



Australia's Performance

In what events did Australia compete?

Where did Australia rank? Why?

Berlin was a lean Games for Australia. Except for the St Louis Games of 1904, where Australia won no medals, it remains the most modest medal haul ever. The only medallist was athlete John 'Jack' Metcalfe, who won a bronze medal in the triple jump. A team of 33, including four women, represented Australia, with 1932 cycling gold medallist Edgar 'Dunc' Gray.

For some Australian competitors the 12 year gap between the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936 and the next Olympics in London in 1948 meant that they would not have the opportunity to compete again.

Jack Metcalfe

In December 1935 Jack Metcalfe set a new world record for the triple jump at a Sydney competition. At Empire Games around these years he competed and had success in the long jump, triple jump and javelin.

What distinguished Jack Metcalfe's result at the Berlin Olympic Games?

<http://corporate.olympics.com.au/athlete/jack-metcalfe>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Metcalfe

Jack Metcalfe would go to the London Olympics in 1948 as the coach of John Winter, who won gold in the high jump.

Edgar 'Dunc' Gray

Gray carried Australian flag for the 33 athletes at the Opening Ceremony. He had won the gold medal for cycling at the 1932 Games but wasn't able to match this performance in Berlin.

Doris Carter

Carter was a high jumper and Australia's first women's field athlete to make the finals. She was placed sixth in the women's high jump with 1.55 metres.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doris_Carter

Performances

During the coming war Carter was Director of the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force and a Flying Officer, she was the first woman to fly both the Canberra Bomber and the Vampire Jet. She had distinguished career of service to Australia and sport

National Library of Australia: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/people/707066?q&l-birth=1912&c=people>

Could this be Doris carter visiting Berlin in 1948: <http://cas.awm.gov.au/item/030296/03>

Awarded: Officer of the Order of the British Empire

Gerald Backhouse

Backhouse came 8th (time unknown) in the 800m final which was won by the American athlete John Woodruff. He also competed in the first round of the 1500 metres.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerald_Backhouse

During World War 2 Gerald Backhouse was in the Royal Australian Air Force serving on attachment with the Royal Air Force. At the outbreak of war, 10 Squadron RAAF was in Britain collecting Sunderland flying boats purchased by the RAAF. The squadron was offered to Britain to serve as part of the Royal Air Force Coastal Command, flying anti-submarine patrols over the Atlantic Ocean for the duration of the war. Gerald Backhouse died in a practice bombing flight in England on the 28 December 1941. His name is located at **panel 118** in the [Commemorative Area](#) at the Australian War Memorial.

http://www.awm.gov.au/research/people/roll_of_honour/person.asp?p=552021

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/athletes/ba/gerald-backhouse-1.html>

Berlin 1936 Not Australia's Games

Australia had a very small team in Berlin in 1936.



Focus

Australia's performance at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games.



Activity

Identify and explain some of the factors which might have influenced Australia's overall performance.

For Australia, there was little joy in the results, simply a realisation that its athletes were competing generally out of their class. Of the team of thirty-three, the second largest ever to have been sent away, **Jack Metcalfe** was the only medal winner, with a bronze in the triple jump. Only in St Louis in 1904, where the total representation was one, had Australia ever fared worse.

Doris Carter, who injured her right, take-off leg four days before she was due to compete, did well to finish equal sixth in the high jump. The swimmers **Percy Oliver**, **Bill Kendall** and **Evelyn de Lacy** all improved on their best performances (and Kendall became the first Australian to swim 100 metres inside one minute), but they were never serious contenders for medals. The wrestlers **Dick Garrard**, **Eddie Scarf** and **James O'Hara** looked impressive, but had trouble coping with unfamiliar rules and questionable judging; at one stage, after Garrard lost a doubtful decision, six nations protested against three judges who officiated. **Dunc Gray**, beaten in a semi-final of the 100 metres sprint, did best of the three cyclists, and the late-entry double scullers, **Herbert Turner** and **Bill Dixon**, finished sixth in their final.

To **Merv Wood**, the Games of 1936 represented a turning point, a moment when it was apparent that sport would never be the same: Until then, sports used to be not much more than pastimes, but suddenly you could see what a critical role training played. You could see that the human body could be forced to do better. In some sports, the professional kind of sports, people had always trained hard. But in others they had just dabbled. One of the reasons the Australians didn't do well was that they were not putting a total effort into sport, they were still regarding it as a pastime. And transport was an awful problem. They were coming from the other side of the world, on a boat for five or six weeks, losing their condition, then trying to compete against superbly conditioned athletes.

Harry Gordon, *Australia and the Olympic Games*, Queensland University Press, 1996 (3rd edition), p155-156.