

2007 AYOF Sport Highlights

Athletics - In the stifling heat 18 AYOF athletic records were broken at the Sydney Athletic Centre over the two days of competition. Athletes from the four Australian teams won 27 of the 40 gold medals on offer with China winning 10 and Chinese Taipei 3.

In the field events Australian Vicki Parnov was only 10cm shy of winning the men's event in setting a new AYOF women's record with a 4.25m clearance in the pole vault. Chinese sensation, 17-year-old Dan Song showed her class with a massive 55.54m throw in the javelin. Australian high jumper Joshua Heap, 16, also set a new record and confirmed he is one to watch in the future with a 2.17m clearance.

Badminton – China claimed all but two of the seven badminton gold medals in the Sports Halls A at Sydney Olympic Park. Only Malaysia's men's doubles team, Abdul Latif Mohamad Arif and Indra Mawan Saniru Vountus could stop the clean sweep in the elite events*.

** Group B medals were awarded for the development teams with NZL, AUS and Oceania medaling.*

Canoe/Kayak – Hungary was the dominant force in the canoe/kayak flatwater competition winning 6 gold and 11 medals in total after the two days of racing at the Sydney International Regatta Centre. Australia won a total of eight medals including two gold.

Slalom began on Day 4 of the AYOF at the Whitewater Centre at Penrith with temperatures reaching up to 40 degrees. The Chinese paddlers upset the teams from the United States of America, Japan and Australia. China won two of the four gold with the United States and Australia winning one each.

Cycling - There was outstanding performances and tight racing over the three days of competition at Dunc Gray Velodrome in Sydney's Bass Hill with five AYOF records broken. WA riders showed their class by winning five gold medals more than any other Australian state or international team. New Zealand riders picked up the most medals with their seven, comprising three gold, one silver and one bronze. Eddie Dawkins broke the AYOF record in the 1km time trial.



Olivia Wright and Rhiannan Iffland from Australia in the synchronised diving.
© Ian Waldie/Getty Images



Victorious China, winning 4 gold medals in the badminton competition.

© Badminton Australia



Luke Davison - Track Cycling.

© Matt King/Getty Images

In extremely hot conditions on the last day of the Festival Australian riders won the men's and women's criterium road events.

Diving – Chinese divers dominated the diving competition at the Sydney Aquatic Centre with Australia and Great Britain having high hopes for 14-year-old Melissa Wu and 12-year-old Thomas Daley respectively. However nobody could stop China from having a clean sweep of all eight gold.

Chinese diver Qin Tian stood above the rest of the competition taking home three individual gold medals beating his compatriots Ying Hong and Li Teng in the men's platform with a flurry of perfect 10 scores.

Football – Korea dominated both the boy's and girl's competitions in Football's debut at the AYOF. At Valentine Sports Park in oppressive heat they won all six round-robin matches to claim both gold medals. Australia accounted for the Asian challenge from Japan, China and Korea extremely well winning silver and bronze in the girl's and boy's competitions respectively. Japan won the other minor medals.

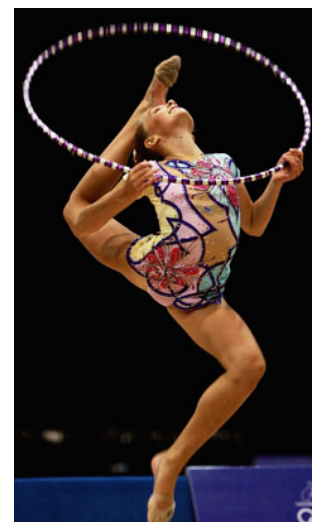


Figure Skating – Japan were the dominant country claiming four of the six medals on offer as figure skating made its AYOF debut. The Sydney Ice Arena was at capacity for every session with spectators loving the standard of competition.

Gymnastics - Rhythmic breakthrough for Australia winning only one gold gymnastics medal in a sensational performance by Chloe Hayes, Keziah Oliver, Danielle Prince and Zena Foale-Banks in the rhythmic team event. Hayes also achieved an individual bronze on the final day in the rhythmic all-around competition. China performed very strongly, winning the all-around gold and silver, plus silver in the team event.



Nanoha Sato in the figure skating.
© Ian Waldie/Getty Images



Chloe Hayes on the hoop at the AYOF.
© Ian Waldie/Getty Images

Artistic - China's artistic women cleaned up every gold medal. They won the team competition, Tian Jung led the trifecta in the all-around and they also won all four apparatus finals. In the men's artistic team Japan was too strong for China and Great Britain. Kazuaki Koizumi won the three gold at the Festival also winning the individual all-around and the high bar.

England's 2006 Commonwealth Pommel Horse Champion Louis Smith showed his class taking out his pet event, silver in the all-around and bronze on the high bar.

Trampoline - The trampoline event was dominated by Japan who won three of the four available gold medals. Australia took five of the minor medals – two silver and three bronze.

Hockey – The scorching heat did nothing to detract from the action at the Sydney Hockey Centre with the clashes between Great Britain and Australia enthralling the packed crowd.

The Australian men moved through in the round robin games undefeated. In the final Great Britain found something extra and pushed the game to a penalty shoot-out - Australia eventually won 7-6. China defeated Malaysia for the bronze in another penalty shoot-out 5-4.

The Australian women were also undefeated throughout the round-robin phase with strong wins against New Zealand, China and Great Britain. In the final the British came out fighting and never looked back eventually taking the gold with a surprise 4-2 victory. New Zealand won the bronze over China.



Australia win gold in the men's hockey.
© Mark Nolan/Getty Images

Rowing – Great Britain rowed away with half the gold winning six gold, five silver and one bronze from the 12 events. Sydney’s hot summer weather proved a nuisance for rowing with the heat forcing a change of schedule which meant even earlier starts. New Zealand won six medals (one gold, one silver, four bronze) and China four (one gold, one silver, two bronze). The Australian state based crews performed well with Tasmania picking up two gold and a silver, New South Wales one gold and four silver, and Western Australia one gold. In the final events Great Britain won the women’s eight and New South Wales powered away to win the men’s by over three seconds.



Great Britain Team

© Corey Davis/Getty Images

Sailing in Sydney Harbour, day 3

© Andrea Francolini



Sailing - A glistening Sydney Harbour played host to the first ever sailing event at the AYOF, where Canada, Great Britain, USA and New Zealand sailed against six Australian state teams in the mixed pacer class. Three days of competition involving 85 races came down to a close challenge for gold on the final day. The crowd turned out in droves at Farm Cove to witness the three Great Britain boats clinch the gold medal over Western Australia after winning the majority in the five race final.

Shooting – Great Britain dominated the skeet shooting, winning back-to-back gold in both the men’s and women’s finals. The AYOF also brought out the best in Australia’s shooters as Nicholas Kirley (double trap) and Catherine Skinner (trap) won gold. Australia finished the medal tally with two gold, one silver and two bronze from the five events, followed by Great Britain (two gold, two silver) and New Zealand (one silver, one bronze).

Short Track Speed Skating – Also appearing for the first time at the AYOF was short track speed skating, with five different events held for both men and women at the Sydney Ice Arena. Australia and China went head-to-head with Australia in the relays winning the men’s 5000m relay and China the women’s. China clearly took control of the women’s individual races – claiming all gold, silver and bronze medals. Sydney skater Ben Southee, 19, won the 1000m to claim Australia’s first international gold medal in short track since Steven Bradbury’s victorious win at the Salt Lake Winter Games in 2002. Overall China cleaned up with 23 medals while the Australian team won two gold, three silver and three bronze.



© Corey Davis/Getty Images

Swimming - At the Sydney Aquatic Centre China threw down the challenge to Australia and in the process nine AYOF swimming records were broken over the four days of competition. Going into the final session Australia and China were locked with eight gold a piece.

However, the Junior Dolphins rallied to finish with 13 gold and 39 medals to China’s 11 gold and 27 total. Japan also confirmed throughout the meet their emergence in the world stage picking up seven gold, five silver and four bronze.

Ellese Zalewski, Samantha Hamill and Belinda Hocking had been the shining stars of the Australian team over the first three days winning a swag of gold, silver and bronze between them.

Hamill led the charge on the first night, winning the gold medal and breaking World Record Holder Jessica Schipper's 2003 AYOF record in the 200m butterfly.

On the final night 14-year-old Queenslander Cate Campbell shocked even herself in the 50m freestyle when she stopped the clock in the final at a sizzling 24.89 – the sixth fastest time recorded anywhere in the world in the last 12 months.



Yosuke Mori wins gold for Japan in the 200m butterfly.

© Matt King/Getty Images

Table Tennis - Tense close action that drew big crowds and exciting competition, with China dominating the female single preliminary matches, leading to an all-Chinese final between Meng Chen and Chen Xi Shi - the gold eventually going to Xi. The two later played together in the double's final, winning a second gold over Chinese Taipei.

In the men's singles Great Britain's Paul Drinkhall missed out on gold after a long battle with Chinese Taipei's Hung Chieh Chiang. Drinkhall also met the Chinese in the doubles final and was successful in winning here.

Despite being the underdogs, Australia, New Caledonia and New Zealand kept the opposition on their toes. Australia managed to make it to the semi-finals in both the singles and doubles competitions but missed out on any medals.

Taekwondo - Australian players won 12 of the 30 medals on offer with Christopher Beach and Gabriel Andres winning gold. However, it was China and Chinese Taipei which won the most gold with four and three respectively.



Weiji Tian and Gylan Al Atroushi in Taekwondo on Day 3.

© Mark Nolan/Getty Images