



SPORTS AND OUR IDENTITY – 1

Sport has played and continues to play a huge part in shaping Australia's national identity. Our sense of national pride is closely connected with sport. The levels of participation in sport and as spectators are much higher than many other countries. Australia's overall climate enables a vast range of sporting activities to be participated in or watched all year round.



Read about some of our interesting sporting facts that help explain or have contributed to Australia's sporting passion.

Australia is so passionate about sport that it is described as 'a national religion'.

Four out of the top five most watched broadcasts for 2006 were sporting programs.

The only sports currently being contested at the Summer Olympic Games that Australia has not won a medal in are football, handball, modern pentathlon, badminton, fencing and table tennis.

At some level, sport is part of most Australians' recreational or professional lives; by direct participation, as an actual spectator or as an 'armchair' follower.

Australia is one of two countries to have competed at every modern Summer Olympic Games and one of six to compete at every Commonwealth Games.

Australia has been first on the medal tally for 11 out of the 18 Commonwealth Games that have been held so far.

Many countries have a national passion for one or two sports; e.g. ice hockey—Canada, soccer—Brazil. Australia has a national passion for an unlimited number—cricket, rugby league, rugby union, soccer, 'Aussie Rules', swimming, hockey, basketball and netball to name a few.

At an international level, Australians have excelled in team sports such as the men's and women's cricket, hockey, water polo, basketball and wheelchair basketball; women's netball and softball; men's rugby league and rugby union and various team events in men's and women's rowing, canoeing, kayaking and sailing.

Australia is the only country that has four professional football codes—AFL ('Aussie Rules'), Rugby League, Rugby Union, and football (soccer).

Aussie Rules is a uniquely Australian game. It is the most highly attended spectator sport in the nation. The AFL Grand Final is the highest attended club championship in the world.

Australia has been proud to have had numerous individual international sporting champions, covering a wide variety of sports. Past and present champions include Ian Thorpe, Dawn Fraser (swimming); Karrie Webb, Greg Norman (golf); Cathy Freeman, Herb Elliot (athletics); Layne Beachley, Mark Richards (surfing); Margaret Court, Lleyton Hewitt (tennis); Cadel Evans, Sarah Carrigan (cycling); Wayne Gardiner, Michael Doohan (500 cc motorcycle); Alisa Camplin, Michael Milton (skiing); Peter Robertson, Emma Snowsill (triathlon) and Sarah Fitz-Gerald, Geoff Hunt (squash).

Considering our population of 21 000 000 people, Australia has had remarkable success at the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. Australia was ranked fourth in the medal tally at the Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004 Olympic Games behind the USA, Russia and China, which have enormous populations. In the Paralympic Games in those years, Australia was ranked first and fifth.



SPORT AND OUR IDENTITY - 2

Use the text on page 43 to answer the questions.

1. Write keywords from Paragraph 1 to list three reasons why sport plays an important part in Australia's identity.

2. List four team sports that Australia has excelled in.

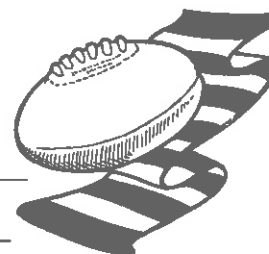
3. List the four professional football codes in Australia.

4. Write one fact that shows how well Australia has done in the Olympic or Commonwealth Games.

5. Unjumble each sport then join each sporting champion to his or her sport.

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| (a) <i>Emma Snowsill</i> • | • misingwm |
| (b) <i>Leyton Hewitt</i> • | • hatlorint |
| (c) <i>Layne Beachley</i> • | • niksig |
| (d) <i>Wayne Gardiner</i> • | • hatslicte |
| (e) <i>Ian Thorpe</i> • | • ginfrus |
| (f) <i>Cadel Evans</i> • | • nestin |
| (g) <i>Cathy Freeman</i> • | • 050 cc rycylmtooe |
| (h) <i>Alisa Camplin</i> • | • nilcygc |

6. Which fact do you consider the most interesting? Explain your answer.



Australians love to give their national sporting teams nicknames. Some include: Boomers—men's basketball, Opals—women's basketball, Kookaburras—men's hockey, Hockeyroos—women's hockey, Rollers—men's wheelchair basketball, Gliders—women's wheelchair basketball.