

Track and Field



*The Commonwealth
Games*



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The Commonwealth Games



The 'Friendly Games'

In an age when the big international sporting festivals have become a cockpit for much else as well, the Commonwealth Games remains refreshingly free from the unwanted spin-off of commerce and politics. Boycotts there have been put the spirit of the Games is positive, even amiable. It is a legacy which might well have appealed to the originator, Mr Astley Cooper, who in 1891 published proposals for a 'festival of contests of industry, athletics, rowing, and cricket, probably every four years, which would increase the goodwill and good understanding of the Empire.' It was to be 40 years before the first British Empire Games were staged in Hamilton, Canada where 11 nations contested six sports. Today the governing body is the British Commonwealth Games Federation to which more than 40 national associations are affiliated. Its rules provide that the games programme must include athletics, swimming, and seven other sports chosen from the following: archery, badminton, bowls, boxing, cycling, fencing, gymnastics, rowing/canoeing, shooting, weightlifting, and wrestling. England, Australia and Canada have consistently led the medal charts especially in the major sports, but nearly

30 nations have at one time or another produced a medallist, including such a relatively new arrival as Swaziland. The United Kingdom is represented by separate teams from all the home countries, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man.

In harmony with changes in the political scene, the title of the Games was adjusted in 1952 to 'British Empire and Commonwealth Games' and in 1970 to 'British Commonwealth Games.'

A less-stern arena than that of other major continental championships, the Commonwealth Games seem to embody all that is best in the Olympic movement on a more manageable and less unwieldy scale. It is held midway between Olympic celebrations, every four years.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES VENUES

- 1930 Hamilton, Canada
- 1934 London, England
- 1938 Sydney, Australia
- 1950 Auckland, New Zealand
- 1954 Vancouver, Canada
- 1958 Cardiff, Wales
- 1962 Perth, Australia
- 1966 Kingston, Jamaica
- 1970 Edinburgh, Scotland
- 1974 Christchurch, New Zealand
- 1978 Edmonton, Canada
- 1982 Brisbane, Australia

Commonwealth stars: Bayi (TAN) leads Hooker (AUS), Boit (KEN) and Walker (NZL), 1974