



Sport History

Wrestling

Origins and the sport today:

Cave drawings dating back to at least 3000 BC show men engaged in a form of wrestling or grappling – but it was the Greeks who made wrestling an intrinsic part of their culture. In 708 BC, the sport was added to the ancient Olympic Games program, forming the final event of the pentathlon. Greco-Roman wrestling, where the legs are not used, was one of 10 sports contested at the first modern Olympics in Athens in 1896, with Carl SCHUHMANN (GER) winning gold.

Freestyle wrestling, which allows legs to bring down an opponent, was introduced to the Olympic program in 1904, while the London 1908 Olympic Games featured both freestyle and Greco-Roman.

The first international wrestling federation was founded in 1905, as part of a jointly administered wrestling and weightlifting body. Wrestling went independent in 1912, becoming the International Wrestling Federation (FILA) in 1953. This lasted until 2014, when it was reformatted as United World Wrestling (UWW).

Wrestling at the Commonwealth Games:

Wrestling is an optional sport at the Commonwealth Games, meaning it is up to the host federation to decide whether it should be on the program.

The sport has appeared 17 times since making its debut at the British Empire Games 1930. In modern times, wrestling was dropped from the Auckland 1990 Commonwealth Games, Kuala Lumpur 1998 and Melbourne 2006.

Canada is the most successful wrestling nation at the Commonwealth Games, with a total of 135 medals (64 gold, 48 silver and 23 bronze). Its nearest challenger is India, 35 medals behind. Wrestling is also one of the strongest events for Nigeria, with a total of 34 Commonwealth Games medals, including six gold.

At Glasgow 2014, Greco-Roman wrestling was dropped, with just men's and women's freestyle events in the program. Canada's wrestlers enjoyed an outstanding Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, topping the overall medal table with seven gold, two silver and three bronze. India won more medals (13), but only five gold. Canada won gold in the three heaviest weight categories.

There are six weight categories each for men and women at the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Wrestling in Australia:

Australia has won 51 wrestling medals in total at the Commonwealth Games (14 gold, 22 silver and 15 bronze). Two of those medals were in Greco-Roman, with a gold for Ivan POPOV in the 120kg category at Delhi 2010. Hassan SHAHSAVAN won bronze at the same Commonwealth Games in the 74kg category.

Australia's most successful wrestler was Dick GARRARD. In a 30-year career, from 1926 to 1956, he won 10 national titles in the lightweight and light-welterweight divisions, while also winning silver at the London 1948 Olympic Games and three British Empire and Commonwealth Games golds between 1934 and 1954. He is still the only Australian wrestler to contest an Olympic final.

Zsigmond KELEVITZ was a triple Commonwealth Games medallist between 1978 and 1986 (one gold, two silver), while Walter KOENIG could not manage a gold between 1974 and 1986, but did come away with four Commonwealth Games silver.