

A HISTORY OF RACEWALKING AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

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.

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".

Racewalking event was not included in the Commonwealth Games until 1966 in Kingston and the distance chosen was 20 miles, a suitable imperial standard! In 2006, racewalking celebrates its 40th year of participation as a Commonwealth sport. From an initial single event for men, it has blossomed into a 20 km event for women and 20 km and 50 km events for men.

This short history spans the entire history of the Commonwealth Games and focuses specifically on the racewalks from 1966 onwards.

All statistics and results are taken from the following website: <http://www.thecgf.com/games/results.asp>

Details of the various racewalking events have been taken from a variety of sources including the Race Walking Record, the Heel & Toe Magazine and my own extensive newspaper archives.

Tim Erickson
Melbourne

5 April 2006

1930 British Empire Games – HAMILTON

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.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Australia	3	4	1	8
Bermuda	-	-	-	-
Canada	20	15	19	54
England	25	23	13	61
Guyana	-	1	1	2
New Zealand	3	4	2	9
Newfoundland	-	-	-	-
Northern Ireland	-	1	-	1
Scotland	2	3	5	10
South Africa	6	4	7	17
Wales	-	2	1	3
Total Medals	59	57	49	165

It was an inauspicious start for Australian Athletics with no Golds at all. England topped the list with 9 Golds ahead of Canada with 6, South Africa with 3, New Zealand with 2 and Scotland with 1. The Athletics medals were spread as follows:

Mens 1 Mile Run	ENG	AUS	ENG
Mens 100 Yard Dash	CAN	ENG	CAN
Mens 120 Yard H	ENG	RSA	ENG
Mens 2 Mile Steeplechase	ENG	AUS	ENG
Mens 220 Yard Dash	ENG	CAN	RSA
Mens 3 Mile Run	ENG	AUS	ENG
Mens 440 Yard H	ENG	ENG	ENG
Mens 440 Yard Run/Quarter Mile	CAN	RSA	AUS
Mens 4x110 Yard Relay	CAN	ENG	RSA
Mens 4x440 Yard Relay/1 Mile Relay	ENG	CAN	RSA
Mens 6 Mile Run	NZL	ENG	ENG
Mens 880 Yard Run/Half-Mile	ENG	ENG	CAN
Mens Discus Throw	RSA	CAN	CAN
Mens Hammer Throw	ENG	NIR	CAN
Mens High Jump	RSA	GUY	CAN
Mens Javelin	NZL	CAN	RSA
Mens Long Jump	CAN	ENG	RSA
Mens Marathon	SCO	ENG	CAN
Mens Pole Vault	CAN	ENG	CAN
Mens Shot Put	RSA	ENG	CAN
Mens Triple Jump	CAN	ENG	CAN

1934 British Empire Games – LONDON

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, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Trinidad made their debut at the London Games. This was also to be the last time that Newfoundland participated independently 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.

Australia improved to win 8 golds but was well behind England and Canada which won the bulk of the medals.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Australia	8	4	2	14
Bermuda	-	-	-	-
Canada	17	25	9	51
England	29	20	24	73
Guyana	1	-	-	1
India	-	-	1	1
Jamaica	-	1	1	2
New Zealand	1	-	2	3
Newfoundland	-	-	-	-
Northern Ireland	-	1	2	3
Scotland	5	4	17	26
South Africa	7	10	5	22
Trinidad & Tobago	-	-	-	-
Wales	-	3	3	6
Zimbabwe	-	-	2	2
Total Medals	68	68	68	204

1938 British Empire Games – SYDNEY

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. It was keenly anticipated that Australia would match if not better England and Canada and this proved to be the case.

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. For the first time (but certainly not the last), Australia showed itself to be the dominant sporting nation in the Commonwealth with 66 medals.

To be fair to the other countries, the event was held out of season for the northern hemisphere nations and involved a long ocean voyage.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Australia	25	19	22	66
Bermuda	-	-	-	-
Canada	13	16	15	44
England	15	15	10	40
Fiji	-	-	-	-
Guyana	-	1	-	1
India	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	5	7	13	25
Northern Ireland	-	-	-	-
Scotland	-	2	3	5
South Africa	10	10	6	26
Sri Lanka	1	-	-	1
Trinidad & Tobago	-	-	-	-
Wales	2	1	-	3
Zimbabwe	-	-	2	2
Total Medals	71	71	71	213

1950 British Empire Games – AUCKLAND

World War II interrupted the staging of the British Empire Games scheduled for 1942 and 1946 but the enthusiasm from within the British Empire to continue what had 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. Australia was dominant once again and New Zealand, responding to its home ground advantage, had its best Games ever with a record 54 medals.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Australia	34	27	19	80
Canada	8	9	13	30
England	19	16	13	48
Fiji	1	2	2	5
Malaya	2	1	1	4
New Zealand	10	22	22	54
Nigeria	-	1	-	1
Scotland	5	3	2	10
South Africa	8	4	8	20
Sri Lanka	1	2	-	3
Wales	-	1	-	1
Zimbabwe	-	1	-	1
Total Medals	88	89	80	257

1954 British Empire & Commonwealth Games - VANCOUVER

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.

The sports on the programme were athletics, boxing, cycling, diving, lawn bowls, rowing, swimming, weightlifting and wrestling.

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.

England, Australia and Canada were the top 3 nations ahead of an emerging South Africa.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Australia	21	11	17	49
Bahamas	-	-	-	-
Barbados	-	1	-	1
Bermuda	-	-	-	-
Canada	9	21	14	44
England	23	24	20	67
Fiji	-	-	-	-
Ghana	-	-	-	-
Guyana	-	-	1	1
Hong Kong	-	1	-	1
India	-	-	-	-
Jamaica	1	-	-	1
Kenya	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	7	7	5	19
Nigeria	1	3	3	7
Northern Ireland	2	1	-	3
Pakistan	1	3	2	6
Scotland	6	2	5	13
South Africa	16	6	14	36
Trinidad & Tobago	2	2	-	4
Uganda	-	1	-	1
Wales	1	1	5	7
Zambia	-	-	1	1
Zimbabwe	3	6	3	12
Total Medals	93	90	90	273

1958 British Empire & Commonwealth Games – CARDIFF

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. Once again, England, Australia, South Africa and Canada took top honours.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Australia	27	22	17	66
Bahamas	1	1	-	2
Barbados	1	1	-	2
Canada	1	10	16	27
Dominica	-	-	-	-
England	29	22	29	80
Fiji	-	-	-	-
Ghana	-	-	1	1
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
Guyana	-	1	-	1
Hong Kong	-	-	-	-
India	2	1	-	3
Isle of Man	-	-	1	1
Jamaica	4	2	1	7
Jersey	-	-	-	-
Kenya	-	-	2	2
Malaya	-	2	-	2
Malta	-	-	-	-
Mauritius	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	4	6	9	19
Nigeria	-	1	1	2
Northern Ireland	1	1	3	5
Pakistan	3	5	2	10
Sabah	-	-	-	-
Sarawak	-	-	-	-
Scotland	5	5	3	13
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-
Singapore	2	-	-	2
South Africa	13	10	8	31
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
St. Vincent & The Grenadines	-	-	-	-

-				
Trinidad & Tobago	-	-	1	1
Uganda	-	1	-	1
Wales	1	3	7	11
Zimbabwe	-	-	3	3
Total Medals	94	94	104	292

1962 British Empire & Commonwealth Games – PERTH

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 commented:

"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.

As expected, Australia responded well to its home ground advantage and won a record 105 medals, well ahead of England with 78, New Zealand with 32 and Canada with 31.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Aden	-	-	-	-
Australia	38	36	31	105
Bahamas	-	1	-	1
Barbados	-	-	1	1
Belize	-	-	-	-
Canada	4	12	15	31
Dominica	-	-	-	-
England	29	22	27	78
Fiji	-	-	2	2
Ghana	3	5	1	9
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
Guyana	-	-	1	1
Hong Kong	-	-	-	-
Isle of Man	-	-	-	-
Jamaica	3	1	1	5
Jersey	-	-	1	1
Kenya	2	2	1	5
Malaya	-	-	1	1
Malta	-	-	-	-
Mauritius	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	10	12	10	32
Northern Ireland	-	-	1	1
Pakistan	8	1	-	9
Papua New Guinea	-	-	1	1
Sabah	-	-	-	-

Sarawak	-	-	-	-
Scotland	4	7	3	14
Singapore	2	-	-	2
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
St. Lucia	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	-	-	-	-
Trinidad & Tobago	-	-	2	2
Uganda	1	1	4	6
Wales	-	2	4	6
Zimbabwe	-	2	5	7
Total Medals	104	104	112	320

1966 British Empire & Commonwealth Games, KINGSTON

The Games

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.

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.

England narrowly won the mantle as the dominant nation, followed by Australia and Canada.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Aden	-	-	-	-
Antigua & Barbuda	-	-	-	-
Australia	23	28	22	73
Bahamas	-	1	-	1
Barbados	-	-	1	1
Belize	-	-	-	-
Bermuda	-	1	-	1
Canada	14	20	23	57
England	33	24	23	80
Fiji	-	-	-	-
Ghana	5	2	2	9
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
Guyana	-	1	-	1
India	3	4	3	10
Isle of Man	1	-	-	1
Jamaica	-	4	8	12
Jersey	-	-	-	-
Kenya	4	1	3	8
Malaysia	2	2	1	5
Mauritius	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	8	5	13	26
Nigeria	3	4	3	10
Northern Ireland	1	3	3	7
Pakistan	4	1	4	9
Papua New Guinea	-	1	-	1
Saudi Arabia	-	-	-	-
Scotland	1	4	4	9
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-
Singapore	-	-	-	-
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
St. Vincent & The Grenadines	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	-	-	-	-
Trinidad & Tobago	5	2	2	9
Uganda	-	-	3	3
Wales	3	2	2	7
Total Medals	110	110	120	340

The Australian 20 Mile Walk Trial

The Australian Trial for the inaugural 20 Mile walk at the 1966 British Empire Games was held in Campbelltown in Sydney on Saturday 7 May 1966. The Games themselves were scheduled for August 1966.

Only one spot had been made available in the Australian team and it was expected to be a closely contested trial with favourites being Bob Gardiner (Vic), Frank Clarke (NSW) and veteran Ted Allsopp (Vic) with Noel Norris (Qld) an outsider with a good show. Noel Freeman would have been the clear favourite but for his extended break from the sport. It was not until mid 1967 that he finally made a reappearance on the local walking scene.

As it turned out, Frank Clarke literally “walked all over” the other entrants and led from start to finish to book his place to Jamaica. His early pace was fast with the 2 mile mark passed in 15:05. The following pack included Victorians Gardiner, Allsopp and Summers. At 6 miles, he surged further ahead and the more experienced competitors felt certain that this furious pace could not last, and that they would catch him after 10 miles.

The half way mark of the race was passed in the fantastic time of 73:39 and Clarke showed no signs of fading. Gardiner was next in 76:36 with Allsopp third in 78:32.

At about 15 miles, Gardiner took a wrong turn and, by the time he had made his way back to the correct road, Allsopp had caught up to him and neither of them had much chance of winning. At the 17 mile mark, Allsopp decided to have a bit of a go and went after Clarke. However, it was much too late and Clarke coasted home in the world class time of 2:36:16 with Ted following him in 2:39:59 and Bob strolling the last few miles to finish in 2:46:17.

1. Frank Clarke	NSW	2:36:16
2. Ted Allsopp	VIC	2:39:59
3. Bob Gardiner	VIC	2:46:17
4. Peter Waddell	NSW	2:48:59
5. Harry Summers	VIC	2:50:05
6. John Croft	NSW	2:59:10
7. Ien Manktelow	NSW	3:03:24
8. Les Wade	NSW	3:04:40
9. Bob Steadman	VIC	3:14:22
Eddie Dawkins	NSW	DQ
Varel Newmark	VIC	DNF
Robin Whyte	NSW	DNF
Kevin Green	TAS	DNF
Logan Irwin	NSW	DNF
Clarrie Jack	VIC	DNF

Two weeks later, Clarke's name was amongst the 22 athletes named in the Australian Track and Field Team for Jamaica.

20 miles Walk – 1966 Commonwealth Games

For the first time ever, a walk was scheduled in these Games, the distance being 20 Miles. The following report by W. Batson was published in the British Race Walking Record of September 1966.

This race attracted an entry of 12 competitors from 7 countries. Rather disappointing but the quality was of a high standard. The 12 lined up in the National Stadium at 6AM and were off on the dot. Just over a lap on the track and out on the road for an out and home course. The first 3½ miles from the Arthur Wint Drive along Mountain View Road to Windward Road dropped some 300 feet to sea level. A group of 7 or 8 were together at the first mile with Hart (Wales) leading the field. Albert Johnson and his two Isle-of-Man lads were taking it easy in the rear. The only coloured man in the race, Valentie (Trinidad and Tobago) burst in to the lead for a short time but was obviously well out of his class and soon dropped back. At 4 miles, Hart was still leading with Clark (Australia), Wallwork, Middleton, Oakley (Canada), Read (New Zealand) and Don Thompson in close attendance.

The course was now down to sea level – Hart had started much too fast and at 5 miles he had dropped back behind the lead bunch. From this point on, he gradually lost ground and finished in ninth position.

It was now warming up. The sun was shining strongly and the first refreshment point at 6 miles was a very welcome sight and made good use of by the competitors. Wallwork, Oakley, Middleton, Thompson, Read and Clark were walking

extremely well and it was obvious the winner would be one of these men. Capella, a short striding Canadian, had tried to hold the main bunch but found the task too much and was now dropping back. At this point, Oakley made a burst to the front but found the pace too hot and soon dropped back.

At the turn, 10 miles, Wallwork was walking superbly and looked full of confidence. He had wisely covered his head and neck as a protection from the sun. Clark, a nice compact walker, hung on to him with Don in third place closely followed by Middleton and Read.



Ron Wallwork wins an 8 mile walk in Bradford, England in 1966 (from Race Walking Record, Oct 1966)

From this point, Don began to lose ground although walking in his usual dogged and determined manner. Middleton and Read were battling for second place. Soon after 15 miles Clark retired and it was learned he had been suffering from stomach trouble during the last week. Gawne (Isle-of-Man) also dropped out at about this point. With 2 miles to go and half way up the long climb to the Stadium, Wallwork led by over 40 yards from Middleton and Read. He entered the Stadium, a worthy winner of the first ever British Empire and Commonwealth Walking Championship.

The walking was of a high standard and it will be seen from the result that there were no disqualifications.

1. Ronald Wallwork	England	2:44:42.8
2. Raymond Middleton	England	2:45:19.0
3. Norman Read	New Zealand	2:46:28.2
4. Donald Thompson	England	2:46:43.0
5. Alexander "Alex" Oakley	Canada	2:54:25.8
6. Felix Cappella	Canada	2:57:21.2
7. Phillip Bannan	Isle of Man	3:06:11.2
8. Albert Johnson	Isle of Man	3:08:05.8
9. Roy Hart	Wales	3:15:02.6
10. Libert Valentine	Trinidad & Tobago	3:22:25.4
Frank Clark	Australia	dnf
Richard Gawne	Isle of Man	dnf

10 Miles Times Wallwork 80:33, Clark 80:35, Thompson 80:35, Oakley 80:43, Middleton 80:52, Read 81:04, Capella 82:00, Gawne 86:33, Hart 88:07, Bannan 88:15, Johnson 88:16, Valentine 89:52

Judges: Chief - W. C. Batson (England), G. A. Life (Canada), H. Gleman (Canada), A. H. Keay (Canada)
W. J. Harris (England), E. Kennel (England), C. Constant (England), V. B. Sharp (Australia)

1970 British Commonwealth Games, EDINBURGH

The Games

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.

Australia and England staged a titanic struggle at the top of the medal table with Australia eventually winning more golds but England winning more medals overall. Canada was not far behind in third while Scotland with 25 medals was a wonderful fourth overall.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Antigua & Barbuda	-	-	-	-
Australia	36	24	22	82
Bahamas	-	-	-	-
Barbados	-	1	-	1
Bermuda	-	-	-	-
Canada	18	24	24	66
Dominica	-	-	-	-
England	27	25	32	84
Fiji	-	-	1	1
Ghana	2	3	2	7
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
Grenada	-	-	-	-
Guernsey	-	-	-	-
Guyana	-	-	1	1
Hong Kong	1	-	-	1
India	5	3	4	12
Isle of Man	-	-	1	1
Jamaica	4	2	1	7
Jersey	-	-	-	-
Kenya	5	3	6	14
Malawi	-	-	1	1
Malaysia	1	1	1	3
Malta	-	-	-	-
Mauritius	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	2	6	6	14
Nigeria	2	-	-	2
Northern Ireland	3	1	5	9
Pakistan	4	3	2	9
Papua New Guinea	-	-	-	-
Scotland	6	8	11	25
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-
Singapore	-	1	1	2
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
St. Lucia	-	-	-	-
St. Vincent & The Grenadines	-	-	1	1
Swaziland	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	-	1	-	1
The Gambia	-	-	1	1

Trinidad & Tobago	-	4	3	7
Uganda	3	3	1	7
Wales	2	6	4	12
Zambia	-	2	2	4
Total Medals	121	121	133	375

The Australian 20 Mile Walk Trial

On August 30 1969, the Australian Commonwealth Games 20 mile trial was held at Albert Park. A large field of 33 starters faced the gun but all eyes were focused on Noel Freeman, Frank Clark and Bob Gardiner, Noel being expected to fight out the honours with Frank.

Noel, with a recent 2:33:54, started a slight favourite from Frank who had a 2:36 on the board. Bob had the fastest time in the field with 2:33:18 in 1968 but he was under-rated for this trial. The field was given an international flavour with the inclusion of Arthur Jones who competed for England in the Mexican Olympics over 20 km and who was now living in Sydney. In all, there were 6 Olympic athletes in the field. The course was over a 2 mile lap which meant 30 sharp “U” turns had to be negotiated during the race.

In what was later described as one of the greatest races ever held in Australia (outside the 1956 Olympics), Bob, Noel and Frank powered through the first 10 miles locked together in 76:43 with Graeme Nicholls a further 1 minute back in fourth place.

At the 12 mile mark, the group started to crack with first Frank and then Noel dropping off as Bob put the hammer down and increased his tempo. From then on, it was all over as Bob stormed home with a second 10 mile split of 74:53. His final time of 2:31:36.6 was only 3.6 seconds outside the World Track Record held by Russian walker Vedjakov. Noel took second in 2:34:17, just outside his own Empire Track Record. Frank Clarke was third in a distant 2:39:24.

1. Bob Gardiner	VIC	2:31:36.6
2. Noel Freeman	VIC	2:34:19
3. Frank Clarke	NSW	2:39:24
4. Graeme Nicholls	VIC	2:45:18
5. Justin Coxhead	VIC	2:47:35
6. Robin Whyte	NSW	2:49:46
7. Ted Allsopp	VIC	2:52:01
8. Peter Waddell	NSW	2:57:09
9. Norm Marr	VIC	2:57:52
10. Peter Whitham	SA	2:59:52
11. Eddie Dawkins	NSW	3:19:02
Robin Wood	VIC	DNF
Keith Heness	NSW	DNF
Frank Overton	NSW	DNF
Les Wade	NSW	DNF

So on this occasion, Bob and Noel gained selection for the Commonwealth Games and Frank Clark stayed at home.

20 miles Walk – 1970 Commonwealth Games

The Commonwealth Games were not to be held until July 1970 so the Australians had nearly 12 months to wait. Amongst a 1970 local Victorian winter season of superb walking, perhaps the best result of the lot was recorded on June 20 1970 when, in a 20 mile trial race at Albert Park, Noel, with 5 mile splits of 37:04. 36:28, 36:28 and 38:02, clocked 2:28:02 , a time more than 3 minutes under the existing track world record and beating Bob’s 1969 world best time of 2:31:36. Bob was blown away and finished a long way back in 2:38:23

These times were so far ahead of the rest of the Commonwealth walkers that they were unbackable favourites. As expected, the Commonwealth Games 20 mile event was a fait accompli. In cool and windy conditions, the two Victorians were in a class of their own, easily outwalking the opposition. Noel won in 2:33:33 and Bob was second in 2:35:55. Local Scottish walker Bill Sutherland was third in 2:37:24. The 1966 winner, Ron Walwork, finished fifth..

It was dull, cold and somewhat blustery when the field of 21 set out on their long haul from Meadowbank Stadium at 10:30AM on the Saturday morning. The route led through Portobello and Joppa to Seton level crossing and back to the stadium.

There was a large turnout of spectators lining the route and they cheered and clapped all the competitors impartially with always an extra cheer for the Scot Sutherland who moved up seventh place to third, a place he then held unchallenged after the turn.

The leader, Wallwork, led for the first five miles, but from there to half-way, the two Australian really put on the pressure. Freeman forged ahead of his compatriot at the half way turn and was never afterwards seriously challenged. He increased his lead over the field to fully 500 yards and, when he entered the stadium, to complete his lap of the track, he was even further ahead.

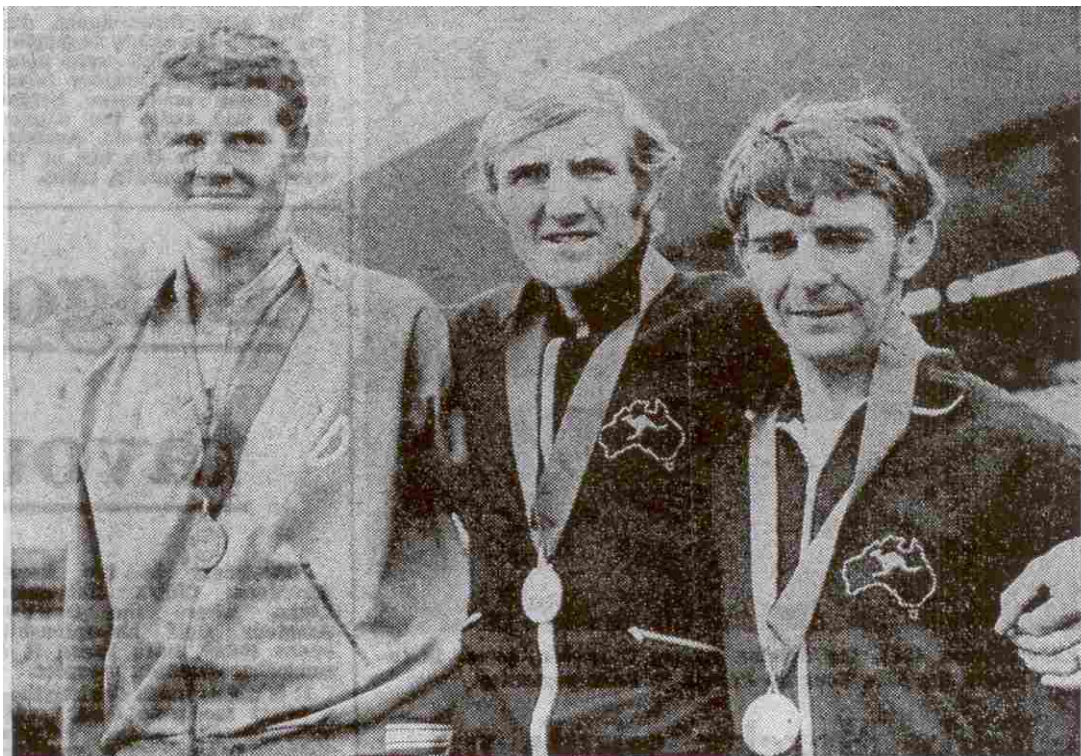
One of the tailenders, the young slightly-built B.K.S. Manian (Singapore) apparently felt the cold and started out wearing a maroon-coloured balaclava which he did not discard until the 15 mile mark.

There was one little mystery. Somewhere on the outward journey, a “competitor” was seen bowling along wearing No. 100. There was no official competitor wearing that particular number in the field. But he was not there for long; after a mile or two, he disappeared just as quietly and mysteriously as he had appeared.

The red haired Sutherland was jubilant after the race over his Bronze. “When I came into the stadium I just couldn't believe it was all happening. The crowd were yelling for me and I knew I was going to get a medal.” He thought the crowds all along the route “fantastic” and the the organisation “really wonderful”.

The 31 year old winner, Freeman, was also surprised that there were so many spectators along the route and had, like Sutherland, nothing but praise for the organisation of the race. Of his win he said: “It was the easiest win of my life”.

The walkers were escorted meticulously throughout by police cars and motorcyclists, well aided by a host of Games officials.



The medallists – Sutherland, Freeman and Gardiner



The start of the walk. Bob is 6th from the left and Noel is 6th from the right. 21 walkers from 11 British Empire colonies or countries contested what was truly an international event. All but two finished the event.

1.	Noel Freeman	Australia	2:33:33
2.	Robert Gardiner	Australia	2:35:55
3.	Bill Sutherland	Scotland	2:37:24
4.	Bob Dobson	England	2:39:55
5.	Ronald Wallwork	England	2:40:10
6.	Len Duquemin	Guernsey	2:42:48
7.	Shaun Lightman	England	2:44:50
8.	Felix Cappella	Canada	2:45:16
9.	Alex Oakley	Canada	2:48:07
10.	John Moullin	Guernsey	2:48:07
11.	Richard "Dave" Rosser	Wales	2:49:41
12.	Karl-Heinz Merschenz	Canada	2:50:32
13.	John "Allan" Callow	Isle of Man	2:51:21
14.	David Smyth	Northern Ireland	2:53:49
15.	John Cannell	Isle of Man	2:56:19
16.	David Dorey	Guernsey	3:03:41
17.	Nolan Simmons	Trinidad & Tobago	3:08:23
18.	Bala Krishna Subramanian	Singapore	3:13:22
19.	Francis Thomas	Trinidad & Tobago	3:14:58
	Ian Hodgkinson	Isle of Man	dnf
	Bachan Singh	India	dq

1974 British Commonwealth Games, CHRISTCHURCH

The Games

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 athletes' 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.

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

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. Again, nothing separated Australia and England with Canada third as usual.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Australia	29	28	25	82
Barbados	-	-	-	-
Bermuda	-	-	-	-
Botswana	-	-	-	-
Canada	25	19	18	62
Cook Islands	-	-	-	-
England	28	31	21	80
Fiji	-	-	-	-
Ghana	1	3	5	9
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
Grenada	-	-	-	-
Guernsey	-	-	-	-
Hong Kong	-	-	-	-
India	4	8	3	15
Isle of Man	-	-	-	-
Jamaica	2	1	-	3
Jersey	-	-	-	-
Kenya	7	2	9	18
Lesotho	-	-	-	-
Malawi	-	-	-	-
Malaysia	1	-	3	4
Mauritius	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	9	8	18	35
Nigeria	3	3	4	10
Northern Ireland	3	1	2	6
Papua New Guinea	-	-	-	-
Samoa	-	1	1	2
Scotland	3	5	11	19
Singapore	-	-	1	1
St. Vincent & The Grenadines	1	-	-	1
Swaziland	-	-	1	1
Tanzania	1	-	1	2
The Gambia	-	-	-	-
Tonga	-	-	-	-
Trinidad & Tobago	-	1	1	2
Uganda	2	4	3	9
Wales	1	5	4	10
Zambia	1	1	1	3
Total Medals	121	121	132	374

The Australian 20 Mile Walk Trial

The Australian trial was held in Canberra on September 17th 1973 and, with the retirements of Gardiner, Freeman, Allsopp and Clarke, it was left to a new generation of walkers to make their marks. Former Englishmen Peter Fullager and Ian Hodgkinson were favourites with the Victorian hopes resting on Graeme Nicholls and Ross Haywood.

The result turned out as expected with Fullager first, Hodgkinson second and Haywood third. Alas, further details of this event are currently unavailable to me.

20 miles Walk – 1974 Commonwealth Games



John Warhurst and Roger Mills lead World 20 km record holder Bernd Kannenbeg in the 1973 Britain vs West Germany 20 km at Warley in England (photo from the July 1974 Race Walking Record)

The following race report by Graham Seaton is taken from the March 1974 edition of the 'Race Walking Record'.

As expected, John Warhurst and Roy Thorpe dominated the Commonwealth Games 20 Miles Road Walk. Only Ian Hodgkinson of Australia had any contact with the top Englishmen but even he dropped to finish fifth.

Warhurst won in 2:35:23 with Thorpe almost 4 minutes behind in second place. These two remained together until fourteen miles had been completed and then Warhurst made his break while the pace was very slow.

Also finishing as expected was Peter Fullager, as he took the bronze medal in 2:42:06. The only surprises came with the withdrawal of Carl Lawton and the fourth placing of the very fast finishing Graham Young.

Warhurst and Thorpe led them from the start, covering the first mile in 7:26 with Hodgkinson close behind. By three miles, Hodgkinson was still with the Englishmen but dropped soon after for a dry wretch, losing 50 metres in the process.

By the five mile mark, Hodgkinson had caught the Englishmen and the three went through in 38:21. Next in order were Moullin, Lawton, Callow and Young.

Warhurst and Thorpe continued to apply the pressure and broke Hodgkinson in the eighth mile. Lawton and Young were coming through the field and by the 10 mile mark, they had improved to seventh and eighth places respectively.

The two Sheffield walkers held a 30 seconds lead over Hodgkinson as they turned at ten miles. Fullager, Stevenson and Haywood remained together with Lawton fifty seconds behind. Lawton had walked a very steady first ten miles, having cut out every mile to within ten seconds of eight minutes – he passed ten miles in 79:21.

Fullager broke away from Stevenson and Haywood soon after the eleven mile mark and set off in quest of his fellow countrymen and also the bronze medals.

By thirteen miles, Warhurst and Thorpe were still together and Fullager was within ten seconds of having caught Hodgkinson.

Soon after came the break. After cutting out the thirteenth mile in 8:09 and the fourteenth in 8:21, Warhurst made his break. Thorpe tried desperately to stay with his clubmate but Warhurst was too strong.

At the fifteen mile mark, Warhurst held a 23 seconds advantage. Fullager had caught and passed Hodgkinson and from here, the medal race became a procession.

The only interest came with the withdrawal of Lawton soon after 15 miles. At this stage, his mile rate had ropped from steady eights and it was obvious that he was having a bad race at an unfortunate time.

By sixteen miles, Warhurst had a lead of one minute on his clubmate who had a three minute advantage over their former countryman Fullager.

Warhurst covered the last four miles in 31:58 to finish first, over 3½ minutes in front of Thorpe. Fullager was a further three minutes behind and the very fast finishing Young only 47 seconds further back. Had the race been a few miles longer, Young may well have been amongst the medals. As it was, he was very pleased with his performance in recording a personal best by five minutes. He was the only walker in the field to walk his fastest 20 miles.

Ian Hodgkinson appeared to pay the penalty for starting too fast. This was especially obvious in the second half when, while walking into a stiff easterly, he finished the second 10 miles in 87:24 compared with a first ten miles of 77:30. Still, he showed a lot of guts in the early stages and also at 15 miles when he collapsed with cramps.

New Zealand had reasonable success with a sixth place to Les Stevenson. This compensated somewhat for the early disqualification of Kevin Taylor, the only disqualification of the race.

All walkers looked very safe throughout except for Thorpe who received close attention from the judges as he tried to stay with Warhurst.

The course was very fast, as became evident in the Marathon times and conditions were conducive to fast times. Such times never eventuated, however, as Warhurst wasn't pushed in the final stages.

All in all, it was a very successful race. The organisation for the most part was good, although adequate crowd and traffic control was sometimes lacking for the later finishers.

1. John Warhurst	England	2:35:23.0
2. Roy Thorpe	England	2:39:02.2
3. Peter Fullager	Australia	2:42:08.2
4. Graham Young	Isle of Man	2:42:55.2

5. Ian Hodgkinson	Australia	2:44:55.4
6. Les Stevenson	New Zealand	2:46:56.2
7. Ross Haywood	Australia	2:50:56.0
8. John "Allan" Callow	Isle of Man	2:53:12.2
9. Len Duquemin	Guernsey	2:53:37.4
10. John Moullin	Guernsey	2:57:27.2
11. Robin Waterman	Guernsey	3:00:14.2
12. Derek Harrison	Isle of Man	3:00:32.4
Carl Lawton	England	dnf
Elisha Kasuku	Kenya	dnf
Kevin Taylor	New Zealand	dq

The following report was lodged by spectator Bob Gardiner in the 'Heel & Toe' of March 1974

Tuesday 29/01/1974

It has been a mild day and today's athletics are finishing, but on the line are the starters for the 20 mile walk. A starting time of 5pm has been decided on, in case of hot weather, but already a cool breeze is blowing and will be on the walkers backs on the outward leg.

The gun goes off and they begin a circuit of the chevron track before starting on the flat course, following the Avon river as it winds through the lovely Christchurch suburbs. Taylor, of New Zealand, nursing a leg injury, looks ragged and doesn't get far before the judges pull him off. The English duo of John Warhurst (18th in the Munich 50 km) and Roy Thorpe take the initiative early and by 5 miles have four seconds on Ian Hodgkinson, who looks determined to stick with them. Peter Fullager and Ross Haywood are sitting in nicely 200 yds back along with Les Stevenson of New Zealand. Skirting the city and out through the parklands they finally leave the river behind, and with little change in position, the leaders take the turn in 77:05.

Although Warhurst and Thorpe have a handy lead, it is still anybody's race. The wind behind and the flat course had enabled a steady pace to be held by all but the Kenyan who had succumbed to the coolish weather. Now turning back into the breeze and a drop in temperature brings pressure onto the athletes and Warhurst surges ahead, looking stylish and powerful. Thorpe, looking behind, seems to be struggling and, by the 15 mile mark, has lost 20 seconds on his countryman who has gone through in 1:55:02. Peter Fullager, 3 minutes in arrears, has moved into third spot, while Ross has been sick and Ian Hodgkinson has been on hands and knees with stomach cramps; both have lost ground to Stevenson (NZ) and Young (Isle of Man), who is really coming home fast.

Back in the stadium, a crowd of enthusiasts have been waiting patiently all this time and Johnnie Warhurst, coming in for a well deserved win in 2:35:25, gets a rousing cheer. Thorpe, second in 2:39:02 and for Peter Fullager, a bronze medal in 2:42:08. Ian Hodgkinson took fifth place in 2:44:55 and Ross Haywood seventh in 2:50:56. There were 12 finishers.

All three Australians finished close to exhaustion, and although not perhaps doing as well as they had hoped, each showed great spirit and gained a great deal of confidence and experience.

1978 Commonwealth Games, EDMONTON

The Games

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. Canada had spent big money in building up to the Montreal Olympic Games in 1976 and had carried through with their development programs to 1978. The results showed and they easily accounted for Australia and England who had their customary close medal contest further back in the field.

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

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Antigua & Barbuda	-	-	-	-
Australia	24	33	27	84
Bahamas	-	1	-	1
Bangladesh	-	-	-	-
Barbados	-	-	-	-
Belize	-	-	-	-
Bermuda	-	-	-	-
Canada	45	31	33	109
Cayman Islands	-	-	-	-
Cook Islands	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	-	-	-	-
England	27	27	33	87
Fiji	-	-	-	-
Ghana	1	1	1	3
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
Grenada	-	-	-	-
Guernsey	-	-	-	-
Guyana	1	1	1	3
Hong Kong	2	-	-	2
India	5	5	5	15
Isle of Man	-	-	1	1
Jamaica	2	2	3	7
Jersey	-	-	-	-
Kenya	7	6	5	18
Lesotho	-	-	-	-
Malawi	-	-	-	-
Malaysia	1	2	1	4
Mauritius	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	5	6	9	20
Northern Ireland	2	1	2	5
Papua New Guinea	-	1	-	1
Samoa	-	-	3	3
Scotland	3	6	5	14
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-
Singapore	-	-	-	-
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
St. Kitts	-	-	-	-
St. Lucia	-	-	-	-
St. Vincent & The Grenadines	-	-	-	-

Swaziland	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	1	1	-	2
The Gambia	-	-	-	-
Trinidad & Tobago	-	2	2	4
Turks & Caicos Islands	-	-	-	-
Wales	2	1	5	8
Zambia	-	2	2	4
Zimbabwe	-	-	-	-
Total Medals	128	129	138	395

The Australian 30 Km Walk Trial

Held on Sunday 14 May 1978 at Fishermans Bend in Melbourne, the trial was over the new distance of 30 km. The Commonwealth Games organising committee had decided after 1974 that the the day of the 20 Mile was over. A new standard was needed and the 30 km distance was chosen.

In times that guaranteed their selection for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games, Australia's two top walkers, Willi Sawall and Tim Erickson, took the quinella. They went shoulder to shoulder for 21 km in almost perfect laps of 14:00 per 3 km (20 km split approximately 93:30) and it was only in the last 9 km that Wili established a winning break after Tim was forced to stop for an unscheduled pit-stop. Willi's finishing time of 2:19:25 was a 2 minute PB and Tim, with 2:21:22, beat Willi's previous best but had to settle for second.

David Smith was with the two leaders at 15 km but then retired, leaving the race for third place wide open with Peter Fullager (SA) and Peter McCullagh (ACT) battling it out. The South Australian eventually proved the stronger and took third with 2:29:18 as against McCullagh's time of 2:31:26.

1. Willi Sawall	VIC	2:19:25
2. Tim Erickson	VIC	2:21:22
3. Peter Fullager	SA	2:29:18
4. Peter McCullagh	ACT	2:31:26
5. Peter Vysma	VIC	2:32:28
6. Robin Whyte	ACT	2:32:56
7. Bruce Cook	VIC	2:35:42
8. Bill Dyer	VIC	2:37:55
9. Stuart Cooper	VIC	2:38:28
10. John Sheard	VIC	2:39:00
11. Mark Wall	VIC	2:45:21
12. Jim Bannon	VIC	2:46:48
13. Bill Dillon	VIC	3:00:07
14. Clarrie Jack	VIC	DNF
Ian Jack	VIC	DNF
Terry O'Neill	VIC	DNF
David Smith	VIC	DNF
Joe Anderson	VIC	DNF

30 Km Walk – 1978 Commonwealth Games

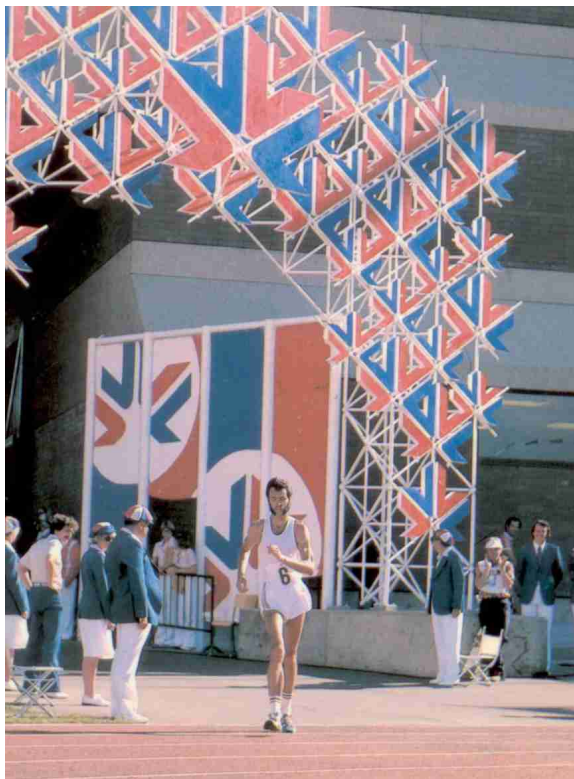
Willi Sawall and Tim Erickson of Australia clearly led the Commonwealth walk rankings coming into the 1978 Commonwealth Games and the pair were duly ranked 1 and 6 in the Australian Commonwealth Games team. All of a sudden, walking was in the public spotlight and Sawall was a household name.

Sawall raced throughout the 1978 winter and recorded win after win and PB after PB and he looked an unbackable favourite for the big race. But his intense racing schedule had taken a heavy toll on his body and he left Australia with a torn thigh muscle. This combined with the heavy pressure of being ranked Number 1 Australian, placed him in an impossible situation. The oldest member of the Australian Track and Field team, he had been rated a certain gold medallist by the

national selectors and it was worrying him.

The 30 km race was held on the hottest day of the entire Games and the walk was scheduled to start at 3PM. The walkers asked for the time to be changed but to no avail.

In the blazing sunshine, the race was held on a flat open course around Edmonton. Sawall started in his usual way – fast from the gun! He surged to the front, followed by Erickson. At the 5 km mark, he led by 21 seconds and was still well clear at 10 km. However, soon after this, the leading gap started to shrink. Ollie Flynn, a gangling English insurance broker from Essex, had started more conservatively but now made his charge, passing Sawall at the 17 km mark to assume the lead. By 20 km, Sawall was suffering badly with thigh soreness in both legs and Flynn was fading in the heat. It was a battle of survival by the two leaders with Flynn eventually crossing the finish line 130m ahead of Sawall before collapsing into the pole vault pits dehydrated and feeling lucky to have survived the conditions.

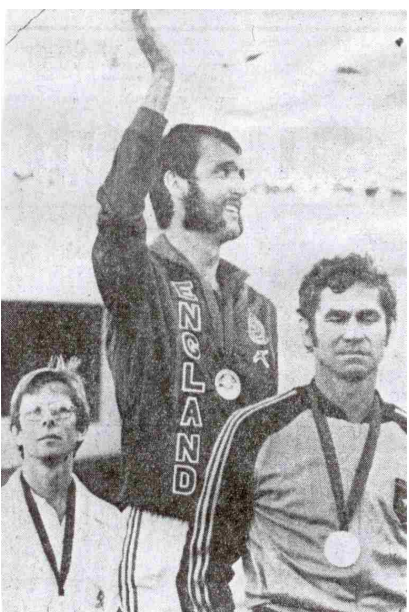


Ollie Flynn enters the stadium a clear winner

Erickson's race was over early. After sitting in second place in the early stages, he started to fade, actually dropping to sixth place at the 20 km mark before coming good and forcing his way back to third, finishing 4 minutes behind the winner.

Australian and English walkers filled the first 5 places.

The quietly spoken 36 year old Sawall took his defeat badly because of the huge pressure placed on him by media. He commented after the race "I've been worried about it ever since the day the team was announced in June. I knew it would be very hard to live up to the Number One spot."



The medal ceremony – Erickson, Flynn and Sawall

The same pressure was not on Erickson who was happy with his bronze medal but he too had trouble. “My problem was different to the other two. I wasn't dehydrated and I wasn't injured. I just couldn't get my style co-ordinated and I couldn't handle the early pace”, he said.

1.	Oliver Flynn	England	2:22:03.70
2.	Willi Sawall	Australia	2:22:58.58
3.	Tim Erickson	Australia	2:26:33.97
4.	Brian Adams	England	2:29:42
5.	Amos Seddon	England	2:29:58
6.	Helmut Boeck	Canada	2:31:21
7.	Graham Seatter	New Zealand	2:31:49
8.	Graham Young	Isle of Man	2:33:15
9.	Marcel Jobin	Canada	2:35:02
10.	Elisha Kasuku	Kenya	2:43:26
11.	Rashid Chege	Kenya	2:45:13
12.	Vellasamy Subramaniam	Malaysia	2:56:08
	Michael Parker	New Zealand	dnf
	David Munyao	Kenya	dnf
	John "Allan" Callow	Isle of Man	dnf
	Robert Lambie	Isle of Man	dnf

1982 Commonwealth Games, BRISBANE

The Games

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. Australia and England were locked in the tightest medal tussle ever seen at any Games with nothing separating them day after day.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Australia	39	39	29	107
Bahamas	2	2	2	6
Barbados	-	-	-	-
Bermuda	-	-	1	1
Botswana	-	-	-	-
Canada	26	23	33	82
Cayman Islands	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	-	-	-	-
England	38	38	32	108
Falkland Islands	-	-	-	-
Fiji	1	-	-	1
Ghana	-	-	-	-
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
Grenada	-	-	-	-
Guernsey	-	1	1	2
Guyana	-	-	-	-
Hong Kong	1	-	-	1
India	5	8	3	16
Isle of Man	-	-	-	-
Jamaica	2	1	1	4
Jersey	-	-	-	-
Kenya	4	2	4	10
Malawi	-	-	-	-
Malaysia	1	-	1	2
Malta	-	-	-	-
Mauritius	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	5	8	13	26
Nigeria	5	-	8	13
Northern Ireland	-	3	3	6
Papua New Guinea	-	-	-	-
Samoa	-	-	-	-
Scotland	8	6	12	26
Singapore	-	-	1	1
Solomon Islands	-	-	-	-
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
St. Helena	-	-	-	-
Swaziland	-	-	1	1
Tanzania	1	2	2	5
The Gambia	-	-	-	-

Tonga	-	-	-	-
Trinidad & Tobago	-	-	-	-
Uganda	-	3	-	3
Vanuatu	-	-	-	-
Wales	4	4	1	9
Zambia	-	1	5	6
Zimbabwe	1	-	-	1
Total Medals	143	141	153	437

The Australian 30 Km Walk Trial

Sawall, now 40 years old but still keen to improve on his silver medal in Edmonton, took extended long service leave and committed himself fully to walking. As the 1982 winter season started, he moved up a notch, with winning performances that included the Victorian 15 km (1:04:55), VAWC 10 km handicap (40:53), Victorian 30 km (2:08:00.4), VAWC 10 km (40:04), Canberra 20 miles (2:18:18), Victorian 20 km (1:21:36), Australian 20 km in Brisbane (1:29:02), VAWC 10 km (40:44) and AFRWC 10 km in Richmond, NSW (40:04),

Erickson, also keen on a second Commonwealth berth, was also in good form with 2nd in the Victorian 30 km in 2:19:40, 3rd in the Victorian 20 km (1:29:15) and 1st in a VRWC 35 km in 2:47:22 (with a 30 km split of 2:17:22). But disaster struck when he was forced to miss the Commonwealth Games trial with the flu.

In his absence, the trial was still an interesting affair. David Smith, better known for his 20 km walking, raced alongside Sawall until disqualified at the half way mark. This left Sawall on his own well out in front and he powered home to win in 2:08:28. Coming off 4th place in the 1982 Victorian 30 km title in 2:24:04, 20 year old Andrew Jachno surprised his senior opponents with a solid performance to finish 2nd in 2:19:55 while 19 year old Michael Harvey finished 3rd in 2:22:04. The first three were all under the Commonwealth Games qualifying standard of 2:25:00.

Harvey favoured his chances of selection, having taken third and broken the qualifying standard in the trial but the selectors chose Erickson in preference alongside Andrew Jachno and Sawall. Jachno, a Physical Education student at Footscray Tech, said that the selection was “a dream come true. I never expected it to come so quickly.”

1. Willi Sawall	VIC	2:08:28
2. Andrew Jachno	VIC	2:17:52
3. Michael Harvey	VIC	2:22:04
4. Keith Knox	NSW	2:25:30
5. Bill Dyer	VIC	2:26:00

30 Km Walk – 1982 Commonwealth Games

With his 2 outstanding 30 km times and his similar split in the Canberra 20 miles, Sawall had the 3 top ranking times in the Commonwealth and he was once again an unbackable favourite. But as in 1978, it was a case of a great season followed by a disappointing finale. Willi was once again nursing injuries in the final weeks leading up to the Brisbane race and he entered the Games a different walker.

The 30 km event was held on the Wynnum-Manly foreshore and started in cool morning conditions with a slight breeze fanning the 19 competitors but by the finish it was quite humid and steamy. Thousands of spectators lined the 2.5 km course and cheered the competitors on throughout the event.

Steve Barry, a plasterer from Cardiff in Wales, had been unlucky to miss selection for England in the 1980 Olympics but had shown great form since then over the shorter distances and was one of the minor medal chances behind favourite Sawall. Willi headed off hard as usual with everyone else chasing. It was Barry who bridged the gap at the 7.5 km mark and he was never headed after that, finishing in 2:10:16 to break the Games record by 12 minutes. His comment after the race “Everything hurts now but I’m elated – I’ll get plastered tonight.”

Barry, whose father David was nine times Wales walk champion, crossed the finish line to the cheers of a large Welsh contingent, not only from the Games Village, but also including local residents who strung flags and signs out their windows.

The minor medals were taken by Canada with veteran Marcel Jobin taking silver in 2:12:16 and the young Guillaume Leblanc taking bronze in 2:14:56. Sawall struggled home in fourth with 2:14:56, knowing that any of his three 2:08 times would have secured him the gold. He commented “Once I moved over a certain pace, I started to limp so it was all I could do to push through the pain and finish the race.”



Steve Barry shadows Willi Sawall early in the race

A second young Canadian, Francois Lapointe, was fifth in 2:17:02 while Erickson struggled to finish 6th in 2:19:45, still not fully recovered from the effects of his bout of illness. Jackno, the third Australian, finished a creditable 9th in 2:24:15 after being forced to take a cordisone injection for a troublesome leg injury.

Barry said he had found the course quite good but had been troubled by the muggy conditions late in the race. He was pleased with his time as he had been hoping to clock around 2 hours 12 mins – some 3 minutes inside his previous best.

1. Steven Barry	Wales	2:10:16
2. Marcel Jobin	Canada	2:12:24
3. Guillaume Leblanc	Canada	2:14:56
4. Willi Sawall	Australia	2:15:23
5. Francois Lapointe	Canada	2:17:02
6. Timothy Erickson	Australia	2:19:45
7. Roger Mills	England	2:21:54
8. Murray Lambden	Isle of Man	2:22:18
9. Andrew Jackno	Australia	2:24:15
10. Robert Elliott	Guernsey	2:24:28
11. Michael Parker	New Zealand	2:26:07
12. Graham Young	Isle of Man	2:27:04
13. Paul Blagg	England	2:30:42
14. Mutai Kiplangat	Kenya	2:34:51
15. Kevin Taylor	New Zealand	2:37:37
16. Elisha Kasuku	Kenya	2:39:32
17. John Mutinda	Kenya	2:50:54
Chand Ram	India	dnf
Robert Lambie	Isle of Man	dq



Steve Barry celebrates as he crossed the finish line

1986 Commonwealth Games, EDINBURGH

The Games

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.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Australia	40	46	35	121
Bermuda	-	-	-	-
Botswana	-	-	1	1
Canada	51	34	31	116
Cayman Islands	-	-	-	-
Cook Islands	-	-	-	-
England	52	43	49	144
Falkland Islands	-	-	-	-
Fiji	-	-	-	-
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
Guernsey	-	2	-	2
Hong Kong	-	-	3	3
Isle of Man	1	-	-	1
Jersey	-	-	1	1
Lesotho	-	-	-	-
Malawi	-	-	2	2
Maldives	-	-	-	-
Malta	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	8	16	14	38
Norfolk Island	-	-	-	-
Northern Ireland	2	4	9	15
Samoa	-	-	-	-
Scotland	3	12	18	33
Singapore	-	-	1	1
Swaziland	-	1	-	1
Vanuatu	-	-	-	-
Wales	6	5	12	23
Total Medals	163	163	176	502

The Australian 30 Km Walk Trial

The Australian 1986 Commonwealth Games 30 km trial is remembered as one of the finest events ever contested in Australia. The venue was a fast flat course around the AIS environs in Canberra and the date was 10 May.

Dave Smith had walked a Commonwealth best time of 2:06:11 in December in Melbourne and had won the National 5000m walk in March in a Commonwealth record of 18:52.87. He was a clear favourite for the trial and made no mistakes, winning in convincing style in 2:05:59, another Commonwealth best and a time that put him well ahead of any other Commonwealth walkers. Simon Baker, his AIS training partner, had chased him to second place in the Australian 5000m title in 19:46 and was second once again in the trial. His time of 2:09:20 was also a big PB and clearly placed him in medal contention.

Willi Sawall and Andrew Jachno, two of the three Australian reps in the 1982 Games, staged a great battle for the third

Games spot with Willi surging away down the inclines and Andrew chasing him down on the flats. Willi, at 44 years of age, secured his third Games berth with a time of 2:12:34 while Andrew missed out with his time of 2:15:05. Michael Harvey was fifth in a PB time of 2:18:34. The first 5 walkers all broke the Commonwealth Games qualifying standard of 2:20:00. What a standard! Willi's berth meant that he was now the only Australian walker to have competed in 5 Olympic and Commonwealth Games.

1. David Smith	VIC	2:05:59
2. Simon Baker	VIC	2:09:20
3. Willi Sawall	VIC	2:12:34
4. Andrew Jachno	VIC	2:15:05
5. Michael Harvey	VIC	2:18:34
6. Stephen Hausfeld	NSW	2:21:27
7. C. Barnett	NSW	2:23:24
8. D Thomson	ACT	2:30:15
9. Robert McFadden	SA	2:31:14
10. Mark Donahoo	VIC	2:35:11
11. Bruce Dudon	VIC	2:35:48
12. Mark Wall	VIC	2:36:19
13. Duncan Knox	VIC	2:36:47
14. John Smith	NSW	2:37:31
15. Rod Huxley	NSW	2:45:39
16. Tony Barrett	VIC	2:46:57
17. Robin Whyte	ACT	2:48:04
18. Keith Laws	NSW	2:53:43
19. Peter Waddell	ACT	2:59:00
20. Steele Beveridge	NSW	2:59:10
21. Bob Chapman	ACT	3:14:04
Frank Overton	NSW	DQ
Bill Dyer	VIC	DQ

30 Km Walk – 1986 Commonwealth Games

The Edinburgh walk produced a much different result to what most pundits expected. In the days leading up to the 30 km walk, David Smith came down with a heavy cold and had to withdraw. He was on the plane back to Australia as the starter fired his gun.

Simon Baker made the most of his opportunity and walked an unforgettable race in the dreadful Edinburgh conditions to win in yet another PB of 2:07:47. The event was broadcast live on Australian television. Simon took the lead at the 14.5 km mark and powered home through the driving rain to win by over a minute. He celebrated his win with a victory leap past the finishing line and a victory lap – you would rarely see a more excited winner. Overnight he became a household name in Australia.

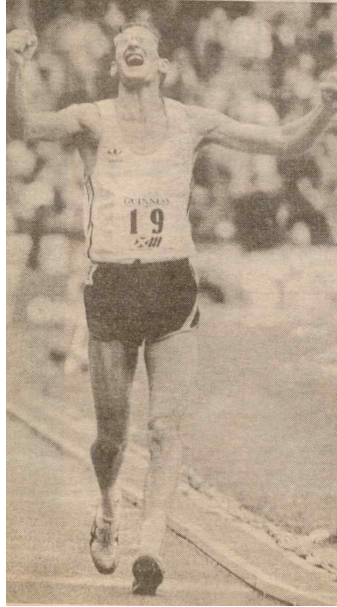
It was Simon's first international success but was soon followed by a Lugano Cup 50 km win, showing that this was not a once off performance but one that marked the start of a monumental international career.

“I cruised through the first 10 km comfortably and I wasn't worried about anyone making a move”, he said afterwards. He wore his spectacles all the way because, he said, without them things looked hazy. “I had a lot of trouble seeing because of the rain on my glasses, particularly around the half way mark when it was raining heavily. “At one stage, I was trying to look over my glasses to see in front of me. As I started to get tired, I had trouble keeping track of the road surface because it was critical that I didn't put my foot in a pothole or anything. I had to be very careful.”

The Canadian Leblanc improved in his 1982 bronze to take silver while Ian McCombie took the bronze. Sawall, the second Australian, walked his fastest yet Commonwealth Games 30 km walk with 2:14:29 but had to be content with fifth place. This was followed by yet another National title – the 50 km in 3:59:48. At 44 years of age, he was still capable of breaking 4 hours for the 50 km event!

1. Simon Baker	Australia	2:07:47
2. Guillaume Leblanc	Canada	2:08:38
3. Ian McCombie	England	2:10:36
4. Christopher Maddocks	England	2:12:42

5.	Willi Sawall	Australia	2:14:29
6.	Murray Day	New Zealand	2:15:11
7.	Martin Rush	England	2:16:01
8.	Stephen Johnson	Wales	2:21:05
9.	Graham Seatter	New Zealand	2:22:48
10.	Stephen Partington	Isle of Man	2:23:02
	Francois Lapointe	Canada	dq



Simon shows his jubilation in winning

1990 Commonwealth Games, AUCKLAND

The Games

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.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Australia	52	54	58	164
Bahamas	-	-	2	2
Bangladesh	1	-	1	2
Barbados	-	-	-	-
Bermuda	1	-	-	1
Botswana	-	-	-	-
British Virgin Islands	-	-	-	-
Brunei Darussalam	-	-	-	-
Canada	35	43	38	116
Cayman Islands	-	-	-	-
Cook Islands	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	1	1	-	2
England	47	40	43	130
Falkland Islands	-	-	-	-
Ghana	-	2	-	2
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
Guernsey	1	-	-	1
Guyana	-	-	1	1
Hong Kong	1	1	3	5
India	13	8	11	32
Isle of Man	-	-	1	1
Jamaica	2	-	2	4
Jersey	1	-	1	2
Kenya	6	9	3	18
Lesotho	-	-	-	-
Malawi	-	-	-	-
Malaysia	2	2	-	4
Maldives	-	-	-	-
Malta	-	-	1	1
Mauritius	-	-	-	-
Nauru	1	2	-	3
New Zealand	17	14	27	58
Nigeria	5	13	7	25
Norfolk Island	-	-	-	-
Northern Ireland	1	3	5	9
Pakistan	-	-	-	-
Papua New Guinea	1	-	-	1
Samoa	-	-	2	2

Scotland	5	7	10	22
Seychelles	-	-	-	-
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-
Singapore	-	-	-	-
Solomon Islands	-	-	-	-
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
St. Kitts	-	-	-	-
St. Lucia	-	-	-	-
Swaziland	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	-	1	2	3
The Gambia	-	-	-	-
Tonga	-	-	-	-
Trinidad & Tobago	-	-	-	-
Uganda	2	-	2	4
Vanuatu	-	-	-	-
Wales	10	3	12	25
Zambia	-	-	3	3
Zimbabwe	-	2	1	3
Total Medals	205	205	236	646

The Australian Walk Trials

The Australian trials for the 1990 Commonwealth Games was held on October 29th 1989 on a course around the inner Melbourne streets near Olympic Park.

For the first time a women's walk was to be held at the Commonwealth Games and the 10 km distance had been chosen. The Australian qualifying standards had been set at 2:15:00 for the men and 48:00 for the women.

In the men's 30 km trial, the old campaigner Willi Sawall (now aged 44) took the lead from the start, racing in the only way he knew. But it was not long before he had to yield to his nagging hamstring and he fell back with his race was over. Michael Harvey was the next to take the lead, solo early on and then in tandem with Simon Baker. But his effort took its own toll and he too fell off the pace.

Andrew Jachno, who had been lurking in the background early in the race, soon joined Simon at the front and they battled each other to the 28 km mark before deciding to cross the finishing line together in 2:10:53.

The real interest lay in the final team spot and there were a number of contenders. Paul Copeland was well back in fifth place early on but walked his way up through the field but outside the required time of 2:15:00. Urged on by family and friends, Paul drew on every reserve to claw the time back, eventually taking third in 2:14:53. During the race he would have had plenty of time to contemplate his 1988 Olympic Trial when he missed out on a trip to Seoul by a mere 2 seconds. This was a fitting payback.

Craig Brill was fourth in 2:16:51 while Michael Harvey was fifth in 2:21:27. It was yet another high quality trial.

E1 Simon Baker	VIC	2:10:53
E1 Andrew Jachno	VIC	2:10:53
3. Paul Copeland	VIC	2:14:53
4. Craig Brill	VIC	2:16:51
5. Michael Harvey	VIC	2:21:27

The women's race started 5 minutes after the men's. As expected, Kerry Saxby went straight to the lead which then grew larger each lap. She eventually won by the proverbial mile in a world class time of 43:29.3. She was not even puffing as she crossed the finish line.

Lorraine Jachno was second in 46:29, a time that cemented her place as the number two woman walker in Australia. Gabrielle Blythe kept Lorraine company for a few laps but never looked comfortable and retired on the fifth lap.

It was a day of dramatic finishes as NSW walker Bev Hayman narrowly qualified and then Carolyn Vanstan also just slipped under the required time. Sadly only 3 women could be selected and the Victorian youngster was the one to miss out.

1. Kerry Saxby	NSW	43:29.3
2. Lorraine Jachno	VIC	46:29
3. Bev Hayman	NSW	
4. Carolyn Vanstan	VIC	

Lorraine and her husband Andrew became one of the very few husband-wife teams to compete at the same Games.

30 Km Walk for Men – 1990 Commonwealth Games

Defending champion and athletics team captain Simon Baker had been expected to win the men's walk. Just three weeks before he had walked a personal best for 10 km and he was, after all, the reigning World Cup 50 km champion. But only two weeks before the Commonwealth Games walk, his hopes were crippled when he came down with sciatica after a fast track session. He had constant treatment at the AIS in Canberra and in Auckland but 500 metres into the race, he knew he had not overcome it. "I had shooting pains up and down my leg," Baker said.

Baker had also come down with a virus the day before the race. "I woke up this morning about 1AM", he said. "I was sweating so much I felt like I could go for a swim." Through a mixture of pride and stubbornness, he finished the race but he was a mere shadow of what might have been expected. It was typical of Simon that he chose to finish the race alongside the young Paul Copeland to encourage him for the future.

Andrew Jachno made a valiant effort to steal the race. He had expected to walk with Baker and cut out a 2:06 pace but now he had to do it alone. He took a gamble, setting a sizzling pace to cover the first 10 km in 42:11 and establishing a big break over the eventual winner, LeBlanc of Canada. He was still well ahead at the 20 km mark but an impending cramp slowed him and, by the 24 km, he was overhauled by the Canadian, with Englishman Crombie close behind.

The Australian and the Canadian walked together for several kilometres but Jachno was now struggling with cramping and LeBlanc made his move, breaking away at the 27 km mark. At 29 km the cramps finally became unbearable and he had to stop and stretch. "At 29 km, it went. I had a cramp in my right hamstring. I knew McCombie was on my hammer." Even after stretching, the cramp would not loosen so he simply had to walk with it for the remainder of the race. It was agonising to watch those last few kilometres on TV as Andrew struggled home for 2nd place in 2:09:09.

The third Australian walker, Paul Copeland, was also in trouble. A back injury in December 1989 severely hampered his final preparations and his 8th place, finishing alongside Baker, was a disappointment after his wonderful trial performance. Growing disillusioned with the AIS, he eventually made the decision to return to Melbourne and continue his career in the more familiar home environment.



The start of the men's 30 km event – the rough road surface is obvious.

Hilliard blasted the course, describing the rough blue chip surface as disgracefully inadequate for an international event. "They've had years to prepare for this, but obviously have a complete lack of understanding of what is required for a world-class walking event." There was little doubt that it had cost Jachno the gold medal.

Baker added his voice to the chorus of protests over the surface of the race course. "There were times when I couldn't put my foot on the surface properly and I thought I would pull my hamstring." He held back from calling it the worst surface he had competed on: "Well, I've raced on cobblestones in Germany – but at least they were flat."

Leblanc's gold now gave him the full set of Commonwealth medals after his bronze in Brisbane in 1982 and his silver in Edinburgh in 1986.

1.	Guillaume Leblanc	Canada	2:08:28
2.	Andrew Jachno	Australia	2:09:09
3.	Ian McCombie	England	2:09:20
4.	Francois Lapointe	Canada	2:12:41
5.	Mark Easton	England	2:14:52
6.	Christopher Maddocks	England	2:15:07
E7.	Simon Baker	Australia	2:19:55
E7.	Paul Copeland	Australia	2:19:55
9.	Stephen Partington	Isle of Man	2:20:11
10.	Shane Donnelly	New Zealand	2:24:01
11.	Martin Archambault	Canada	2:29:22
12.	Sean Sullivan	New Zealand	2:35:40
	Moetu Tangitamaiti	Cook Islands	dnf

10 Km Walk for Women – 1990 Commonwealth Games

Lorraine Jachno's immediate pre-race preparations were ruined by the sight of her husband Andrew limping across the line in second place and then being stretchered off groaning in agony. Once she had determined that Andrew was going to be ok, she left to mentally tune herself for her own walk.

By that time, the sun had a real sting to it and the effects were not long in coming. With her rivals collapsing around her and the stretcher bearers working overtime, Australia's Kery Saxby cruised to victory in the inaugural Commonwealth Games women's walk – after covering most of the 10 km with a stone in her shoe.

The amazing walker from the NSW coastal town of Ballina, who had set 26 world best times on the track and road, was relaxed and still full of energy at the finish, in stark contrast to the rest of the field.

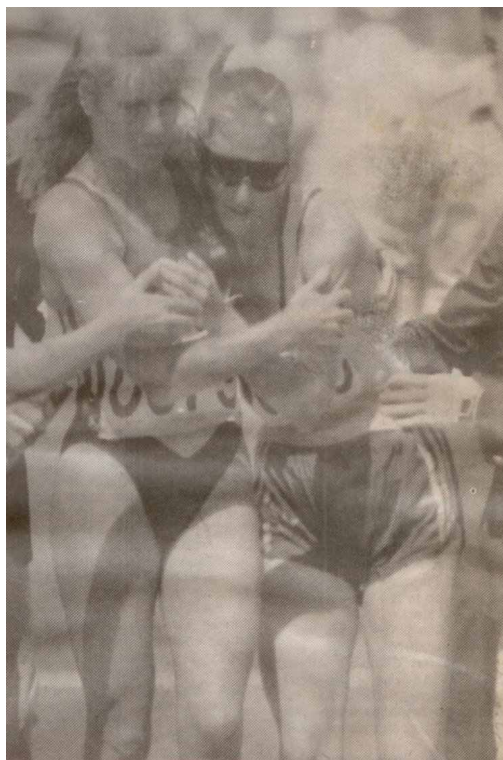
The hot weather and rough course took a heavy toll with five of the 11 walkers ending in the hands of the medical people. Four of them, silver medallist Lisa Langford of England, Janice McCaffrey (fifth) and Alison Baker (eighth) and England's Betty Sworawski, who failed to finish, were taken away on stretchers. Another Canadian, Ann Peel, also failed to make it to the finish and was led away in tears. The competitors tent looked more like a hospital ward.

Only Saxby seemed unaffected by the ordeal. In fact she said she didn't feel the heat and enjoyed the race. She won in 45:03, well outside the world record of 43:08, and exactly two minutes ahead of the silver medallist, Auckland doctor Anne Judkins.

The victory ended years of frustration for Saxby, 28, who has always felt that her feats have gone unrecognised in Australia because she has never won a medal at the Olympic or Commonwealth Games. There was a good reason for that – women's walking was never a part of either Games and was a late addition to the Auckland program after Australian athletics officials lobbied heavily on her behalf. It was to be added to the Olympic Program in 1992 and they felt it deserved to be added at the Commonwealth level.

She got added pleasure from the fact that her mother, sister, brother and 82 year old grandmother all made the trip to Auckland to watch her walk in an international race for the first time.

She supported Hilliard's criticism of the course, saying it was too bumpy. "It was very harsh on my legs," she said.



Kerry Saxby strolls to victory and then helps Lorriane Jachno as she collapses over the finishing line

Australia's other two walkers, Lorriane Jachno and Bev Hayman, finished fourth and sixth in 47:35 and 48:50 respectively. But that does not tell the story of the brave race put up by both girls in the dreadful conditions. I remember watching Lorriane's valiant performance in the final kilometres where she chased eventual bronze medallist Langford but could not bridge the gap. She collapsed at the finish and was comforted by Saxby.

1. Kerry Saxby-Junna AM	Australia	45:03
2. Anne Judkins	New Zealand	47:03
3. Lisa Kehler (nee Langford)	England	47:23
4. Lorriane Jachno	Australia	47:35
5. Janice McCaffrey	Canada	48:26
6. Beverley Hayman	Australia	48:50
7. Helen Elleker	England	49:51
8. Alison Baker	Canada	50:54
9. Ann Peel	Canada	dnf
Elizabeth Sworowski	England	dnf
Jane Jackson	New Zealand	dq

1994 Commonwealth Games, VICTORIA

The Games

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.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Antigua & Barbuda	-	-	-	-
Australia	87	53	43	183
Bahamas	-	-	-	-
Bangladesh	-	-	-	-
Barbados	-	-	-	-
Belize	-	-	-	-
Bermuda	-	-	1	1
Botswana	-	-	1	1
British Virgin Islands	-	-	-	-
Brunei Darussalam	-	-	-	-
Canada	41	42	48	131
Cayman Islands	-	-	-	-
Cook Islands	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	2	1	2	5
Dominica	-	-	-	-
England	31	45	51	127
Falkland Islands	-	-	-	-
Ghana	-	-	2	2
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
Guernsey	-	-	1	1
Guyana	-	-	-	-
Hong Kong	-	-	4	4
India	6	12	7	25
Isle of Man	-	-	-	-
Jamaica	2	4	2	8
Jersey	-	-	-	-
Kenya	7	4	8	19
Lesotho	-	-	-	-
Malawi	-	-	-	-
Malaysia	2	3	2	7
Maldives	-	-	-	-
Malta	-	-	-	-
Mauritius	-	-	-	-
Montserrat	-	-	-	-
Namibia	1	-	1	2
Nauru	3	-	-	3
New Zealand	5	16	21	42
Nigeria	11	13	13	37

Norfolk Island	-	-	1	1
Northern Ireland	5	2	3	10
Pakistan	-	-	3	3
Papua New Guinea	-	1	-	1
Samoa	-	1	-	1
Scotland	6	3	11	20
Seychelles	-	-	1	1
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-
Singapore	-	-	-	-
Solomon Islands	-	-	-	-
South Africa	2	4	5	11
Sri Lanka	1	2	-	3
St. Kitts	-	-	-	-
St. Lucia	-	-	-	-
St. Vincent & The Grenadines	-	-	-	-
Swaziland	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	-	-	1	1
The Gambia	-	-	-	-
Tonga	-	-	1	1
Trinidad & Tobago	-	-	2	2
Uganda	-	-	2	2
Vanuatu	-	-	-	-
Wales	5	8	6	19
Zambia	1	1	2	4
Zimbabwe	-	3	3	6
Total Medals	218	218	248	684

The Australian Walk Trials

The trials were held in conjunction with the Australian roadwalking Championships at Runaway Bay on the Gold Coast in Queensland on April 23rd, 1994.

There were no surprises in the women's event when Kerry Saxby, Anne Manning and Jane Saville took the first three places and confirmed their Commonwealth Games selections. Nineteen year old Jane Saville, following on from her silver medal at the 1992 World Junior championships and her 1993 World Cup representation, took another major step forward with a fine 46:04.

1. Kerry Junna-Saxby	NSW	45:08
2. Anne Manning	NSW	45:56
3. Jane Saville	NSW	46:04
4. Teresa Letherby	QLD	46:31
5. Gabrielle Blythe	VIC	47:05
6. Jenny Jones	QLD	47:24
7. Jane Barbour	SA	47:38
8. Wendy Muldoon	VIC	48:27
9. Simone Wolowiec	VIC	
10. Natalie Camplin	QLD	52:07
11. Allana Rogers	TAS	52:55

The men's trial also produced the expected result. With Andrew Jachno now retired, Nick A'Hern had assumed the mantle as the top Australian walker and won comfortably in a PB time of 2:12:13. Simon Baker was keen for one last Commonwealth Games but had to battle hard to hold out fellow Victorian Mark Donahoo. Simon recorded 2:15:50 for 2nd and Mark was 3rd in 2:15:52, a big PB. In an effort to improve his case, Mark won the Victorian 20 km title in May in 1:26:33, another PB and well ahead of second place AIS walker Dion Russell. He even went overseas in an attempt to sway the selectors but to no avail – only 2 male walkers went to Victoria in Canada. It was an unjust decision – Mark had done more than enough to earn his place in the team.

1. Nick A'Hern	NSW	2:12:23
2. Simon Baker	VIC	2:15:50
3. Mark Donahoo	VIC	2:15:52 (PB)

4. Craig Barrett	NZ	2:17:46
5. Michael Harvey	VIC	2:25:25
6. Dominc McGrath	VIC	2:27:01
7. Duane Cousins	VIC	2:29:13
8. Ignacio Jimenez	QLD	2:32:15
9. Mark Coleman	VIC	2:37:01
10. Frank Bertei	VIC	2:37:22
11. Andrew Ludwig	QLD	2:41:48
12. Duncan Knox	VIC	2:42:12
13. Peter Bennett	QLD	2:45:16
14. Klaus Maurer	QLD	3:01:44
15. Caleb Maybir	QLD	3:26:37

10 Km Walk for Women – 1994 Commonwealth Games

Kerry Saxby defended her Commonwealth title with a Games record time of 44:25. It was nice, she said, that the contest finished in a picturesque seaside setting rather than the main stadium. “I get scared in stadiums full of people. They frighten the daylight out of me,” she said.

But it was no walk in the park for the 33 year old who had endured a rough time since the last Games, failing (according to her own high standard) at the Barcelona Olympics, finishing fifth in the 1993 World Cup and not completing the race at the world championships. Plunging to a nadir at the Goodwill Games earlier in the year, she had been disqualified 50 metres from the line. Gasping for breath because of sinus troubles, she had panicked. Back home, she was distraught. “I was crying after training. Totally stressed out. There are times when you just wonder 'Why am I doing this?' ”.

Saxby-Junna had gone back to the AIS and worked under her coach Craig Hilliard to refine her technique to the point where Hilliard believed it was better than ever. And she had temporarily sorted out any doubts about her breathing – a sinus operation was scheduled for straight after the Games.

Her second Commonwealth Gold was the culmination of that effort. She dominated the race from the first lap, although second placed Anne Manning, a friend and training partner in Canberra, finished just 12 seconds behind. Saxby-Junna had slept restlessly on race-eve, waking at 3AM ready to go and she admitted to some nerves.

“Usually in international competitions, I'm happy with a medal but this time I really wanted the gold,” she said. “I had some tough competition and I knew it wasn't going to be as easy as 4 years ago. She said the proposal to extend the women's road races to 20 kilometres would prolong the careers of her and the 34 year old Manning. “Sydney 2000 is looking good for us,” she said.

The young Saville finished 8th in a high quality race.

1. Kerry Saxby-Junna AM	Australia	44:25
2. Anne Manning	Australia	44:37
3. Janice McCaffrey	Canada	44:54
4. Holly Gerke	Canada	45:43
5. Victoria Lupton	England	45:48
6. Lisa Kehler (nee Langford)	England	46:01
7. Verity Larby-Snook	Scotland	46:06
8. Jane Saville	Australia	47:14
9. Carolyn Partington	Isle of Man	47:21
10. Grace Karimi	Kenya	48:20
11. Karen Smith	England	48:45
12. Alison Baker	Canada	51:28
Agnetha Chelimo	Kenya	dnf
Linda Murphy	New Zealand	dq

30 Km Walk for Men – 1994 Commonwealth Games

Nick A'Hern fulfilled his promise when he won the gold medal in the men's 30 km road walk, a day when Kerry Saxby made it a golden double by winning the women's 10 km roadwalk.

For the previous four years, the 25 year old had worn the label of walking's "next big thing", the Australian to replace Simon Baker at the highest level. But despite some flashy performances in lesser competitions, he had yet to make a real mark on the world stage. There had been extenuating circumstances – a foot operation, another to remove a benign tumour from his neck – but A'Hern had gone to every major championship in reasonable form and had performed at mid-field level.

This was his big breakthrough race. He kept his cool through an early breakaway by silver medallist Tim Berrett of Canada and bronze medallist Scott Nelson of New Zealand and walked strongly over the last 10 km to win in 2:07:53.

"I've been knocking at the door for a while," A'Hern said after the race. "The time was world class, good enough to win some of the major races in Europe. I'm stoked. That's great."

He missed Baker's Games record by just six seconds but most definitely assumed his mantle. Baker was in the main bunch early on but when the pace increased, he dropped, finishing in 6th place in 2:14:02. The writing was on the wall and later that same year, he resigned his AIS scholarship as an athlete and took up an assistant coaching position there. He was still racing well but not with the same fire as previously.

1. Nicholas A'Hern	Australia	2:07:53
2. Timothy Berrett	Canada	2:08:22
3. Scott Nelson	New Zealand	2:09:10
4. Darrell Stone	England	2:11:30
5. Martin St.Pierre	Canada	2:11:51
6. Simon Baker	Australia	2:14:02
7. Stephen Partington	Isle of Man	2:14:15
8. Craig Barrett	New Zealand	2:14:19
9. Chris Britz	South Africa	2:14:28
10. Justus Kavulanya	Kenya	2:14:37
11. Stephen Akol	Kenya	2:14:37
12. Christopher Maddocks	England	2:18:14
13. Mark Easton	England	2:20:10
14. Stephen Taylor	Isle of Man	2:21:34
Martin Bell	Scotland	dnf

1998 Commonwealth Games, KUALA LUMPUR

The Games

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 participators 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.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Anguilla	-	-	-	-
Antigua & Barbuda	-	-	-	-
Australia	82	61	57	200
Bahamas	1	1	-	2
Bangladesh	-	-	-	-
Barbados	1	-	2	3
Belize	-	-	-	-
Bermuda	-	1	-	1
Botswana	-	-	-	-
British Virgin Islands	-	-	-	-
Brunei Darussalam	-	-	-	-
Cameroon	-	3	3	6
Canada	30	31	40	101
Cayman Islands	-	-	-	-
Cook Islands	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	1	1	1	3
Dominica	-	-	-	-
England	36	49	53	138
Falkland Islands	-	-	-	-
Fiji	-	1	-	1
Ghana	1	1	3	5
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
Grenada	-	-	-	-
Guernsey	-	-	-	-
Guyana	-	-	-	-
India	7	10	8	25
Isle of Man	-	1	-	1
Jamaica	4	2	-	6
Jersey	-	-	-	-
Kenya	7	5	4	16
Lesotho	1	-	-	1
Malawi	-	-	-	-
Malaysia	10	14	12	36
Maldives	-	-	-	-
Malta	-	-	-	-
Mauritius	1	1	2	4
Montserrat	-	-	-	-
Mozambique	1	1	-	2
Namibia	-	2	1	3
Nauru	3	-	-	3

New Zealand	8	6	20	34
Norfolk Island	-	-	-	-
Northern Ireland	2	1	2	5
Pakistan	-	1	-	1
Papua New Guinea	-	-	1	1
Samoa	-	-	-	-
Scotland	3	2	7	12
Seychelles	-	2	-	2
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-
Singapore	-	-	-	-
Solomon Islands	-	-	-	-
South Africa	9	11	14	34
Sri Lanka	-	1	1	2
St. Kitts	-	-	-	-
St. Lucia	-	-	-	-
St. Vincent & The Grenadines	-	-	-	-
Swaziland	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	1	1	1	3
The Gambia	-	-	-	-
Tonga	-	-	-	-
Trinidad & Tobago	1	1	1	3
Turks & Caicos Islands	-	-	-	-
Uganda	-	-	1	1
Vanuatu	-	-	-	-
Wales	3	4	8	15
Zambia	-	-	1	1
Zimbabwe	2	-	3	5
Total Medals	215	215	246	676

The Australian Walk Trials

1998 saw a further change to the Commonwealth Games walking schedule as the 30 km event for men was replaced by the two international distances of 20 km and 50 km. So now the Commonwealth Games matched the Olympics with three walks on offer.

The 50 km Trial

The 50 km selection trial was held in conjunction with the Australian Championship in Melbourne in December 1997 and the A standard of 4:00:00 was the obvious required mark.

Dion Russell, in his first 50 km event, was a clear winner a great time of 3:48:12. This put him third in the all time Australian rankings behind Simon Baker and Willi Sawall – and he was only 22 years of age. Second and third places were also under the required standard. Duane Cousins, who was already a sub-4 walker, made no mistakes with his 3:57:40. For Dominic McGrath it was a different story. Dom started slowly as usual and his first 10 km was covered in 49:18, well back in the field. But as the race progressed, he sped up and his last 5 km saw him storm home to break the 4 hour standard.

1. Dion Russell	VIC	3:48:12
2. Duane Cousins	VIC	3:57:40
3. Dominic McGrath	VIC	3:59:15
4. Shane Pearson	QLD	4:12:29
5. Darren Bown	SA	4:35:13
Marcus Dwyer	VIC	DQ
Michael Harvey	VIC	DNF
Mark Thomas	VIC	DNF
Brian Trower	VIC	DNF
Brent Vallance	NSW	DNF
Matthew Griggs	ACT	DNF

The first three looked certain for Games selection but had to wait until August before they finally saw their names in print.

The 20 km Men's Trial

The men's 20 km trial was held in conjunction with the Australian Championships in Melbourne. The race was scheduled on Thursday 12th March 1998 on a 2 km circuit around Princes Park with the start/finish alongside the Optus Oval stadium.

Nick A'Hern was an easy winner in 1:22:07 – no issues there! The real turmoil was a couple of minutes further back in the field - Nathan Deakes crossed the finishing line in second place in around 84 minutes, only to discover that he had picked up a third report late in the race and been disqualified. The minor places were subsequently taken by Dion Russell and Duane Cousins but the times were not good enough to guarantee selection (the A standard was set at 1:23:30 and the B standard at 1:26:00).

1. Nick A'Hern	NSW	1:22:27
2. Dion Russell	VIC	1:27:02
3. Duane Cousins	VIC	1:28:23
4. Brent Vallance	NSW	1:32:56
5. Brad Malcolm	VIC	1:33:41
6. Michael Harvey	VIC	1:35:52
7. Shane Pearson	QLD	1:37:17
8. Mark Thomas	VIC	1:39:25
9. Marcus Dwyer	VIC	1:41:08
10. Christian Bone	WA	1:45:47
11. Graham Watt	VIC	2:04:57
Mark Donahoo	VIC	DNF
Matthew Griggs	ACT	DNF
Darren Bown	SA	DNF
Noel Wooler	QLD	DNF
Andrew Jamieson	VIC	DNF
Damien O'Mara	NSW	DNF
Luke Adams	NSW	DNF
Anthony Miles	QLD	DNF
Mark Blackwood	VIC	DQ
Nathan Deakes	VIC	DQ
Craig Barrett	NZ	DQ

With only one team spot clearly filled, the race was on to clinch the second and third positions. Brent joined the AIS team going to Europe to race the European summer. This was his last chance to get the points on the scoreboard and he had to self-fund his trip. On May 23rd in Naumburg, Nathan recorded an A qualifying time of 1:23:24 and Brent recorded 1:24:34 for a B qualifier. Nathan's spot now looked confirmed but had Brent done enough to secure the final berth?

Apart from his one failure at the National titles in March, Brent had raced well. He had recorded 1:25:01 at the Adelaide GP on 26/01/98, 1:24:34 in Naumburg on 23/05/98, and won the Second Federation event in Geelong in 1:24:37 (2/08/98). The selectors obviously had him in mind for the final spot and, when Nick and Nathan were asked to participate in a pre-departure 10 km trial in August, he was called by Ron Weigel two days before the event and told he was also expected to walk. Selector Brian Rowe had rung Ron to inform him it would be a three man pre-departure trial. The times of the 3 walkers were as follows

Nick A'Hern	39:20
Nathan Deakes	40:14
Brent Vallance	41:43

The selectors decided that Brent had done enough and a 3 man team was finally confirmed to contest the 20 km in Kuala Lumpur.

The 20 km Women's Trial

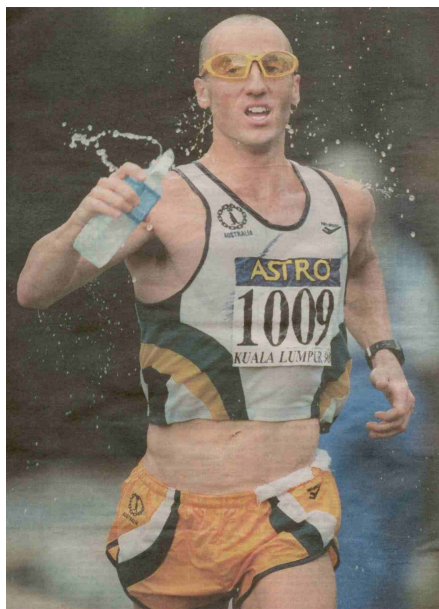
The women's 10 km walk trial was held at the official selection trials at Homebush in Sydney on Saturday August 8th 1998 and Kerry Saxby-Junna had yet another easy win. Her position of dominance on the Australian scene looked set to continue for some time yet and few people thought that only months later she would suffer defeat in Kuala Lumpur at the hands of the young Jane Saville. Jane on this occasion finished over 3 minutes behind Kerry and just under the qualifying standard of 47:00. Her younger sister Natalie was only 25 seconds further back in third place but unfortunately that small gap was what

separated her from her first Commonwealth Games berth. She would have to wait another 4 years for her opportunity.

1. Kerry Saxby-Junna	NSW	43:38
2. Jane Saville	NSW	46:42
3. Natalie Saville	NSW	47:07
4. Simone Wollowiec	VIC	47:40
5. Michelle French	NSW	49:09
6. Megan Chapman	NSW?	49:28
7. Wendy Muldoon	VIC	49:47
8. Tereasa Leatherby	QLD?	49:54
9. Linda Coffee	NSW	50:03
10. Justine Toniti-Fillipini	VIC	50:26
Cheryl Webb	NSW	DQ

20 Km Walk for Men – 1998 Commonwealth Games

Watching his wife Jennifer go through a 27 hour labor to deliver their first child six weeks before the 1998 Games steeled Nick A'Hern against his own searing pain as he claimed an historic 20 km walk victory in Kuala Lumpur



Nick A'Hern feels the heat in the 20 km walk

“Before I left home, I promised my daughter Sian I would win gold for her,” Nick said. True to his pledge, in steamy heat on an overcast morning against the beautiful Lake Titawangsa, the Canberra hairdresser became the first man in Games history to retain the walks title. To add to the delight of the Australian contingent, his young team mate Nathan Deakes collected the bronze on his Games debut, just behind Arturo Huerta of Canada. Who would have thought at that time that Nathan would go on to win double golds at the next 2 Commonwealth Games.

A'Hern, 28, the Australian team men's captain, destroyed the field with two surges at 5 km and 10 km to earn his second gold medal in 1:24:59. “Conditions were very tough, reminiscent of Atlanta, that heat especially coming off the road surface”, Nick said, recalling his stoic fourth in this event at the last Olympics.

“I knew I had to break them up early. About 5 km , I knew it was time to go. It's pretty gutsy in this weather because you've got 15 km to go and the wheels could fall off. So I just bit the bullet. I knew it was now or never. I knew I was tough enough and I had done the work and had made the sacrifices so it was time to rock 'n roll. I knew I had to dig deep and I guess seeing my wife go through labor and feeling some of her strength from that...I don't think I feel pain after that. She was just unbelievable so I drew strength from her.”

After all his efforts to make the team, Brent Vallance had a shocker and walked what he described recently as the worst race

of his life. It just goes to show that even with the best preparations, things can still go wrong on the day.

1.	Nicholas A'Hern	Australia	1:24:59
2.	Arturo Huerta	Canada	1:25:49
3.	Nathan Deakes	Australia	1:26:06
4.	Darrell Stone	England	1:26:37
5.	David Rotich	Kenya	1:26:57
6.	Teoh Boon Lim	Malaysia	1:27:47
7.	Martin Bell	Scotland	1:29:20
8.	Julius Sawe	Kenya	1:29:23
9.	Harbans Narinder Singh	Malaysia	1:30:13
10.	Christopher Maddocks	England	1:30:21
11.	Timothy Berrett	Canada	1:31:19
12.	Andrew Drake	England	1:32:04
13.	Stephen Partington	Isle of Man	1:32:15
14.	Brent Vallance	Australia	1:36:29
15.	Mohamed Haizy	Malaysia	1:36:32
16.	Dip Chand	Fiji	1:52:47
17.	Pradeep Chand	Fiji	2:03:38



Nick A'Hern crosses the line and dedicates the win to his baby daughter Sian

50 Km Walk for Men – 1998 Commonwealth Games

“I’m the greatest person in the world and I won’t die. I won’t die.” That chilling cry from an athlete in meltdown, and a world of delirium, rang out from an army camp bed in one of the closing scenes to an appalling finale of the mens 50 km road walk. New Zealander Craig Barrett was ranting. There were intravenous drips in both arms as a team of doctors and support staff buzzed around him, working frantically, bathing his body in ice.

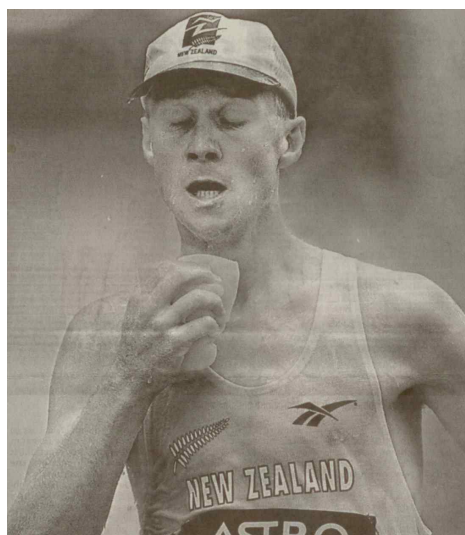
Thirty minutes earlier, Barrett had been on the last of 19 laps around the course at Lake Titiwangsa. He was just 1 km from the finish and led the field by six minutes. Another five minutes and the gold would be his, in what is the most brutal event in the Games. And then he collapsed.

Despite suffocating heat and humidity, with temperatures nudging 40 degrees, there had been no warning that Barrett would

hit the wall and short-circuit both body and brain. He was maintaining good pace and showing only the usual signs of distress that walkers do after more than four hours on the road. But rounding a bend, he buckled. What followed was a danse macabre.

In pathetic scenes reminiscent of the 1984 Olympic Games when women's marathon runner Gabrielle Andersson Scheiss of Switzerland, her limbs askew, lurched and staggered in the final straight. Barratt's auto-pilot went haywire. His left leg refused to follow his right. As if paralysed, it flapped and sagged and dragged behind him. He attempted to keep going, then stopped. He sat in the gutter, then tried again. After 4 aborted attempts to resume, his struggle captured vividly by television cameras, he shuffled backwards in the final throes of consciousness.

New Zealand's chef de mission, Les Mills, having just arrived at the walk venue and well away from the finish line, was the only Kiwi official to witness the collapse. Marshalls had not wanted to intervene, as Barrett was leading. But Mills, a former Commonwealth Games discus gold medallist, ordered the ambulance in, fearing the walker's life could be at risk if he stayed out on the course much longer.



Craig Barrett – before and after the collapse

As the New Zealander was helped into the ambulance, Malaysian Govindaswamy Saravanan, a 28 year old bank clerk, cruised past. "I saw him collapse so I knew I had gold. I knew I just had to keep my pace and finish the race to win," Saravanan said. Pandemonium broke out as he crossed the finish line in 4:10:05, becoming the first Malaysian ever to win an Commonwealth athletics gold. To make the story even more amazing, he finished the event in bare feet – something never seen before or since!

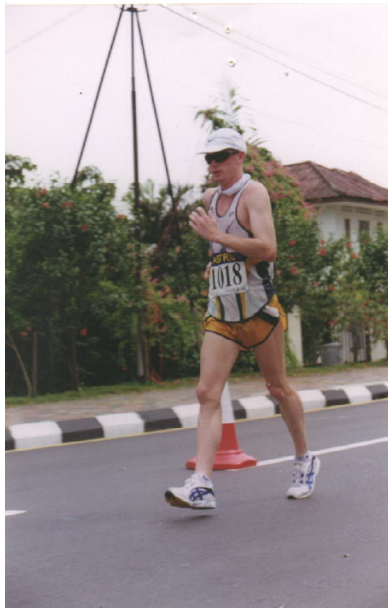
Duane Cousins walked a very well judged race in the atrocious conditions, storming home for 2nd place in 4:10:30, just 25 seconds behind the winner. Dominic McGrath raced with his usual tactics, starting slowly and speeding up to finish in 3rd place in 4:12:52, blood streaming down his right leg from chafing caused by ill-fitting shorts. Dion Russell, who had gone into the race as one of the favourites, led early. But the heat was too much and he retired before halfway.

By the evening, Barrett had recovered sufficiently to be released from hospital but he was shattered, knowing that he had been so close to the win.

1. Govindaswamy Saravanan	Malaysia	4:10:05
2. Duane Cousins	Australia	4:10:30
3. Dominic McGrath	Australia	4:12:52
4. Steven Hollier	England	4:18:41
5. Mark Easton	England	4:22:23
6. Graham White	Scotland	4:30:17
7. Kannian Pushparajan	Malaysia	4:31:22
8. Christopher Cheeseman	England	4:38:36
9. Thirukumaran Balaysendaran	Malaysia	4:44:33
10. Tony Sargisson	New Zealand	4:45:04
Timothy Berrett	Canada	dnf

Dion Russell
Craig Barrett

Australia dnf
New Zealand dnf



Duane and Dominic walk to silver and bronze in the tropical heat of Kuala Lumpur

10 Km Walk for Women – 1998 Commonwealth Games

Jane Saville first came to prominence in 1992 as a silver medallist in the junior World Championships. Two years later, on her first senior Australian team for a big meet, she did well to finish eighth as Saxby-Junna won the Commonwealth Games title in Victoria, Canada. In her first Olympics, in Atlanta in 1996, she finished 26th in the 10km walk.

She went to the 1998 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games after finishing second behind Saxby-Junna at the trials. The two Australian girls were expected to do well and they were in the lead pack throughout the race. The relentless pace took its toll as the leading group dropped and eventually only the Australians and the Malaysians were left. It came down to a battle of three with Saville, Saxby-Junna and Yu Fang Yuan shoulder to shoulder. When the chief judge stepped onto the track, the question was – which of the three would go? It was the Malaysian and all of a sudden it was the two Australians fighting out gold in the last lap. To Jane's credit, she was able to produce the something extra and she gradually forged the winning break, going on to claim her first international gold.



The final three fight out the last lap.

1. Jane Saville	Australia	43:57 (GR)
2. Kerry Saxby-Junna AM	Australia	44:27
3. Lisa Kehler (nee Langford)	England	45:03
4. Janice McCaffrey	Canada	46:36
5. Anastasia Raj	Malaysia	46:41
6. Carolyn "Cal" Partington	Isle of Man	48:09
7. Victoria Lupton	England	48:27
8. Kimberley Braznell	England	51:15
9. Monica Okumu	Kenya	51:56
10. Karen Kneale	Isle of Man	52:25
11. Angela Keogh	Norfolk Island	55:00
Cheng Tong Lean	Malaysia	dq
Yu Fang Yuan	Malaysia	dq



Jane celebrates her win in Kuala Lumpur

2002 Commonwealth Games, MANCHESTER

The Games

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.

For the first time in the Games history, indeed at any multi-sport event in the world, a limited number of full medal events for elite athletes with a disability (EAD) were included in a fully inclusive sports programme. The sports which included EAD events were Athletics, Lawn Bowls, Swimming, Table Tennis and Weightlifting.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Anguilla	-	-	-	-
Antigua & Barbuda	-	-	-	-
Australia	82	62	63	207
Bahamas	4	-	4	8
Bangladesh	1	-	-	1
Barbados	-	-	1	1
Belize	-	-	-	-
Bermuda	-	-	-	-
Botswana	-	2	1	3
British Virgin Islands	-	-	-	-
Brunei Darussalam	-	-	-	-
Cameroon	9	1	2	12
Canada	31	41	46	118
Cayman Islands	-	-	1	1
Cook Islands	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	2	1	1	4
Dominica	-	-	-	-
England	54	52	60	166
Falkland Islands	-	-	-	-
Fiji	1	1	1	3
Ghana	-	-	1	1
Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
Grenada	-	-	-	-
Guernsey	-	-	-	-
Guyana	1	-	-	1
India	30	22	17	69
Isle of Man	-	-	-	-
Jamaica	4	6	7	17
Jersey	-	-	-	-
Kenya	4	8	4	16
Kiribati	-	-	-	-
Lesotho	-	-	1	1
Malawi	-	-	-	-

Malaysia	7	9	18	34
Maldives	-	-	-	-
Malta	-	-	1	1
Mauritius	-	-	1	1
Montserrat	-	-	-	-
Mozambique	1	-	-	1
Namibia	1	-	4	5
Nauru	2	5	8	15
New Zealand	11	13	21	45
Nigeria	5	3	11	19
Niue	-	-	-	-
Norfolk Island	-	-	-	-
Northern Ireland	2	2	1	5
Pakistan	1	3	4	8
Papua New Guinea	-	-	-	-
Samoa	-	1	2	3
Scotland	6	8	16	30
Seychelles	-	-	-	-
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-
Singapore	4	2	7	13
Solomon Islands	-	-	-	-
South Africa	9	20	17	46
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
St. Helena	-	-	-	-
St. Kitts	1	-	-	1
St. Lucia	-	-	1	1
St. Vincent & The Grenadines	-	-	-	-
Swaziland	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	1	-	1	2
The Gambia	-	-	-	-
Tonga	-	-	-	-
Trinidad & Tobago	-	1	-	1
Turks & Caicos Islands	-	-	-	-
Tuvalu	-	-	-	-
Uganda	-	2	-	2
Vanuatu	-	-	-	-
Wales	6	13	12	31
Zambia	1	1	1	3
Zimbabwe	1	1	-	2
Total Medals	282	280	336	898

The Australian Walk Trials

2002 saw yet another change to the Commonwealth Games walking program. In line with world trends, the women's distance was increased from 10 km to 20 km. The men's 20 km and 50 km walks remained unchanged.

The 20 Km Trials

The 20 km trials were held as part of the Australian 20 km roadwalk titles in Davies Park in Brisbane on Sunday February 14th 2002. The races were also the official trial events for the 2002 Racewalking World Cup.

Both races started at 7AM to beat the heat of the day but the Davies Park course is not a fast one and that was reflected in the times.

In the men's event, the four AIS walkers, Nathan Deakes, Luke Adams, Darren Bown and Liam Murphy led early as a group until eventually Nathan increased the tempo and the group broke up. Behind them, Daniel Thorne and Troy Sundstom walked well for the first half but then started to fade. Troy eventually pulled out while Daniel was disqualified near the finish. Duane Cousins started slowly but worked his way up past Daniel, Troy and Liam and he finished strongly to take 4th and split the AIS walkers. Nathan and Luke were rewarded with Commonwealth Games selections and ther remained the potential for a third Commonwealth Games selection if any of the other walkers could subsequently impress the selectors.

1. Nathan Deakes	AIS	1:23.36
2. Luke Adams	AIS	1:23.56
3. Darren Bown	AIS	1:27.34
4. Duane Cousins	VIS	1:28.44
5. Liam Murphy	AIS	1:30.24
6. Frank Bertei	VIC	1:34.43
7. Brent Vallance	NSW	1:34.43
8. Chris Erickson	VIC	1:41.59
9. Shane Pearson	QLD	1:42.39
10. Ignacio Jimenez	QLD	1:44.31
11. Michael Beaton-Wells	VIC	1:45.48
12. Peter Bennett	QLD	1:46.47
13. Daniel Lowe	WA	1:56.30
14. Robert Osborne	NSW	1:58.51
Brad Malcolm	VIC,	DNF
Troy Sundstrom	NSW	DNF
Daniel Thorne	VIC	DQ

In the women's event, Jane Saville, Natalie Saville and Simone Wolowiec led together for the first 5 km before Jane broke away and Simone slowed. At the same time, Cheryl Webb worked her way up through the field, passing Simone and Natalie and finishing strongly only about 20 secs behind Jane. But it was not to be when it was announced that she had been disqualified. That moved Natalie up into 2nd place and Simone into 3rd place. The 3 placegetters were then all rewarded with Commonwealth Games selection – a bitter blow for Cheryl.

1. Jane Saville	NSW/AIS	1:34.18
2. Natalie Saville	NSW	1:36.22
3. Simone Wolowiec	VIC	1:38.21
4. Gabrielle Gorst	NZL	1:40.45
5. Claire Woods	SA/AIS	1:43.56
6. Karen Foan	CAN	1:45.06
7. Wendy Muldoon	VIC	1:45.53
8. Tracy Rosengrave	VIC	1:49.02
9. Roisin Gleich	VIC	1:49.42
10. Claire Bock	QLD	1:56.58
11. Judy Moller	QLD	2:07.10
Lyn Ventris	WA	DNF
Megan Peters	VIC	DNF
Cheryl Webb	AIS	DQ

The 50 Km Trial

The 50 km trial was held alongside the Australian 50 km championship in Melbourne on May 5th, 2002. With the Commonwealth Games standard set at 4:00:00 and the Lugano Cup standard set at 4:20, there were a number of spots up for grabs and the race produced the goods with the first 2 places gaining Commonwealth and the first 5 places gaining Lugano Cup selection.

1. Liam Murphy	SA/AIS	3:55:20
2. Duane Cousins	VIC	3:59:27
3. Luke Adams	NSW/AIS	4:04:03
4. Darren Bown	SA/AIS	4:12:53
5. Frank Bertei	VIC	4:19:28
6. Michael Harvey	VIC	4:42:10
Nathan Deakes	VIC/AIS	DNS
Richard Everson	SA	DNF

20 Km Walk for Women – 2002 Commonwealth Games

The women's 20 km event was the first of the walks to be held, starting in the late afternoon on Sunday July 28th 2002 at the stunning Salford Quays walk course outside Manchester city centre. The men's 20 km event started 20 minutes later.

Jane Saville, the hot favourite, retained her Commonwealth Games title with a dominant display. She admitted she was relieved just to finish the race without being disqualified. She had seriously considered retiring after being disqualified at the Sydney Olympics and the 2001 World Athletics Championships at Edmonton: "I was delighted to finish today," she said and then added: "I was keen to prove myself today and I'm really pleased to have won here."

In most un-Manchester like heat and in front of an enthusiastic crowd of 15000, she fell into the arms of her husband Matt with tears of joy after crossing the line. On this occasion, she did not receive any warnings from the judges. "I was worried throughout. I was really concentrating on my technique the whole time. It was really nice not to be noticed by the judges out there."



Jane strides away from the opposition early in the race

England's Lisa Kehler, who took bronze in the walk at New Zealand 1990 and Kuala Lumpur 1998 finished 11 seconds behind Saville to take silver. Malaysia's Yu Fang Yuan took bronze with a time of 1:40:00.

Jane paid tribute to the crowd and the host city after the event: "It was a fantastic atmosphere today, I have never heard anything like it. Manchester has really embraced the Games."



Jane shows the joy of gold after her recent tribulations

Natalie Saville finished fourth and the two sisters were planning to celebrate that night with their family. The third Australian, Simone Wolowiec, had lost a lot of valuable time with a hamstring injury and had to be content with her fifth place.

1.	Jane Saville	Australia	1:36.34
2.	Lisa Kehler (nee Langford)	England	1:36.45
3.	Yu Fang Yuan	Malaysia	1:40.00

4.	NatalieSaville	Australia	1:42:38
5.	Simone Wolowiec	Australia	1:43:10
6.	Gabrielle Gorst	New Zealand	1:44:48
7.	Niobe Menendez	England	1:46:16
8.	Sharon Tonks	England	1:49:21
9.	Sara Cattermole	Scotland	1:50:29
	Carolyn Partington	Isle of Man	dnf

20 Km Walk for Men – 2002 Commonwealth Games

It was no surprise when Nathan Deakes won his third straight Australian 20 km title in mid February in Brisbane. His subsequent selection in both the Commonwealth Games and Racewalking World Cup teams was a formality. But his burst of intensive racing had come at a cost – a hamstring injury refused to heal and valuable months of training were lost. It was not until June that he could resume decent training and there was some speculation about whether he could handle the double at Manchester given the closeness of the events.

People need not have worried. Nathan was in a class of his own with regard to the walks. In the 20 km event which was held on the hottest day of the Games, he flew from the gun with an amazing 7:42 for the first 2 km and had what already looked like an insurmountable lead by the end of the first lap.



Nathan and Luke were too good for the opposition

The judges obviously thought otherwise and he was red-carded twice in the first 30 minutes of the race. Changing his race plan, he settled down to what was for him a pedestrian pace and ambled to the finish to win in 1:25:35.

Nathan admitted he had been worried by the two early red cards. “But in a way, they helped: I wanted to slow down towards the end”, he said, explaining that he would contest the 50 km wal over the same Salford Quays later the same week.

Luke Adams was a clear second in what had been a very good walks competition for the Australians.

1.	Nathan Deakes	Australia	1:25.35
2.	Luke Adams	Australia	1:26.03
3.	David Rotich	Kenya	1:28.20
4.	Andy Penn	England	1:29:15
5.	Don Bearman	England	1:37:29
	Dominic King	England	DQ
	Steve Partington	Isle of Man	DQ



Luke and Nathan with their medals

50 Km Walk for Men – 2002 Commonwealth Games

After a recovery time of only 36 hours, Nathan fronted for the 50 km event. This time, he did not have things his own way as New Zealander Craig Barrett, also a top 50 km walker, forced the pace and held Nathan over the first half of the race. But soon after the 25 km mark, Nathan made a decisive break and looked once again to have things well in hand. It was a great surprise to everyone when the TV coverage returned to the walk a few minutes later to show him clearly in trouble and stretching his troublesome hamstring.

With Barrett now on his heels, he slowly started again and tried to get back into the race. To his credit, he was successful and actually increased his pace to break the Kiwi walker. His final time of 3:52:40 was a new Commonwealth Games record and another world class performance. He finished over four minutes ahead of silver medal winner Barrett (3:56:42) who had collapsed within sight of the finish while leading the 50 km event four years earlier in Kuala Lumpur. Canada's Tim Berrett took third place, over a lap down, with a time of 4:04:25.



Nathan cools down in the humid conditions

Nathan's double captured the public imagination and was generally recognised as one of the top performances of the Games. Korzenowski had won the double at the 2000 Olympics but had a 5 day break between the 2 events. Nathan had only 36 hours between the two events for his double.

“This has never been done before”, said his coach Ron Weigel. “He could not recover fully. It was impossible. He's hurting now but he's fighting. He'll walk through the agony.”

Deakes said the heavy rain, which lasted for about 30 minutes in the second half of the race, had made it difficult to judge the course and try to dodge deep puddles.

Deakes' triumph was particularly sweet because he ruined the effort of the hosts to limit him to one event. The Australians were horrified when they learned that the 20 km walk would be conducted late on the Sunday afternoon and the 50 km would start at 10AM on the Tuesday. They requested more time be inserted between the events, as is the case in Olympics and World Championships. The organisers were unyielding – and so too was Deakes who defiantly decided to do the double, recovery time or not.

Th drug watchdogs wanted to make sure he did not use anything illegal in his recuperation. After the initial urine test on the Sunday for the winner, he was summoned back to the athletes' village for an unannounced sample session comprising one urine and two blood samples on the Monday, and then went through the formality of another post-competition test on the Tuesday. That makes 5 tests in 2 days!

Duane Cousins was fourth in 4:09:59 but the third Australian walker, Liam Murphy, was disqualified before the half way mark.

1.	Nathan Deakes	Australia	3:52.40
2.	Craig Barrett	New Zealand	3:56.42
3.	Timothy Berrett	Canada	4:04.25
4.	Duane Cousins	Australia	4:09:59
5.	Tony Sargisson	New Zealand	4:13:19
6.	Steven Hollier	England	4:16:46
7.	Gareth Brown	England	4:40:07
	Mark Easton	England	dq
	Liam Murphy	Australia	dq

2006 Commonwealth Games, MELBOURNE

The Games

The Australian city of Melbourne, hosted the XVIII Commonwealth Games between the 15 and 26 March 2006. Melbourne was the location for the 1956 Olympic Games, and 50 years later it hosted its first Commonwealth Games.

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. The city is a multicultural one, known for its arts, culture, parks and gardens, restaurants and sport.

The Melbourne Games had one village which housed both the athletes and team officials, located within three kilometres of the city centre. The majority of the sports venues were located along the Yarra River within the city precinct and were of world class standard. The Opening Ceremony and Athletics competition were held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, one of the world's largest and most outstanding outdoor sporting grounds. It seats approximately 100,000 spectators.

The following sports were contested: Aquatics, Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Bowls, Boxing, Cycling, Gymnastics, Hockey, Netball, Rugby 7s, Shooting, Squash, Table Tennis, Triathlon and Weightlifting. Australia dominated, winning a record 221 medals and more than doubling the efforts of England in second place.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Australia	84	69	68	221
England	36	40	34	110
Canada	26	29	31	86
India	22	17	11	50
South Africa	12	13	13	38
Scotland	11	7	11	29
Jamaica	10	4	8	22
Malaysia	7	12	10	29
New Zealand	6	12	13	31
Kenya	6	5	7	18
Singapore	5	6	7	18
Nigeria	4	6	7	17
Wales	3	5	11	19
Cyprus	3	1	2	6
Ghana	2	0	1	3
Uganda	2	0	1	3
Pakistan	1	3	1	5
Papua New Guinea	1	1	0	2
Isle of Man	1	0	1	2
Namibia	1	0	1	2
Tanzania	1	0	1	2
Sri Lanka	1	0	0	1
Mauritius	0	3	0	3
Bahamas	0	2	0	2
Northern Ireland	0	2	0	2
Cameroon	0	1	2	3
Botswana	0	1	1	2
Malta	0	1	1	2
Nauru	0	1	1	2
Bangladesh	0	1	0	1
Grenada	0	1	0	1
Lesotho	0	1	0	1
Trinidad and Tobago	0	0	3	3
Seychelles	0	0	2	2
Barbados	0	0	1	1
Fiji	0	0	1	1
Mozambique	0	0	1	1
Samoa	0	0	1	1
Swaziland	0	0	1	1

The Australian Walk Trials

The 50 km Selections

There was no specific trial for 50 km selection but the most important event on the calendar was clearly the 2005 Australian 50 km championship which was contested on May 1st in Melbourne.

Nathan Deakes, Craig Barrett and Duane Cousins lead early from Chris Erickson and Daniel Walters. By the 22 km mark, Nathan had made his break and went on to win comfortably in 3:47:51. His last 20 km was the fastest of the race – 88:39 – and he finished fresh only a week's after a fabulous 20 km victory in China.

Craig broke away from Duane around the 30 km mark and went on to record 3:58:39. As Duane faded, Chris Erickson and then Darren Bown caught and passed him and it looked like Chris and Darren would fight out third spot. When Darren, with only a very limited preparation, faded at around the 40 km mark, Chris was left on his own to bring it home with 4:03:42, a PB by over 10 minutes and a time that pushed him well up the ranking lists. Duane held on for 4:04:35. Nathan, Chris and Duane all broke the 4:05:00 Commonwealth Games A standard and put themselves in serious contention for next year's Games in Melbourne.

The event started at 7:30AM and conditions remained cool and almost ideal throughout the race.

1. Nathan Deakes	VIC	3.47.51
2. Craig Barrett	NZ	3.58.39
3. Chris Erickson	VIC	4.03.42
4. Duane Cousins	VIC	4.04.35
5. Darren Bown	SA	4.07.22
6. Troy Sundstrom	NSW	4.18.28
7. Daniel Walters	VIC	DQ
8. Frank Bertei	VIC	DNS

The first three Australians had to wait a further 9 months before their team selections were confirmed in February 2006 but no one bettered their times and the announcement was as expected.

The 20 Km Trials

The 2006 National Open 20 km Roadwalking titles were contested at Homebush in Sydney on Saturday 4th February. An 8AM start combined with overcast conditions meant that walkers were spared the worst of the usually hot humid Sydney weather. On the Thursday it was 39°C so thank goodness for a bit of luck! The walks also doubled as the Commonwealth Games and Racewalking World Cup trials so large fields were seen.

Defending Commonwealth champion Nathan Deakes walked his way onto his third Commonwealth Games team with a dominant display. Nathan, Luke Adams and Jared Tallent broke away right from the start and were never challenged for the top three placings. Nathan made his winning break just after half-way and went to the line unchallenged in a time of 1:22.13 - importantly under the A-qualifying standard. Luke was second (1:23.07), also an A-qualifier and automatic selection, with Jared third in a B qualifying time of 1:25.22.

But the final outcome was not certain. After finally overcoming persistent hamstring problems a few months before, he slipped and fell during a training walk in Thredbo two weeks before the 20 km trial, injuring his knee.

"At first they thought I'd torn my meniscus, which would have put me out of the Games, but the femur bone took most of the impact. I tore a muscle at the back of my knee and had fluid running down into my calf, so it has been quite painful. I just wanted to come out today and confirm that I'm one of the best athletes in Australia and I'm looking forward to defending my titles in Melbourne," said Nathan, who looked like he'd strolled done to the newsagents to pick up the morning paper, as opposed to the 20km he'd just endured at just over four-minutes per kilometre.

The high quality field produced 2 Commonwealth Games A qualifiers and 3 B qualifiers.

1. Nathan Deakes	ACT	1:22:13
2. Luke Adams	NSW	1:23:09
3. Jared Tallent (U23)	AIS	1:25:23
4. Adam Rutter (U23)	AIS	1:26:51
5. Duane Cousins	VIS	1:27:54

6. Darren Bown	SASI	1:29:31
7. Chris Erickson	VIS	1:30:30
8. Thomas Barnes	VIC	1:33:28
9. Troy Sundstrom	NSW	1:37:07
10. Danny Hawksworth	VIC	1:39:36
11. Kim Mottrom (U23)	SA	1:39:43
12. Ashley Colquhoun (U23)	ACT	1:44:05
13. Michael Smith (U23)	NSW	1:47:02
14. Michael McCagh (U23)	AIS	DNF

In the women's event, Jane Saville was just as dominant. Despite making mutterings about retirement following a disappointing display in the previous IAAF World Championships, the 2002 Commonwealth Games champion was giving no such indication that she is about to hang up the shoes, even talking about the possibility of continuing on to Beijing following her weekend win. "After what happened in Helsinki you always question whether it's worth it, but I've put that behind me," she said.

Jane recorded an automatic Commonwealth Games spot in winning with 1:33.25, ahead of sister Natalie (1:35.25), with Cheryl Webb third (1:35.59). The next 5 finishers all beat the Commonwealth Games B standard and, as Australians filled the first six places on the Commonwealth rankings, the first three were subsequently selected to represent Australia in Melbourne the next month.

1. Jane Saville	NSWI	1:33:19
2. Natalie Saville	NSWI	1:35:25
3. Cheryl Webb	NSWI	1:35:59
4. Lisa Grant (U23)	NSWI	1:36:40
5. Kellie Wapshott	VIC	1:37:22
6. Claire Woods	SASI	1:37:43
7. Megan Szirom	VIC	1:39:47
8. Michelle French	AIS	1:41:19
9. Laura Johnson (U23)	NSW	1:47:15
10. Claire Bock	QLD	1:50:17
11. Vanessa Ebejer (U23)	NSW	1:54:24
12. Chloe Jones (U23)	NSW	1:56:48
13. Christina Alldis (U23)	NSW	2:03:14
14. Carma Watson	NZL	DNF
15. Simone Wolowiec	VIC	DNF

The Commonwealth Games Walks

All three walks were held at the Docklands Precinct in inner Melbourne. The two 20 km events were contested on Monday 20th March and the 50 km walk was contested on Friday 24th March.



Jane and Nathan celebrate their victories in the 20 km events (photos from A.A. Website)

Overall, Australia won 8 of the 9 medals on offer in an astonishing display of depth and quality. The first day of racing saw Australia pick up all 6 medals in the men's and women's 20 km events and in the 50 km event, they won 2 of the 3 medals on offer.

The Docklands course offered maximum viewing opportunities for spectators and allowed them to get up close and personal with the walkers as they swept past. Thousands lined the 2 km lap and the atmosphere was one of excitement and cheerful support. Although the course was a fairly technical one with lots of twists and turns, the times were fast and competitors seemed to handle it well.

20 Km Walk for Women – 2006 Commonwealth Games

The women's event started at 9AM on Monday 20th March in overcast conditions. Even when the sun came out later in the morning and the temperature crept towards the mid twenties, a cool onshore breeze provided some relief.

Jane Saville won her third consecutive Commonwealth Games gold medal with sister Natalie taking silver and fellow Aussie Cheryl Webb the bronze. All 3 girls were under Jane's Games record which she set in winning in Manchester in 2002.

Sri Lanka's Geetha Gallage started the race hard and went to an initial lead in the first lap, followed by the 3 Australians. Soon she was swallowed up by the Australian juggernaut and from then on, it was a succession of gold singlets. Jane went to the lead but Natalie chased hard and remained within striking distance for most of the race.

Jane's final time of 1:32.46 was some 4 minutes faster than Manchester and Natalie hung on superbly for her silver medal winning time of 1:33.33. They joined Cycling sisters Anna and Kerry Meares as the second pair of Australian sisters to take out gold and silver in the same event at these Games.

In her first Commonwealth Games appearance, Cheryl Webb won the bronze medal with a time of 1:36.03. She had chased the Saville sisters throughout the 20 km but the gap always looked unassailable.

The South African competitors, who were well positioned throughout the race, finished behind the Australian pack, with Nicolene Cronje taking fourth place and Suzanne Erasmus fifth. India's Deepmala L Devi finished sixth, with the English pair of Johanna Jackson and Niobe Menendez finishing seventh and eighth. Geetha Gallage, who had led early, withdrew from the event after 12km, apparently suffering from exhaustion.



The Australian trio in action early in the event

1. Jane Saville	AUS	1:32:46	GR
2. Natalie Saville	AUS	1:33:33	SB
3. Cheryl Webb	AUS	1:36:03	
4. Nicolene Cronje	RSA	1:38:19	SB
5. Suzanne Erasmus	RSA	1:40:54	PB
6. Deepmala L. Devi	IND	1:41:54	SB
7. Johanna Jackson	ENG	1:42:04	PB
8. Niobe Menendez	ENG	1:47:35	
9. Geetha Gallage	SRI	DNF	

Jane's lap times read impressively: 9:14, 8:14, 27:24, 36:34, 45:48, 55:04, 1:04:16, 1:13:39, 1:23:10, 1:32:46.

20 Km Walk for Men – 2006 Commonwealth Games

The men's 20 km race started at noon, soon after the women's event had completed and once again, the Australians made a clean sweep of the medals.

Nathan Deakes and Luke Adams went out fast and the field was well spread before the first lap was even completed. Jared Tallent went out more conservatively in a small group which included the Kenyan David Rotich (third in Manchester), the Indian Jalan and the English walkers.

Such was Nathan's pace that Luke was forced to let him go after only 2 km and from then on it was Nathan walking against the clock. He went through the first 10 km in about 39:36 in a superb display of speed walking. If anyone thought that he might be taking it easy with a 50 km event to follow in only 4 days, Nathan had other plans. His final time of 1:19:55 took over 4 minutes off his Manchester Games record (in fact, the first 3 all broke the Games record).

Luke gamely chased Nathan throughout the race and really only lost significant ground in the final laps. His final time of 1:21:38 earned him a second silver medal, matching his Manchester effort.

Jared Tallent, the youngest competitor in the field at the age of 21, soon broke away from the second group and walked the remainder of the race on his own behind Nathan and Luke but well clear of the other walkers. His final time of 1:23.32 was his second fastest ever and rounded out the trifecta.



The three Australian medallists

Kenya's David Kimutai Rotich held on to finish in fourth place, a position he had maintained since the early stages of the race. He had taken third in Manchester and this was a much faster walk but he it was too hard an ask to split the strong Australian team. Fifth place went to India's Parayil Jalan and the English walkers filled out the remaining places.

Nathan had only a short time for recover and prepare for the gruelling 50km Walk. “Four days isn’t long and 50km is a pretty daunting distance, but I’m pretty optimistic about my chances,” he said.

His post-race comment summed it up nicely: “I’m a Melburnian at heart, and with the absolutely fabulous support - an Aussie trifecta in the Women’s and Men’s - we couldn’t have scripted it better.”

1. Nathan Deakes	AUS	1:19:55	GR
2. Luke Adams	AUS	1:21:38	
3. Jared Tallent	AUS	1:23:32	
4. David Kimutai Rotich	KEN	1:25:42	
5. Parayil Jalan	IND	1:30:43	
6. Daniel King	ENG	1:31:17	
7. Dominic King	ENG	1:32:21	
8. Andrew Penn	ENG	1:32:54	
9. Dip Chand	FIJ	DNF	
10. Abdul Moh'd Sharrulhaizy	MAS	DQ	

Nathan's lap times showed amazing consistency with his slowest lap still a very swift 8:10: 7:44, 15:32, 23:32, 31:39, 39:36, 47:34, 55:38, 1:03:43, 1:11:53, 1:19:55

50 Km Walk for Men – 2006 Commonwealth Games

The last of the Commonwealth Games walks was completed on the morning of Friday 24th March at the same Docklands course in Melbourne. The day was expected to be hot (max expected 30°C) and, while the 8AM start was some consolation, it was expected to be a torrid affair in the Melbourne sun.

Luckily early morning cloud cover and the morning shadows from the surrounding buildings shielded the walkers for the first half of the race but the second half was walked in the sunshine with the temperature quickly rising.

Nathan Deakes did not disappoint, breaking his own Games record by 10 minutes to finish in a fantastic 3:42:53. He walked with the other walkers for the first couple of laps before heading off on his own and increasing his pace each 10 km split right through to the end. The first 10 km was the slowest of his race! What an amazing athlete - 4 golds from the last 2 Commonwealth Games.



Nathan walked his own race to win gold in a new Games Record and 2006 World Best time

The battle for the minor medals was fierce with Craig Barrett, Tim Berrett and Duane Cousins pushing each other through

the first 20 km in 1:32:17. Chris Erickson decided to let them go, relying on the second half to sort things out. The early pace took its toll and first Tim Barrett and then Craig Barrett dropped off. That left the 3 Aussies clearly in front with Nathan leading Duane and Chris hot in pursuit. Chris worked hard to bridge the gap to Duane and got it down to 20 secs at one stage before Duane responded brilliantly and started to increase the margin. But then tragedy for Duane when informed he had been disqualified. This left Chris in second spot with 5 km to go and it looked like it was all over. But the second of the Kiwi walkers, Tony Sargisson, was walking an inspired race further back in the field and he had other ideas.

Catching Chris with just over 1 lap to go, he surged past the slowing Australian and powered home to take silver in 3:58:05. His splits were 1:59:59 followed by 1:58:06. He negative split the second half by nearly 2 minutes. Chris held on gamely for third with 3:58:22. It was the first time under 4 hours for both Tony and Chris.



Chris Erickson, Tim Berrett and Duane Cousins were amongst the early pace setters but Tony Sargisson spoiled the party

Craig Barrett finished next in 4:02:27 ahead of Tim Barrett who was fifth in 4:08:18. Both these walkers headed out hard and the warm conditions perhaps laid waste to their plans. Tim had just come from Canada with its sub zero temperatures so he was never going to be acclimatised for the hot Melbourne weather.

Steve Partington (Isle of Man) was next in in 4:25:18. This was his sixth Comm Games appearance, a great record that will take some beating. The only other finisher was Abdul Mohd Sharrulhaizy of Malaysia who showed great courage to labour through the midday heat and complete the course in 5:07:39. He had been disqualified in the 20 km event and wanted to show that he could finish such a race and walk to the required international standard.

Once again, huge crowds lined the course and witnessed an exciting event.

1. Nathan Deakes	AUS	3:42:53	GR
2. Tony Sargisson	NZ	3:58:05	PB
3. Chris Erickson	AUS	3:58:22	PB
4. Craig Barrett	NZ	4:02:27	
5. Tim Berrett	CAN	4:08:18	
6. Steve Partington	IOM	4:25:39	
7. Abdul Moh'd Sharrulhaizy	MAS	5:07:32	
Charles Arosanyin	NGR	DSQ	
Duane Cousins	AUS	1DSQ	
Dip Chand	FIJ	DNS	

How did walk numbers compare this time with previous Games?

Some people commented on the small size of the walk fields so let's look at the walk numbers Games by Games. A perusal of the following table shows, perhaps surprisingly, that the walk fields were no smaller this year than in other years and were in fact slightly bigger than in Manchester.

YEAR	EVENT	NO. OF COMPETITORS	COUNTRIES REPRESENTED	TOTAL COMPETITORS
1966	20 Mile Walk Men	12	7	12
1970	20 Mile Walk Men	21	12	21
1974	20 Mile Walk Men	15	6	15
1978	30 Km Walk Men	16	7	16
1982	30 Km Walk Men	19	9	19
1986	30 Km Walk Men	11	6	11
1990	30 Km Walk Men	13	4	24
	10 Km Walk Women	11		
1994	30 Km Walk Men	15	8	29
	10 Km Walk Women	14	7	
1998	20 Km Walk Men	17	8	43
	50 Km Walk Men	13	6	
	10 Km Walk Women	13	7	
2002	20 Km Walk Men	7	4	26
	50 Km Walk Men	9	4	
	20 Km Walk Women	10	6	
2006	20 Km Walk Men	9	6	29
	50 Km Walk Men	10	7	
	20 Km Walk Women	10	5	

The mainstays of the Commonwealth Games walks have been Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Canada. The occasional African has competed, the Asian and Pacific countries have often entered one or more competitors and the Caribbean countries have been regular non-starters. But this is not confined to the walks. The same can be said of most of the more technical Track and Field events. In 2006, there were a number of Track and Field events with smaller fields than the walks and some sports had very small fields indeed.

The challenge for the Commonwealth remains the same - to foster sporting participation and excellence in the many smaller and less economically viable countries.