OSU hosts junior summer games

By Mary Kay O'Brien
Lantern staff writer

Ohio Stadium has played host for many track events in the past from the Special Olympics to the Jesse Owens Memorial Race and this weekend another event will be added to the list.

Junior athletes from six countries will compete at the 1990 International Junior Summer Games to be held July 28 and 29 at Ohio Stadium.

The Games this weekend are the final event before the Junior World Championships to be held August 8-12 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

Male and female athletes ranging in age from 14 to 16 will be competing in various track events this weekend.

"Most of the athletes come at the older end of the age bracket," said Maggie Kozelek, public information director for the Columbus Recreation Department.

Teams from Bermuda, Canada, Jamaica, Mexico, Cuba, and the United States have sent aspiring track athletes to the event.

The U.S. team, which consists of 95 track athletes, and the Canadian team with 90 members, represent the largest group of athletes at the Games.

Chris Nellons, future OSU freshman will be representing the U.S. junior team in the 100 and 200 meters at the games.

Nellons, a high school track star for Dayton Dunbar, has an outstanding record as a four-time state champion in the 400-meter dash, and holds records in the 400- and 200-meter dashes and also qualified for the 1988 Olympic trials in the 400.

Kozelek said the U.S. team was selected by the Athletic Congress, the governing body of track in the United States, and are the best right now in the country for their age bracket.

The events for the International Junior Games will start Saturday with the race-walk at 8:30 a.m., field events at 1:00 p.m. and running races starting at 3:00 p.m. On Sunday the events will start at 3:00 p.m. and the last relay will be held at 5:20.
Nelloms breezes in 400

Rogers sees gold for OSU recruit

By Derek Monroe  
Dispatch Sports Reporter

Russ Rogers’ interest in the International Junior Summer Games runs deeper than his duties as meet director.

Much of the Ohio State track coach’s attention is focused on sprinter Chris Nelloms, the Buckeyes’ prize recruit.

Nelloms, who led Dayton Dunbar High School to big-school state titles the past two years, continued his dominance in the 400 meters by posting the fastest qualifying time (46.84 seconds) yesterday in Ohio Stadium.

He also ran the leadoff leg on the United States’ 400 relay team that clocked 39.23 seconds, the fastest time in the world this season for juniors (ages 14 to 19). The team of Nelloms, Glenn Terry of Cincinnati, Reggie Harris of Oxen Hill, Md., and James Stallworth of Tulare, Calif., also established a stadium record, bettering the 39.41 set by a U.S. team during the 1988 International Junior Summer Games.

“T’d just like to see him run well and get his confidence up going into the World Championships,” Rogers said of Nelloms. “There will be the world junior champion, which is a steppingstone that he needs.

“It’s a title that he needs to let us know and prove to himself that he will be a world-class athlete in years to come.”

Rogers has not been coaching Nelloms during the summer.

“It’s safe to say that I’ve been giving him verbal workouts the past few days,” Rogers said. “But that’s all it will be, because I don’t want to change his routine.

“He’s been running so well, and I’m happy with the progress he’s shown this summer.”

Nelloms, who has the fastest 400 (45.36) in the world among juniors, has not been beaten this season.

“Having someone like Nelloms is definitely going to turn our program around,” Rogers said.

“He’s what you would call a horse that you can depend on. A guy that you can build your program around. And the thing about keeping him in the state, the people who’ve been following him through high school will get to see him run more often.”

The two-day meet, which has attracted more than 300 athletes from seven countries, concludes today. Competition begins at 3 p.m.

The meet is hosted by the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department and OSU. Admission is $2.

This is the final stop for the U.S. squad before the World Championships Aug. 8-12 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

Nelloms will enter OSU in the fall but will be ineligible after failing to meet Proposition 48 academic requirements.

“I think it was a blessing in disguise,” Nelloms said of Prop 48. “I have had a long, hard season and it gives me a chance to rest.

“It’s probably something that I needed, because I’ve been competing in the quarter since I was 7.”

Nelloms, who has never lost a 400 race on the Jesse Owens track, finished nearly two seconds ahead runner-up Mark Graham of Canada (45.76) in his qualifying heat.

Derek Mills of Washington, D.C., ran the second-fastest: 400, winning heat two in 47.83.

Nelloms, who won four state titles in the 400, said running in Ohio Stadium gives him a decisive edge in the final.

“I know this track,” he said. “I’ve been running on this track since I was a freshman. I know where to break it down and when to turn it on on this track.”

The U.S. teams combined for six gold medals through the finals of 16 events yesterday. Canada had five, Jamaica three and Cuba two.

Jamaica swept the 100 as Donovan Powell (10.39) and Nikole Mitchell (11.51) won the men’s and women’s titles.
Fast finisher

Chris Nelloms of Dayton outdistances the competition in a 400-meter heat yesterday at the International Junior Summer Games in Ohio Stadium. Nelloms, bound for Ohio State, was the fastest qualifier. See story on Page 7 H.