

FRANCOIS BODA



It's not surprising to those who know him that Francois Boda aims to break a record in Fort Lauderdale at the 2021 National Senior Games. What is surprising, is that Boda has no idea what time he has to beat.

"I don't like to know before I get there," Boda said. "I know it's below a certain number, but I don't want to think too much, so I don't like to know beforehand. It's a little bit weird, but I trust my training and I know if I run my best I should be able to break those records."

The 56-year-old Midwest City resident seeks gold medals in four individual track and field events and one relay next year, and is looking to set new records for his age group in the 200 and 400 meter sprints.

Boda grew up in Mauritius, trained in France and ran in Europe, Asia and Africa before moving to Oklahoma in 1988 to attend college. Boda has been a member of the U.S.A Track and Field Team for over 10 years and is a two times world champion as well as a two times world record holder. He is a disciplined athlete who trains six days a week year around and only cheats on his diet on Fridays when, he admits, he likes to eat junk food.

Training happens mostly on weekends and before and after school at Mount St. Mary's where Boda teaches French, personal finance and coaches boys and girls soccer. Like anyone, Boda occasionally finds himself lacking motivation before a workout. But unlike most, Boda is quick to remember what's at stake.

“You have to be top 10 in the world to make the U.S.A. relay team, so I have to be the best,” Boda said. “I know somewhere in the world, someone is training really hard today so I can’t fall behind. That’s what lights my fire when I train.”

Despite being in top condition, Boda often walks with a limp -- a lingering symptom from a race injury last summer. Boda suffers from a tight tendon as a result of his injury, which he will have to deal with for the rest of his life. But he pushes through the pain in an effort to hold on to his abilities as long as possible and prolong his quality of life. And Boda shares his philosophy with anyone who will listen, offering tips and recommendations to athletes at any level.

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.