

Many people wonder, how does the staff of only four at Virginia Amateurs Sports organize over 40 competitive events for the Virginia Commonwealth Games year after year. The truth is... each event has a volunteer coordinator, and some events have several. "Our coordinators are the backbone of our business," says Amanda Mangum the VAS Games Director. After a one-year hiatus, Outdoor Archery will return to the games with Lani Young as the coordinator. For someone who competed in the archery competition every year except the first year and 2022, when archery wasn't held because of the loss of the range. "Having Lani back will make our archery competition a notable event. She is simply the best in the business" Mangum says with excitement.

A resident of Reston in Northern Virginia, Young has been the coordinator of the archery competition in the Commonwealth Games since 2010. She not only runs the show, but she also competes. Young is out there firing away, enjoying the competition and her friendship with fellow competitors in a sport she took up in high school.

"We had a unit on archery in my physical education class and I liked it. My instructor said, 'There's an archery shop but it's going out of business,'" Young says. She scraped together \$35 and bought her first bow. Now she has one that costs more than \$1,600, and that was 10 years ago.

The sport of archery got a bump from Hollywood.

"The Hunger Games, Lord of the Rings, and another Disney movie all got younger people interested," Young says. The interest remains for younger competitors and the numbers of entrants is steady. It's the older age groups that have seen a drop. Too bad, Young says, because there are medals to be won. She's proof, with a nice haul of Commonwealth Games medals over the years.

"Once you become a little old lady, you can win medals," Young says with a laugh. "Old" being a relative term, Young would only give her age as eligible to compete in the over-60 category, Now that Virginia Amateur Sports found a suitable site for archery – the Central Virginia Regional Soccer complex just off U.S. 501 in Campbell County, on the backside of Candler's Mountain from Liberty University -- the sport is back in the Games' line-up.

There are two archery tournaments. The first is a one-day event on Friday, July 21, called a 900 where competitors shoot a total of 90 arrows, 30 from each of three midrange distances of 40-60 meters (shorter for the younger competitors). The two-day tournament will be Saturday and Sunday, July 22-23, as part of a 1440, where each competitor shoots 36 arrows from four distances for a total of 144 shots. Those distances start at 30 meters and go to between 60 and 90 meters, depending on age group and gender. Competitors may enter either or both tournaments.

The type of bow matters, too. Young says everything but a crossbow is allowed.

"We have compound bows, which we call the bows with training wheels. There are recurve bows and long bows. The girl scouts also have genesis bows which look like compound bows but shoot like recurve bows. I put them in a separate category, and they only shoot short distances."

Bow technology differences are nearly as broad as that of firearms. A compound bow can have many bells and whistles, up to and including magnification on its sight. On the other end, the long bow is the black-powder musket of bows, with nothing but a piece of expertly crafted wood and a string, like the British Army in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

“A lot of people still prefer to shoot that way,” Young says of the long bow competition. Still, compound bows are the largest categories.

The competition is strong, but Young says the motivating factor for most of the archers is a chance to see old friends again, a common element in the Commonwealth Games.

“You get to know the people and you see them at the competitions,” Young says. “People like the competition and they like seeing the friends they’ve made at all the places like the Commonwealth Games.”

For her efforts to be part of the Games, as both competitor and coordinator, Young was selected to the VAS Wall of Honor in 2019.

Information about categories of competition and entry fees can be found at [commonwealthgames.org](http://commonwealthgames.org).