



## Athlete Profile (National)

**Joe Velasquez**  
**Navy Veteran**  
**61 years old**  
**Turlock, California**

If you have ever been to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, then chances are you've heard of "Rollin' Joe Velasquez." Velasquez is a long-time competitor in the Games, having participated for 23 years; but, what he is best known for is his kind heart and encouraging nature.

You will often find Velasquez on the sidelines cheering along his fellow Veterans, or lending a hand to a friend in need. That's one of the main reasons why he was selected as the 2007 "Spirit of the Games" award winner, a testament to his athletic prowess as well as the sportsmanship he continuously displays to other athletes.

Don't let his kind nature fool you, though – Velasquez is quite the competitor. At the 2008 Games, he won four gold medals in all four events he entered which included nine-ball, shot-put, bowling and table tennis.

In 2009, he won gold medals in table tennis, slalom, nine-ball and bowling.

This year, his goal is not only to win more medals but to share his love for the Games with the family members who will come to support him.

**"Every year, we find individuals who are inspired by the attitudes and abilities of the competitors," Velasquez said. "Novices, repeats, coaches, family members, sponsors and volunteers are all winners at this event, and that's a proven good thing!"**

