

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

By the time the School community gets to read this article the Beijing Olympics will be well under way. Hopefully you are all enjoying the television coverage and the performances of not only the Australian athletes but the talented athletes from all around the world. With the Olympics in full swing it is opportune to write about past students from Grammar who have come close to representing Australia at the Olympics or have had the opportunity to represent Australia at the Games.

There is no evidence available to show that any student from Grammar earned Olympic selection in the period before World War Two. The only past student who may have been selected, had he been available, was FRED TIMBURY (1901) who represented Australia at Rugby Union. It must be remembered that Rugby Union was an Olympic sport at the early Games. There are many reasons for the non-participation of Grammar's past students and also citizens who lived in the then more remote regions of the country. The tyranny of distance would have been a big problem for any athlete with any talent. Queensland University opened its doors to students in 1911 and prior to that students from the north had to travel to Sydney not only to advance their education but also to develop their sporting skills.

Two past students came close to representing Australia at the Melbourne Olympics in 1956. **RENATO CANTATORE (1951)**, Head Prefect in his final year at Grammar, Renato was one of the most talented sportsmen to attend the School. Awarded colours in Rugby League, Cricket and Tennis, Renato also broke six Athletics' records in 1951 including the Long Jump record set in 1909 by **GEORGE HALL (1909)** our first Rhodes Scholar. In 1956 Renato represented Queensland at the National Championships and was placed third in the Long Jump. He was invited to join the squad for the Olympics but turned down the invitation as he could not afford the time off from work as well as having to face the cost of travel to Melbourne from Ingham where he lived.

**FAY MACKILLOP (1956)** was fortunate that she did not have to face the tyranny of distance handicapping Renato Cantatore. Fay was still at Grammar when she swam in the Australian Championships in 1955 and 1956. She finished fourth in the hundred yards Breaststroke event in 1956 and just failed to make the Olympic squad. Fay, however, had the wonderful experience of training with the squad who, in that year, trained exclusively at the Tobruk Pool in Townsville. **PAM SERGEANT (1964)** missed selection to the 1964 Games in Tokyo but swam for Australia at the Empire Games in Perth in 1962. At these Games, Pam broke the 110 yards World Backstroke record. Pam has kindly donated the certificate acknowledging the achievement to the School archives.

Another breaststroker who came close to national selection was **DEBBIE WADE (1991)**. A specialist over the one hundred metres event Debbie, while representing Queensland, finished fifth in the National titles in her last year of School. She made the final again in 1992 but missed out on selection for the Barcelona Games.

The School's best representation at the Olympics has been in the sport of Water Polo. This can be attributed largely to the influence of KEITH HARRON, Sports Master from 1981 to 1993. Keith fostered Water Polo at the School as well as coaching the Australian Schools' team in over one hundred games. **SHARYN GIST (1985)** represented Australia at the World Titles while still at the School and won gold when Australia won the competition. Sharyn then moved into coaching and was part of the coaching squad of the Australian team that won Olympic Gold in Sydney in 2000. **BEN LEES (1989)**, on leaving school moved into Water Polo administration and was part of the Athens' coaching squad in 2004. Ben's brother, **DYLAN LEES (1992)**, represented Australia at Water Polo in the period before the Athens' Olympics but was unavailable for selection for the Games.

**PETER BURGE (1989)** is the only Grammar past student who has represented Australia at Athletics at the Olympic Games. Peter, a talented Cricketer, left Grammar at the end of Year 10 in order to develop his athletic prowess. Peter won the Long Jump gold medal at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur in 1998 and made the final of the Long Jump at the Sydney Games in 2000. In the final Peter finished sixth, an excellent result by any standard.

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