

History and Progression of Commonwealth Games

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INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth Games is an international, multi-sport event involving athletes from the Commonwealth of Nations. It is organized among the countries of former British Empire. The current form of games has come after many evolutionary chances. The Commonwealth Games are arranged every four years between the Olympic years among the member countries of Commonwealth of Nations since 1930; except 1942 and 1946, due to World War II. It is the third mega sports event in the world after Olympics and Asian Games. Commonwealth Games being long known as the 'Friendly Games'. There are currently 54 members of the Commonwealth of Nations, and 72 Games Associations (teams) participate in the Games. The Commonwealth Games may not have as rich sporting history as the Olympics but over the years, the event has grown in stature from just being a sporting extravaganza for former British colonies by throwing up some world-class athletes. It has tremendous growth and progression from one after other games.

HISTORY OF COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Commonwealth Games are like the Olympics, the multi-sport event -- dubbed as the "Friendly Games" -- is held every four

years; but, unlike the Olympics, the competition only comprises countries and territories which formed part of the British Empire in the earlier period. Reverend Ashley Cooper was the first person to propose the idea of having a Pan-Britannic sporting contest to foster a spirit of goodwill and understanding within the British Empire. The holding of the first recorded Games between Empire athletes coincided with the celebrations in connection with the Coronation of His Majesty King George the Fifth, in 1911, and was known as the 'Festival of Empire'.

The idea for organizing Commonwealth Games took shape during the Olympic Games of 1928 as Canada got the rights of organizing the first meet and then at the initiation of a Canadian athlete, Melville Marks Robinson, the first ever British Empire Games were held in Hamilton, Canada in 1930. It attracted 400 athletes from eleven countries with six sports. The success of the first Games provided enough incentive to make them a regular feature. In the year 1954, feature the name of the game was changed as British Empire and Commonwealth Games. In the year 1970, the games were renamed as British Commonwealth Games. In the Year 1978, the name for the games was again changed to The Commonwealth Games; and it is retained till date.

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Progression and also Indian performance of Commonwealth Games

S. No	Venue	Year and No. of sports & Events			No. of teams and participants		India's Medal Tally			
							G	S	B	Rank
1	Hamilton, Canada	1930	6	59	11	400	Did not participate			-
2	London, U K	1934	6	68	16	500	0	0	1	12
3	Sydney, Australia	1938	7	71	15	464	0	0	0	Nil
4	Auckland, N Z	1950	9	88	12	590	Did not participate			-
5	Vancouver, Canada	1954	9	91	24	662	0	0	0	Nil
6	Cardiff, UK	1958	9	94	35	1122	2	1	0	8
7	Perth, Australia	1962	9	104	35	863	Did not participate			-
8	Jamaica, W I	1966	9	110	34	1050	3	4	3	8
9	Edinburgh, U K	1970	10	121	42	1383	5	3	4	6
10	Christchurch, N Z	1974	9	121	38	1276	4	8	3	6
11	Edmonton, Canada	1978	10	128	48	1473	5	5	5	6
12	Brisbane, Australia	1982	9	142	47	1583	5	8	3	6
13	Edinburgh, U K	1986	9	163	26	1662	Did not participate			-
14	Auckland, NZ	1990	9	204	55	2826	13	8	11	5
15	Victoria, Canada	1994	10	217	64	2557	6	11	7	6
16	Kuala Lumpur	1998	15	213	70	5065	7	10	8	7
17	Manchester, U K	2002	17	281	72	3679	30	22	17	4
18	Melbourne, Australia	2006	16	245	71	5766	22	17	10	4
19	New Delhi, India	2010	17	285	72	6081	38	27	36	2
20	Glasgow, Scotland	2014	18	261	71	4947	15	30	19	5
21	Gold Coast, Queensland	2018	19	275	71	4426	26	20	20	3

G-Gold, S-Silver, B-Bronze

The CWG has tremendous development, in all the aspects, one after other games. The number of games increased from six to nineteen and number of events increased from fifty-nine to two hundred and eighty-five. The participating teams also increased from eleven to seventy-two and the number of participants also increased from four hundred to six thousand and eighty-one. It shows a positive indication of rising interest of the people of commonwealth countries towards sports.

INDIA AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

The comparison of Indian performance at the CWG is something remarkable and marvelous. India made their debut in the 2nd edition of the CWG in 1934. In this meet India secured 12th position, in securing only one bronze medal by welterweight wrestler Rashid Anwar, where the Country took part as a British Colony. India open its account with only one bronze medal and thereafter, one after other, CWG medal tally and Indian rank increased in an

exemplary manner. Indian performance progressed from games to games. The first ever gold medal for India was won by 'Flying Sikh' Milkha Singh who won the 440 yards track event in the sixth edition of the Games in 1958 in Cardiff, United Kingdom. Having started off in 1934 with just one bronze medal, India have come a long way winning a total of 502 medals -- 181 gold, 174 silver and 147 bronze medals -- in 17 of the 21 editions that they competed in. India started the journey with one bronze medal in the first participation in 1934 and it reaches 2nd position by securing 101 medals includes 38 gold, 27 silver and 36 bronze medals in the 19th New Delhi CWG games. In the recently concluded CWG India secured 3rd position by securing 66 medals includes 26 gold, 20 silver and 20 bronze medals. It is remarkable and on the basis of this tendency we can forecast that, in the coming decades, we will reach the top position.

HISTORICAL FACTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Queen's Baton Relay

The Queen's Baton Relay is one of the great traditions of the Commonwealth Games, having started at the Games in Cardiff, Wales, in 1958. The Baton is now as much a part of the Commonwealth Games tradition as the torch is part of the Olympics. Melbourne 2006 has been the most memorable adventure so far, travelling for a year and a day visiting the 71 nations of the Commonwealth – home to one third of the world's population; and the

same tradition was much improved in the New Delhi Games. Over the years, the Queen's Baton Relay has evolved into a powerful symbol of the unity and diversity of the Commonwealth of Nations. With each Game, the tradition grows in scale and significance—including more nations, involving more participants and generating more excitement than ever before; but, the Delhi 2010 Baton's journey was planned to be the biggest yet. It is set to be the longest and most technologically advanced of the Baton Relays to date. The Queen's Baton travelled through all the Commonwealth countries until it landed in India where it spent 100 days touring the 28 states. It was then taken to its final destination, the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, for the Opening Ceremony of the XIX Commonwealth Games, where Her Majesty's message was read aloud to the athletes. The Queen's Baton for the 2010 Commonwealth Games is a delicate mix of aesthetics and technology with an in-built location tracking system and a camera capable of sending images to the Games website. When it reached New Delhi, for the October 3 opening ceremony, it had travelled over 190,000 kilometers, in 340 days.

Approved Sports

There are a total of 31 sports (with two multi-disciplinary sports) and 7 Para-sports which are approved by the Commonwealth Games Federation. They are categorized into three types. Core sports must be included on each programme. A number of optional sports may be picked by the host nation, which may include some

team sports such as Basketball. Recognized sports are sports which have been approved by the CGF but are deemed to need promotion; host nations may not pick these sports for their programme until the CGF's requirements are fulfilled.

Counties who participated in all 21 games

Only six teams have attended every Commonwealth Games; and they are: Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales.

Organizers from Asian countries

India is the second Asian country to host CWG; after 1998 games organised by Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Boycotts

The Commonwealth Games, like the Olympic Games, has also suffered from political boycotts. Most of these can be linked to the political situation in South Africa. The 1934 Games were originally awarded to Johannesburg, South Africa; but, were moved to London to prevent a political crisis concerning the way South Africa might greet and treat black and Asian Commonwealth athletes. Nigeria boycotted the 1978 Games in protest of New Zealand's sporting contacts with South Africa, while 32 of 59 nations from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean boycotted the 1986 Commonwealth Games due to the Thatcher government's attitude towards South African sporting contacts. Boycotts were also threatened in 1974, 1982, and 1990, because of South Africa. In 1998, at the Kuala Lumpur Games, the team from Singapore was booed as it entered the stadium during the opening ceremony, reflecting the cold relations between Singapore and the hosts. The boycotts,

scandals and controversies could spoil the image of Commonwealth Games; but, everything was tackled in a better way.

Vision

The vision of Commonwealth Games is to promote a unique, friendly, world-class games and to develop sports for the benefit of the people, the nations and the territories of the Commonwealth; and thereby strengthen the Commonwealth.

Growth of Games

Before 1998, the Commonwealth Games traditionally hosted only single-athlete events. In 1998, however, team sports were introduced at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur. For the first time, Cricket, field Hockey, Netball and Rugby were contested. In 2002, field Hockey, Netball and Rugby sevens again were contested, though Cricket was dropped from the schedule. In 2006, Basketball was added to the programme; but, was again dropped in 2010, and field Hockey, Netball and Rugby were the only team sports contested. Tennis has been approved at the Commonwealth Games, long back, as an optimal sport; unfortunately it was not included up to 2006 Games. With a hard struggle Tennis has been included in the New Delhi, 2010, Commonwealth Games; and, in these five events, is conducted in men and women singles and doubles as well as mixed doubles. The Commonwealth Games have included disabled athletes since 2002. Disabled athletes participate in Swimming, Athletics, Table Tennis and Power Lifting at the Commonwealth Games. The major sports events in 1930 Commonwealth Games were Boxing, Lawn Bowls,

Swimming, Wrestling, Athletics and Rowing. In 1930, it just started with 6 sports became 19 sports in the 21st games. These 19 sports are from the 26 approved sports administered by Commonwealth Governing Bodies, a minimum of ten core sports and maximum of seventeen sports must be included in any Commonwealth Games schedule. Addition and omission of games are as per the description of the Commonwealth Governing Bodies.

Mascots of Commonwealth Games

Mascot has a great importance in any of the world recognized games. The mascot concept was first introduced in the 1978 Edmonton, Canada Commonwealth games, by the host country. This concept decides the promotion and commercial success of the any international Games. In the 2010 New Delhi Commonwealth Games, Shera was the mascot. It was a Royal Bengal Tiger and it is the national animal of India. The mascot embodies values that the Indian nation is proud of: Courage, Majesty Power and Grace. Borobi was the mascot of the 2018 Commonwealth Games, held in Gold Coast, Australia. Borobi is a male Koala with blue fur and unusual markings on his paws. Like this, mascots were designed since 1978 CWG, by the host countries, related to some themes.

NOTABLE COMPETITORS IN THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Maximum Games Participation

Lawn bowler Willie Wood from Scotland is the first competitor to have competed in seven Commonwealth Games, from 1974 to 2002. Also, Greg Yelavich, a

sports shooter from New Zealand, has won 11 medals in seven games from 1986 to 2010.

Most Gold Medals Achievers

- Swimmer Susie O'Neill won 10 Gold medals at three successive Games (1990, 94, 98).
- Swimmer Ian Thorpe won 10 Gold medals at two successive Games (1998, 2002).
- Swimmer Leisel Jones won 10 Gold medals at three successive Games (2002, 06, 10).

Most Gold Medals won at a single Game

- Swimmer Susie O'Neill won 6 Gold medals at the 1998 Games.
- Swimmer Ian Thorpe won 6 Gold medals at the 2002 Games.

Most Medals won by a Competitor

Shooter Phillip Adams has won 18 medals (7 Gold, 9 Silver and 2 Bronze) at five Games (1982, 86, 90, 94 and 2002). Swimmer Susie O'Neill has won 15 medals (10 Gold and 5 Silver) at three Games (1990, 94, 98).

Oldest Gold Medal Winner

Dorothy Roche was 61 years and 10 months old when she won a gold medal in the women's fours in Bowls at the 1990 Games.

Youngest Gold Medal Winner

Jenny Turrell was 13 years and 8 months old when she won a gold medal in the 400 meters Freestyle Swimming at the 1974 Games.

Medal tally of first 5 countries up to 2018 CWG

Rank	Country	No. CWG participated	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Australia	21	846	712	662	2220
2	England	21	719	717	711	2147
3	Canada	21	447	475	506	1428
4	India	17	181	174	147	502
5	New Zealand	21	159	270	285	714

In comparison of all the 21 games, Australia is leading the medal tally with 2220 medals including 846 gold medals followed by England with 2147 medals with 719 gold medals.

More Number of Times Champions

From 1930 to 2018 CWG, Australia secured a top position 14 times; England 6 times; and Canada only once in 1978 games. Throughout the CWG, Australia is the only country which dominates in many aspects.

CONCLUSION

The Commonwealth Games is really a game which promotes cooperation and friendship among the commonwealth countries. It is ever marching forward from game to game in different aspects. It is really a great experience to witness the fast development of the Commonwealth Games. It helps to establish social relationships, socialization and social integration of the people, in the Commonwealth countries.

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