience to meet people from the rest of the country and from all over the world. You find out that some of the training you’ve done is the same as what they’ve done. I’ve met athletes in their seventies and eighties. One of my best memories was being introduced to a swimmer named Sam. He was ninety years old and still going strong. The guy was simply awesome.”