

# HOOP DREAMS STILL PAYING OFF

## Flindt brings home silver from World Senior Games

By **PAUL DANZER**  
*Columbian staff writer*

Larry Flindt went to St. George, Utah, in October hoping to add a second national championship to his collection of basketball accomplishments.

An unexpected turn took the shot at gold away from the 76-year-old Clark County man, but Flindt still walked off the court a winner at the Huntsman World Senior Games.

Flindt made several critical plays down the stretch to help his team win the silver medal in



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the four-on-four tournament for men 75 and older. Flindt made two free throws with eight seconds left in the second half, and his team won the medal game 46-42 in overtime.

It was only a silver medal because one team was considered too strong and walked off with the gold without even playing a game.

Flindt's team won four of its five games. The round-robin games were 20 minutes. The

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TROY WAYRYNEN/The Columbian

**Larry Flindt won this silver medal at the Huntsman World Senior Games last month in St. George, Utah. His team won four of its five games in a 4-on-4 competition for men ages 75 and older.**

# Flindt

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medal game was 30 minutes, with a two-minute overtime.

In the 75-plus age division at St. George, games are played on a 50-foot court with four players on a team, a modification that allows the end-to-end action of full-court basketball without making the players run the full 94 feet.

"That was about the right size for guys our age," Flindt said.

Six years ago, when Flindt played on a team that won a 70-and-older national tournament, he said he could still beat taller players up the full-sized court. This modified full-court game fits the skills and fitness for his age division, Flindt said.

The game is more challenging with each passing year.

"I don't know why they raise the basket every year," Flindt joked.

Flindt grew up on a Battle Ground-area farm. He said he taught him self to shoot into a hoop attached to the family barn. A 1953 graduate of Battle

## Did you know ?

■ Dating to 1987, the Huntsman World Senior Games is held each fall in St. George, Utah. It offers competition in 25 sports at age divisions starting at 50.

Ground High School, Flindt's first experience with organized basketball came at Clark College.

He has played the game since, mostly in pickup games and adult leagues in Clark County. These days Flindt plays basketball each Monday evening at Eisenhower Elementary School.

In 2005, Flindt played on a team that won the 70-and-older title at the Coral Springs (Fla.) Sports Commission National Championship Tournament.

He was invited to play on that team by a friend from the Seattle area. Flindt said he became interested in playing in tournaments for older players after learning about Pudgy Hunt's successful teams of older players sponsored by Portland's East Bank Saloon.

In 1990, Flindt participated in the Coral Springs national tournament for the first time

as part of a Portland-area team that placed second in the 50-55 age group.

Last month in St. George, the scene was different — and not only because the players are 20 years older. This time, the team Flindt played on was built from a pool of players from around the country who had not met until they gathered to play some competitive basketball. He said his teammates included players from about a half dozen states.

Flindt was disappointed not to get a shot for the gold medal. He explained that because one team showed up ready to play together in a tournament with no similar entries, organizers decided to give that team the gold medal without playing a game rather than have that one strong team beat up on the others.

Still, Flindt said he enjoyed the competition and the camaraderie among the players who participated.

The body might not allow players in their 70s to make the plays they once could, but the competition is still plenty spirited.

"One thing about all of us who are still playing, we're all very competitive," Flindt said.