

Commonwealth Games

The Commonwealth Games is an international athletic competition held every four years among members of the Commonwealth of Nations. By the 2026 Commonwealth Games, seventy-two nations and territories belonging to the Commonwealth were recognized, collectively representing nearly one-third of the world's population. Like the Summer Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games is a televised event comprising multiple fair-weather sports, such as athletics, boxing, hockey, netball, rugby and swimming.

The Commonwealth Games are also known as the Friendly Games due to the event's atmosphere of friendly competition between Commonwealth member states. The Commonwealth Games Federation states that the core values of the games are humanity, equality and destiny.

The host location changes for each Commonwealth Games

Australia hosted in Sydney in 1938, Perth in 1962, Brisbane in 1982, Melbourne in 2006 and Gold Coast, Queensland, in 2018. New Zealand hosted the games in Auckland in 1950, Christchurch in 1974, and Auckland again in 1990. England hosted the 2002 games in Manchester and the 2022 games in Birmingham; Delhi, India, hosted the 2010 games; and Scotland hosted the 2014 and is schedule to host the 2026 games in Glasgow.

Origins and History

Although it is now described as an event celebrating the shared values and common attributes of participating nations, the Commonwealth Games began as a celebration of the strength of the British Empire and the friendly relationships between its dominions.

The first large-scale sporting competition between British Empire territories was organised in 1911 to celebrate the coronation of King George V. The Festival of Empire, held in London, included a multi-event competition between Australasia, Canada, South Africa and the United Kingdom. The Festival of Empire Games were held only once, but the success of the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam inspired British officials to organise another intra-empire friendly sporting event.

The inaugural Commonwealth Games, then known as the British Empire Games, took place in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, in 1930. The Hamilton Games, overseen by British Empire Games chair Sir James Leigh-Wood, consisted of four hundred athletes from eleven nations competing in fifty-nine events. The games have been held every four years since 1930, interrupted only in 1942 and 1946 by World War II. The British Empire Games were retitled the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in 1954. In 1978, they became known simply as the Commonwealth Games.

Since 1958, the Commonwealth Games have been preceded by the Queen's Baton Relay, during which a silver baton inscribed by Queen Elizabeth II is carried through all participating nations and territories before reaching the host city at the end of its route. The Queen's Baton Relay resembles the practise of carrying the Olympic Games torch through participating nations.

The Commonwealth Games added team competitions beginning in 1998 and a Para Sports programme in 2002, permitting athletes with disabilities to compete in a range of the games' events.

Rules and Regulations

The Commonwealth Games occur over an eleven-day period every four years. Participating athletes compete in a range of sport events, earning medals for victories. Each event is hosted by a member nation of the Commonwealth of Nations. Like the Olympic Games, eligible countries enter bids to host a future games event in one of their cities. The host city is chosen eight years before the event is to be held. Commonwealth Games must include ten to seventeen sports, ten of which are mandatory; Para Sports must include four sports and no more than twenty events.

The games are administered and regulated by the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF). The CGF maintains a constitution, which lays out the rules and regulations for competition at the games, as well as codes of conduct for participating athletes, including anti-doping provisions. As part of its goal of maintaining the Commonwealth Games' friendly atmosphere, the CGF constitution includes articles on gender equity and anti-discrimination.