



# History of the Games

## Introduction

The first Commonwealth Games were held in 1930 in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Bobby Robinson, a major influence within athletics in Canada at the time, finally implemented the event that had been talked about amongst Commonwealth nations for over thirty years. Eleven countries with 400 athletes in total participated in the first Commonwealth Games. \$30,000 was provided by the City of Hamilton to these nations to help cover travelling costs. Since then, the Games have been conducted every four years except for 1942 and 1946, due to World War II.

From 1930 to 1950 the Games were known as the British Empire Games, then the British Empire and Commonwealth Games until 1962. From 1966 to 1974 they took on the title of British Commonwealth Games and from 1978 onwards they have been known as simply the Commonwealth Games. A governor-general represents her in the country.

## The Growth of the Games

While other Games around the globe have been founded on geographic or climatic factors such as the Asian, Pan Am, African Games and Winter Olympics, the Commonwealth Games has been founded on history. Unique characteristics of the Commonwealth Games include being the only Games which shares a common language. All athletes and officials can converse with each other in English, creating an atmosphere that has led to the Commonwealth Games being long known as the "Friendly Games".

The bonds of the Commonwealth Games help to encourage and support the pursuit of health and fitness in each of the member countries and provide an inspiration for youth to strive for excellence.

## 1930 British Empire Games - Hamilton Canada

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The city of Hamilton proved a gracious first host of the Commonwealth Games movement and is as important to it as Athens is to the Olympics. Then called the British Empire Games, the sociological, cultural and political makeup of the Commonwealth Movement has altered substantially since 1930.

The inaugural Games was utilitarian and very down to earth, proving that more doesn't necessarily mean better. The athletes' village was the Prince of Wales School next to the Civic Stadium, where the competitors slept two dozen to a classroom. Despite missing some basic comforts, the participants were unanimous in their praise for the Games and Hamilton's hospitality.

Eleven countries sent a total of about 400 athletes to the Hamilton Games. Women competed in only the swimming events. The participant nations were Australia, Bermuda, British Guiana, Canada, England, Northern Ireland, Newfoundland, New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa and Wales.

The Hamilton Games featured six sports: track and field, boxing, lawn bowls, rowing, swimming and diving, and wrestling and ran at a cost of \$97,973.00.





## 1934 British Empire Games - London England

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Sixteen nations sent a total of about 500 competitors to the London Games. In addition to the 11 nations that had competed at the 1930 Hamilton Games, making their debut at the London Games were Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Trinidad. This was also to be the last time that Newfoundland took independent of Canada.

Six sports were featured in the Games - athletics, boxing, cycling, lawn bowls, swimming and diving, and wrestling. A highlight of the 1934 Games was the inclusion of events for women in athletics, with careful consideration given not to include events that were considered 'too exhaustive'. The running events were restricted to the short sprints and a shortened 4 x 220 yard relay instead of the 4 x 440 yard relay as per the men's program. Nevertheless this was a breakthrough for women in sport that would one day lead to full recognition and programming for women's athletics on the international stage.

The athletes oath was read by the captain for the England Athletics team, R.L. Howland as follows:-

"We declare that we are loyal subjects of His Majesty the King, Emperor, and will take part in the British Empire Games in the spirit of true sportsmanship, recognising the rules which govern them and desirous of participating in them for the honour of our Empire and the Glory of Sport."

Originally scheduled for Johannesburg, South Africa, the II Games were hosted by London, in order to avoid a political crisis over South Africa's 'Apartheid' policy and its implications on visiting Commonwealth athletes and officials.

## 1938 British Empire Games - Sydney Australia

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Held in the southern hemisphere for the first time, the III Games opening ceremony took place at the famed Sydney Cricket Ground in front of 40,000 spectators who were keen to see Australia and New Zealand excel against England in particular.

Fifteen nations participated down under at the Sydney Games involving a total of 466 athletes and 43 officials. New participants included Fiji and Ceylon.

Seven sports were featured in the Sydney Games - track and field, boxing, cycling, lawn bowls, rowing, swimming and diving, and wrestling.

## 1950 British Empire Games - Auckland New Zealand

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World War II interrupted the staging of the British Empire Games scheduled for 1942 and 1946, however the enthusiasm from within the British Empire to continue what was started in 1930 was still strong enough for interest to be shown in their revival..

Awarded to New Zealand, the IV Games were held at the nation's largest city, Auckland. New Zealand had never been the focus of so much sporting attention and the hosts responded in a most magnificent and hospitable manner.





The opening ceremony at Eden Park was attended by 40,000 spectators, whilst nearly 250,000 people attended the Auckland Games, paying out a total of £89,435 as event spectators.

The atmosphere of the Opening Ceremony is best described by this paragraph from the Official Record of the Games:

"The entrance of the gladiators in the days of ancient Athens and ancient Rome could not have been more impressive than was that Parade at Eden Park on the afternoon of February 4, 1950. As one, the crowd stilled by the majesty of the colourful scene, wonderful too in its simplicity, rose to its feet to remain standing throughout the ceremony, cheering to the echo as the parade passed on its way around the stadium..."

Twelve countries sent a total of 495 male and 95 female competitors to Auckland. Newly formed Malaysia and Nigeria made their first appearance.

Nine sports featured at the Auckland Games - track and field, boxing, cycling, fencing, lawn bowls, rowing, swimming and diving, weightlifting and wrestling.

### **1954 British Empire & Commonwealth Games - Vancouver Canada**

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The awarding of the Games to Vancouver, was the culmination of two years of very hard work by an enterprising group of Civic leaders spearheaded by then Mayor, Charles E. Thompson.

Vancouver then proceeded to set new standards in organisation and presentation of not only Commonwealth Games but all multi-sport Games of the times.

The athletes oath was taken by the captain of the Canadian team, Mr Bill Parnell, which for the first time would reflect the involvement of Commonwealth nations, outside of the British Empire.

The Fifth (V) Games, placed Vancouver on a world stage and featured memorable sporting moments as well as outstanding entertainment, technical innovation and cultural events. The 'Miracle Mile', as it became dubbed, saw both the gold medallist, Roger Bannister of England, and silver medallist, John Landy of Australia, run sub-four minute races in an event that was televised live across the globe for the first time.

Some 24 nations sent a total of 662 athletes and 127 officials to the Vancouver Games. This was a 'quantum leap' in size for the Commonwealth Games and represented the most significant increase in (100%) for any Commonwealth Games.

Nations winning medals at the Games included England, Australia, South Africa, Canada, New Zealand, Scotland, Trinidad, Northern Ireland, (Zimbabwe)North and South Rhodesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Wales, Jamaica, Hong Kong, Uganda, Barbados and British Guiana.

### **1958 British Empire & Commonwealth Games - Cardiff Wales**

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The VI Games marked the largest sporting event ever held in Wales and it was the smallest Country ever to host a British Empire and Commonwealth Games. Cardiff had to wait 12 years longer than originally scheduled to become host of the Games, as the 1946 event was cancelled because of World War II.





"The triumph of Wales and Cardiff in staging the Sixth British Empire and Commonwealth Games is now history - and history that will ring down the years to come".

England's famed middle distance runners, Roger Bannister and Chris Chattaway, were handed the honour of taking the Queen's Baton from Buckingham Palace on the first stage of its journey to Wales.

The Cardiff Games were to be South Africa's last until their post-apartheid return to the Games in 1994. A number of objections against South Africa took place in Cardiff because their team had been selected on the basis of race and colour rather than ability. South Africa subsequently withdrew from the Commonwealth in 1961 for 30 years.

Thirty-five nations sent a total of 1,130 athletes and 228 officials to the Cardiff Games and 23 countries and dependencies won medals, including, for the first time, Singapore, Ghana, Kenya and the Isle of Man.

Nine sports were featured in the Cardiff Games - athletics, boxing, cycling, fencing, lawn bowls, rowing, swimming and diving, weightlifting and wrestling.

### **1962 British Empire & Commonwealth Games - Perth Australia**

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The VII Commonwealth Games are remembered for its "heat, dust and glory". The day before the Perth Games opened the temperature was an expected 80 degrees Fahrenheit, but the heat was measured at 105 degrees at the opening ceremony in the new Perry Lakes Stadium the following day and such extremes persisted throughout the Games' duration. In the previous 65 years, only 10 100 degree plus days had been recorded in Perth. Australian soldiers were pressed into action, ferrying water to competing athletes.

James Coote of the London Daily Telegraph describes:

" The VIIth Commonwealth Games have proved that it is possible for an area as basically devoid of sports interest as Perth to stage the second most important sports meeting in the World - and stage it successfully. Perth has shown that these Games will continue for years to come "

Thirty-five countries sent a total of 1,041 athletes and officials to Perth. Jersey was amongst the medal winners for the first time, whilst British Honduras, Dominica, Papua New Guinea and St Lucia all made their inaugural Games appearances. Aden also competed by special invitation. Sabah, Sarawak and Malaya competed for the last time before taking part in 1966 under the Malaysian flag.

Nine sports were featured at the Perth Games - athletics, boxing, cycling, fencing, lawn bowls, rowing, swimming and diving, weightlifting and wrestling.

For Perth, the staging of the Commonwealth Games provided it with a springboard for phenomenal development in sport and recreation, centered around the sports facilities that were built for the Games. These facilities have catered not only for elite sport but provided much needed opportunity for the development of organised recreational sport as well as a focus for Australia's first University degree Program in Physical Education.





## 1966 British Commonwealth Games - Kingston Jamaica

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With the British Empire formally ended, the Kingston Games became the VIII British Commonwealth Games. There was a worry amongst the larger nations that Jamaica's infrastructure would not enable a successful Games delivery - but this proved to be largely unfounded.

Controversially, also, the event programme was altered for the first time since 1950 with lawn bowls and rowing dropped and replaced with badminton and shooting instead.

Thirty-four nations (including Aden and Saudi Arabia) competed in the Kingston Games sending a total of 1,316 athletes and officials.

The nine sports featured in the Kingston Games were athletics, badminton, boxing, cycling, fencing, shooting, swimming and diving, weightlifting and wrestling.

## 1970 British Commonwealth Games - Edinburgh Scotland

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The IX Games from the 16th to the 25th of July, 1970 in Edinburgh will be remembered for a number of firsts. It was the first time that metric distances and electronic photo-finish technology were employed at the Games and also the first time that HM Queen Elizabeth II attended in her capacity as Head of the Commonwealth. Scots will further remember the Games for the Stewart brothers Ian (gold) and Peter (4th) in the 5000 metres and Lachie Stewart (no relation) who took gold in the 10000 metres.

Forty-two nations sent a total of nearly 1,750 athletes and officials to the first Edinburgh Games. New medal winning nations included Tanzania, Malawi and St Vincent.

Ten sports were featured in the Games - athletics, badminton, boxing, cycling, fencing, lawn bowls, shooting, swimming and diving, weightlifting and wrestling.

## 1974 British Commonwealth Games - Christchurch New Zealand

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Following the massacre of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics, the X Games at Christchurch was the first multi-sport event to place the safety of participants and spectators as its uppermost requirement. Security guards surrounded the athlete's village and there was an exceptionally high-profile police presence. Even so, Christchurch enchanted the watching world as a city of beautiful churches and gardens.

On the running track, Jamaica's Don Quarrie successfully defended both his 1970 100m and 200m gold medals. Quarrie was to go on to win the 1978 100m as well.

Only 22 countries succeeded in winning medals from the total haul of 374 medals on offer, but first time winners included Western Samoa, Lesotho and Swaziland.

Nine sports were featured in the Christchurch Games - athletics, badminton, boxing, cycling, lawn bowls, shooting, swimming and diving, weightlifting and wrestling.





## 1978 British Commonwealth Games - Edmonton Canada

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The XI Games was the first to bear the current day name of the Commonwealth Games. Whilst Edmonton had won the right to host the Games with an audacious vision presented six years earlier to the Commonwealth Games Federation General Assembly, the organisers had to walk a careful tightrope in the immediate run up to the Edmonton Games to ensure that there was no repeat of the African nations boycott of the 1976 Montreal Olympics caused by a New Zealand rugby tour of South Africa.

Forty-six countries sent a total of 1,405 athletes and 504 officials to the Edmonton Games. As host nation, Canada also topped the medal table for the first time.

Ten sports were featured at the Edmonton Games - athletics, badminton, boxing, cycling, gymnastics, lawn bowls, shooting, swimming and diving, weightlifting and wrestling.

## 1982 Commonwealth Games - Brisbane Canada

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The Brisbane Games are still hailed as one of the very best. Everything went so well from the moment Matilda, a 13-metre mechanical kangaroo, helped out with the opening ceremonies. Once again, a boycott was avoided and the sun shone throughout the duration of the XII Games.

Forty-six nations participated in the Brisbane Games with a new record total of 1,583 athletes and 571 officials. As hosts, Australia headed the medal table leading the way ahead of England, Canada, Scotland and New Zealand respectively.

The men's 200m gold was shared by England's Mike McFarlane and Scotland's Allan Wells, with judges unable to separate the pair at the winning post.

Nine sports featured at the Brisbane Games - athletics, badminton, boxing, cycling, lawn bowls, shooting, swimming and diving, weightlifting and wrestling.

## 1986 Commonwealth Games - Edinburgh Scotland

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After nearly two decades successfully averting political stay-aways and protests because of apartheid and sanction-busting sports tours to South Africa, the XIII Games, the second to be staged at Edinburgh, was to become known as "the Boycott Games". Sadly, despite there being so many fond memories of the Scottish hospitality offered in 1970, 32 Commonwealth nations decided that they could not attend, because of their opposition to apartheid in sports.

Twenty-six nations did attend the second Edinburgh Games and sent a total of 1,662 athletes and 461 officials.

Ten sports were featured at the second Edinburgh Games - athletics, aquatics, badminton, boxing, cycling, lawn bowls, rowing, shooting, weightlifting and wrestling.





## 1990 Commonwealth Games - Auckland New Zealand

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The XIV Commonwealth Games, the third to be hosted by New Zealand and Auckland's second, witnessed a fantastic opening ceremony comprising a magnificent and moving portrayal of the forces that led to the formation of New Zealand society and culture.

Thankfully, the perennially threatened boycott gave way to a new positive spirit of co-operation far more in keeping with the image of "The Friendly Games" and a new record of 54 nations participated in the second Auckland Games.

Twenty-nine of the competing nations succeeded in winning medals from a total of 639 medals available. Australia headed the medals table with New Zealand claiming fourth place behind England and Canada.

Ten sports featured in the second Auckland Games - athletics, aquatics, badminton, boxing, cycling, gymnastics, judo, lawn bowls, shooting and weightlifting.

## 1994 Commonwealth Games - Victoria Canada

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Following the successful Victoria delegation to the Commonwealth Games Federation in 1988, the XV Games were held in Canada for the fourth time. The end of apartheid in the early part of the decade also heralded the return of South Africa to the Commonwealth Games and ensured that the era of threatened boycotts was over. Both the opening and closing ceremonies were held at Victoria's Centennial Stadium, which had undergone a superb refit in honour of the Games.

Sixty-three nations sent a total of nearly 2,450 athletes and 892 officials as the Commonwealth Games burgeoned at Victoria. Once again, Australia headed the medals table whilst the hosts, Canada, pushed England into third place. Nigeria marked its arrival as a Commonwealth sporting force by picking up more gold medals than both New Zealand and India. Hong Kong said farewell to the Games with the territory becoming a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China in 1997.

Ten sports were featured at the Victoria Games - athletics, aquatics, badminton, boxing, cycling, gymnastics, lawn bowls, shooting, weightlifting and wrestling.

## 1998 Commonwealth Games - Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

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For the first time in its 68-year history, the Commonwealth Games were held in Asia. The XVI Games, held in Kuala Lumpur were also the first Games to feature team sports - an overwhelming success that added large numbers to both participants and TV audience numbers.

A new record of 70 countries sent a total of 5,250 athletes and officials to the Kuala Lumpur Games. The top five countries in the medal standing were Australia, England, Canada, Malaysia and South Africa. Nauru also achieved an impressive haul of three gold medals.

Fifteen sports were featured in the Kuala Lumpur Games - aquatics, athletics, badminton, boxing, cricket, cycling, gymnastics, hockey, netball, lawn bowls, rugby 7s, shooting, tenpin bowling, weightlifting and wrestling.





## 2002 Commonwealth Games - Manchester England

The city of Manchester is the capital of the North West and is the commercial educational and cultural focus for this vibrant region of England. As well as having a population of over 400,000 60 per cent of the population of Britain, more than 33 million people, live within a two hour drive of Manchester.

Manchester is an international destination for conferences and exhibitions with more than 200,000 bed spaces within one hour's drive of the city centre.

The XVII Commonwealth Games was a world-class event and the most significant multi-sport event to be held in Great Britain since the Olympics of 1948. It was the largest in the history of the Commonwealth Games with participating athletes from 72 nations competing in 14 individual sports and three team sports from 25 July - 4 August 2002.

The sports contested were:

Aquatics, Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Cycling, Gymnastics, Hockey, Judo, Lawn Bowls, Netball, Rugby 7s, Shooting, Squash, Table Tennis, Triathlon, Weightlifting and Wrestling.

## THE 2006 COMMONWEALTH GAMES IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

The Australian city of Melbourne successfully hosted the XVIII Commonwealth Games between 15<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> March 2006. Melbourne is the capital of the State of Victoria and the second largest city in Australia with a population of nearly 3,500,000 people and was the venue for the 1956 Olympic Games. The city is synonymous as a multicultural one, known for its arts, culture, parks, and gardens, restaurants and love of sport.

Whilst Bendigo, the venue for the 2004 Commonwealth Youth Games, the majority of sports venues were located along the Yarra River and within the city precinct. The Opening and Closing ceremonies as well as the athletics competition took place at the Melbourne Cricket ground (MCG), one of the world's largest and most outstanding sporting grounds. The Athlete's Village was located within three kilometres of the city centre. Karak, the red-tailed Black Cockatoo, was the official mascot for these Games.

For the first time in the history of the Games, the Queen's Baton visited every single Commonwealth Nation and Territory taking part in the Games, a journey of 180,000 kms (112,500 miles). The relay ended when the Governor of Victoria, and former Commonwealth Games medallist, John Landy, delivered the baton to Her Majesty The Queen at the Melbourne Cricket Ground during the Opening Ceremony. The Games was officially closed by the CGF Patron, HRH Prince Edward.

The sports on the programme were -: athletic, aquatics (diving, synchronised swimming and swimming), badminton, basketball, boxing, cycling, gymnastics, hockey, lawn bowls, netball, rugby 7's, shooting, squash, table tennis, triathlon, and weightlifting.







## 2010 Commonwealth Games - Delhi India

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The city of New Delhi, home to 13.8 million people, will host the Commonwealth Games in 2010. This will be the first time India has hosted the Games and only the second time the event has been held in Asia.

Delhi is the capital city of India and is rich in culture and history. It stands on the western end of the Gangetic Plain and is bordered by the states of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. There are two main districts of the city, Old Delhi the capital of Muslim India between the mid 17th and late 19th centuries with its historic sites, mosques and monuments and New Delhi, the imperial city created by the British Raj with its imposing government buildings and tree lined avenues.

The proposed dates for the Games are Saturday 23 October to Wednesday 3 November 2010 inclusive of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. Weather wise the city experiences an October mean temperature minimum 17.2 degrees centigrade and maximum 31.3 degrees centigrade with humidity ranging from 31 to 78% for the October and November months.

The Delhi Games Village is to be constructed as a low rise medium development on a 40 acre site in the heart of the capital with a possible capacity for 8,500 athletes and officials. Existing and new stadia will be used to house the following sports:

Aquatics, Athletics, Badminton, Bowls, Boxing, Cycling, EAD Events, Gymnastics, Hockey, Netball, Rugby 7s, Shooting, Squash, Table Tennis and Weightlifting.

