

# Edged at the tape by a 99-year-old, this 92-year-old runner wants a rematch

---

By Kelyn Soong February 28 at 12:25 PM

Dixon Hemphill logged onto his Facebook account last week to find dozens of notifications. Some were comments from friends but many more were from users Hemphill didn't recognize. They all wanted Hemphill to know that they were in awe of the viral video of his 60-meter race at the USA Track and Field masters indoor championships, where Hemphill, 92, was narrowly defeated by 99-year-old Orville Rogers by 0.05 seconds.

"I didn't expect the attention I got," Hemphill said Monday in a phone interview. "I didn't know I had that many friends. . . . There were some very nice comments."

Hemphill competed in five events over the course of three days in Albuquerque, where he was the only runner in the men's 90 to 94 age group, but it was the thrilling head-to-head race against Rogers on Feb. 18 that reached beyond the insular community of masters track and field.

In a photo finish, Rogers out-leaned Hemphill, winning in 18.00 seconds to Hemphill's 18.05.

Typically, race organizers will combine age groups into one heat to speed up the meet, but in the 60-meter dash, it was just the pair of nonagenarian World War II veterans. And even though Hemphill lost, he can't help but appreciate the attention the race has received.

"I'm glad he won the race this time," Hemphill, who lives in Fairfax Station, Va., said. "Because had I won it, it would've been not as much of a deal. That's news, because he's got seven years on me. He's amazing."

Hemphill has been a fixture in the Washington-area running community for over half a century. A former collegiate pole vaulter, high jumper and discus thrower at Middlebury College in the 1940s, Hemphill took up racing at age 50 and has competed in a number of distances and events as a member of the Potomac Valley Track Club.

A serious bike accident in 1999 nearly ended his running career, but Hemphill recovered from a collapsed lung and broken ribs and pelvis to resume racing. Neither a hip replacement surgery in 2008 nor a bladder infection last year has slowed or discouraged Hemphill, who trains three times a week at the George Mason University track with a personal coach.

He maintains a healthy diet, avoiding processed meat and allowing his wife of 62 years to pick out his food, and does exercises for strength, balance and flexibility in addition to his track workouts.

The narrow loss to Rogers has only convinced Hemphill that he needs to add to his training.

---

## Sports Daily newsletter

Sports news with a focus on D.C. area teams.

[Sign up](#)

---

“I just want to run faster than I’m running,” Hemphill said. “My training is not complete. I’m not doing long distance running. I want to add at least two to three miles. . . . Orville Rogers is doing more mileage than me in a week. That’s not right in my mind. I should be doing more. I think it’ll make a difference.”

For now, though, Hemphill is planning on taking a few weeks off to rest and recover. He will run the Cherry Blossom Ten Miler in early April before turning his focus to the USA Track and Field masters outdoor championships in Baton Rouge, La. this July.

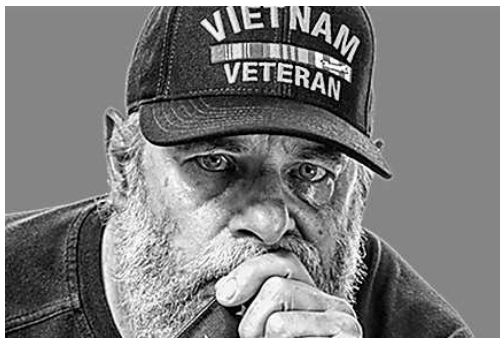
There, Hemphill will get another chance against Rogers, who has beaten him in the 60-meter dash at the last three USA Track and Field masters indoor championships.

“I really enjoy the competition. I love to compete,” Hemphill said. “I like to beat a person just as much as he likes to beat me.”

Kelyn Soong works in the sports department and contributes to The Early Lead and D.C. Sports Bog. He also covers tennis and running in the D.C. area. [🐦 Follow @KelynSoong](#)

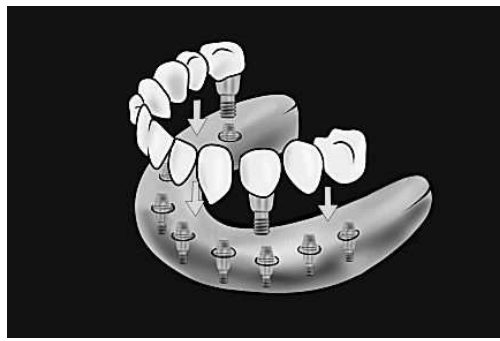
**PAID PROMOTED STORIES**

Recommended by



## Vets could receive up to \$42k with these VA benefits

LendingTree



## Here's What New Dental Implants Should Cost You - View Pricing & Dentist Information

New Dental Implants



## The One Shirt Women Need At 70% Off

MorningFinance



## The Real Reason Brokers Sell Annuities

Fisher Investments



## How This Mattress is Upending a \$14B Industry

Inc.com



## The Best Horror Films Ranked

PrettyFamous