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OVERSEAS WOMAN ATHLETES & SWIMMERS ARRIVE

Teams for Empire Games

OUTSTANDING PERFORMERS

Although for many months now the Empire Games in Sydney in February have been foremost in the thoughts of sportswomen, it was not until yesterday that full realisation of the fact that Australia is for the first time the centre of a big sports gathering came. This was when the South African and Rhodesian teams arrived by the *Ascanius*.

Bronzed and exceedingly attractive, Melbourne's first glimpse of the visiting sportswomen was a favorable one, and apart from their sporting ability their charming personalities instantly makes one want to be friendly. The South African team of four women, includes three swimmers and one athlete, while the second athlete, Miss Burke, is travelling with the English team on board the steamer *Ormonde*. In the Rhodesian team of seven are only two young sportswomen, both swimmers. It would seem, in fact, that the swimming section—as far as the women are concerned—has definitely attracted the largest number of adherents, and the times and performances should be outstanding. All representatives are champions, coming with records and most creditable performances. Especially is this so in the case of the South African visitors. The three swimmers are Miss Molly Ryde, Miss Hazel Holmes, and Miss Carla Gerke, while Miss A. Robertson is a jave-

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Took Part in 1934 Games.

A head of glorious blonde hair instantly distinguishes Miss Ryde, the free-style champion, from her sun-tanned companions. She is the holder of the South African championship, while the records for 440 yards and 220 yards, she has held now for six years. Miss Ryde, who is just eighteen years of age, first came into championship swimming in 1933, with the Pretoria Women's Club, and almost instantly won recognition, and the right to represent South Africa at the 1934 Empire Games in London. Miss Ryde in private life is a stenographer employed by the Pretoria city council, and finds that training for championships occupies any spare time she may have when away from her work. Her time for the 440 yards is 5 min. 34 sec., while she has covered 220 yards in the splendid time of 2 min. 34 sec. Both

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The backstroke representative is Miss Hazel Holmes, who hails from Durban. She is the champion of that particular style of swimming in South Africa, and like Miss Ryde is a typist, and also is just eighteen years of age. The South African back-stroke championship is raced over 150 yards, and Miss Holmes' record for this distance is 1 min. 56 3-5th sec. The Sygnur Club, to which Miss Holmes belongs, is one of the outstanding clubs in Durban, and consists only of women. Finally, there is Miss Caria Gerke, the breast-stroke champion, a tall bronzed Dutch girl from Pretoria, who belongs to the same club as Miss Ryde. Miss Gerke was born in Amsterdam, and came to South Africa at the age of 10. Although she recalls many of the famous Dutch women swimmers of that time, Miss Gerke admitted that she had no desire to take up championship swimming until a few years ago, when Jimmy Green, the well known swimmer, persuaded her to enter for the championship. This she did, and won so comfortably that she has since adopted it seriously. Miss Gerke enjoys hockey, too, and plays for the Western Province. The majority of the outstanding swimmers in the Pretoria club, she said, were Dutch, a fact that goes further to prove how excellent are the Dutch girls at this aquatic sport. Miss Gerke holds the South African record of 2 min. 49 sec. established early last season, and this time she equalled at the special trials, which were held for the selection of the team. For some time Miss Gerke has corresponded with several of the leading Dutch swimmers, and in this way has kept in touch with the latest developments and training methods in swimming. By profession she is a dress designer, and has made all her wardrobe for the trip, as well as being the designer and dress maker for the team's fancy dress costumes worn at shipboard Christmas festivities.

Javelin Thrower.

The one athlete aboard, Miss Antonio Robertson, will represent South Africa in

Robertson, will represent South Africa in the javelin event, for which she holds the Empire record of 129 feet. This record, however, she expects to break again, for just before embarking she was throwing 135 feet at practise. Miss Robertson, unlike the swimmers, lives away from any town in Middleburg, Eastern Province, where her home is seven miles from the township. The farm naturally offers little scope for practise, except for the javelin, and Miss Robertson laughingly explained that this she throws into the lucerne patches, much to the concern of the native workers.

The Australian competitors in the javelin throw event will be Misses Clarice Kennedy, Elsie Jones and L. Mitchell, and it should be one of the most exciting contests on the programme, especially as the English competitor, too, is throwing well. The Australian girls will have to throw remarkably well to better the performance of the English or South African girls, for the new Australian record established at the recent national championships by E. Jones was only 110 feet 2 inches, while the Australian record held by Clarice Kennedy is only 117 feet $7\frac{3}{4}$

inches. Miss Robertson, or as she is known to the team "Toni," celebrated her 21st birthday at sea, with a special party given by the members of the team. Her performances are especially outstanding when it is realised that she does not take part in any weekly or club competition. To do this it would be necessary for her to travel to Port Elizabeth, a distance of 260 miles.

From Rhodesia.

Rhodesia has sent two very youthful representatives to the Games. The Misses Valerie Aitkens and Rita Baker—both free-style swimmers and champions of Rhodesia, are still school girls. Miss Aitkens, who is the holder of the 410 yards free-style championship, as well as the 220 and 100 yards, is a member of the Crusader club in Bulawayo, South

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the 220 and 100 yards, is a member of the Crusader club in Bullawayo, Southern Rhodesia; while Miss Baker hails from Guelo, also Southern Rhodesia. Just 16 years of age, Miss Baker will compete in the 110 free-style event only. She is still a student at the Chaplin school, where she has been champion swimmer for the past two seasons. Miss Aitkens, the Rhodesian champion, is a pupil at the Eveleni high school, and has been swimming in championship events for about two years.

Taking care of these two young representatives, Mrs. E. McDonald Clark, is with the team, and she is also keeping an eye on the South African girls as well. Mrs. Clark is not a stranger to Australia, as she has several times before paid this country a holiday visit. Their first action yesterday upon landing was training, and the swimmers made instantly for the Olympic Pool, for one of the first training spins since embarking at Durban. The salt-water swimmers naturally found the fresh water "not so easy," and in the majority of cases, leg exercises were the order of the training hour.

Miss Holmes, the back-stroke swimmer, found it most difficult to work her legs in the harmony of motion so necessary, but she took it with a cheery smile, and admitted that she would just have to be determined to master it in the six weeks at her disposal, for the Empire swimming events will be raced in fresh water. It was pleasing to see Miss Holmes and the Australian back-stroke champion, Miss Madge Nixon, in action together. Certainly this was in training spins only, but the contrast in style was interesting, for Miss Holmes favors a style more after that of the brilliant English swimmer, who visited Australia, Miss Joyce Cooper. She is one of the most unusual of back-stroke swimmers, too, for she is beautifully balanced, and her arm actions are in direct contrast to the straight form followed by Miss Nixon. Her speed indicates that she will be Pat Norton's chief opponent in this event. The stylist of the team is the breast-stroke champion, Carla Gerke, who is delightful to watch.

Additions to Team

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Additions to Team.

The additions to the Australian athletic team have naturally been the chief topic of conversation this week, as well as the announcement of the swimming team. Congratulations of course are due to the Victorian members of the team, including the Australian diving cham-

plion, Miss Irene Donnett, who was after all one of the few "certainties" for the Empire events. Although Miss Donnett will have plenty of opposition in the diving events, the overseas competitors will not find it easy to defeat her; in fact many of the swimming officials feel sure that she will win the Empire title for Australia. The surprise selection came in this section, and already has stirred swimming circles. This was the selection of Miss Lurline Hook, the New South Wales diver and former Australian champion, who has been retired for several seasons, and has done very little in the sporting world since the National

Games in 1932. It was expected that the other little Sydney diver, Miss Middlemiss, who was second to Miss Donnett in the last Australian championships, would gain a place, but this she has failed to do.

The young Tasmanian, Miss Wiedenhöfer, was in Melbourne about four years ago for the Australian championships, and at that time it will be remembered was not able to perform all the standard championship dives. Since that time she has improved, and now comes her chance to represent Australia in the spring dives. She will be the only Tasmanian sports-woman in the Empire Games teams.

Miss Pat Norton's selection, of course, was expected, for she is without doubt one of the outstanding swimmers in Australia to-day.

With Dorothy Green and Evelyn De Lacy leading the free-style exponents, Australia has an excellent chance of success in this section of the swimming events. Both the West Australians will be coming to Melbourne within a few weeks on their way to Sydney for train-

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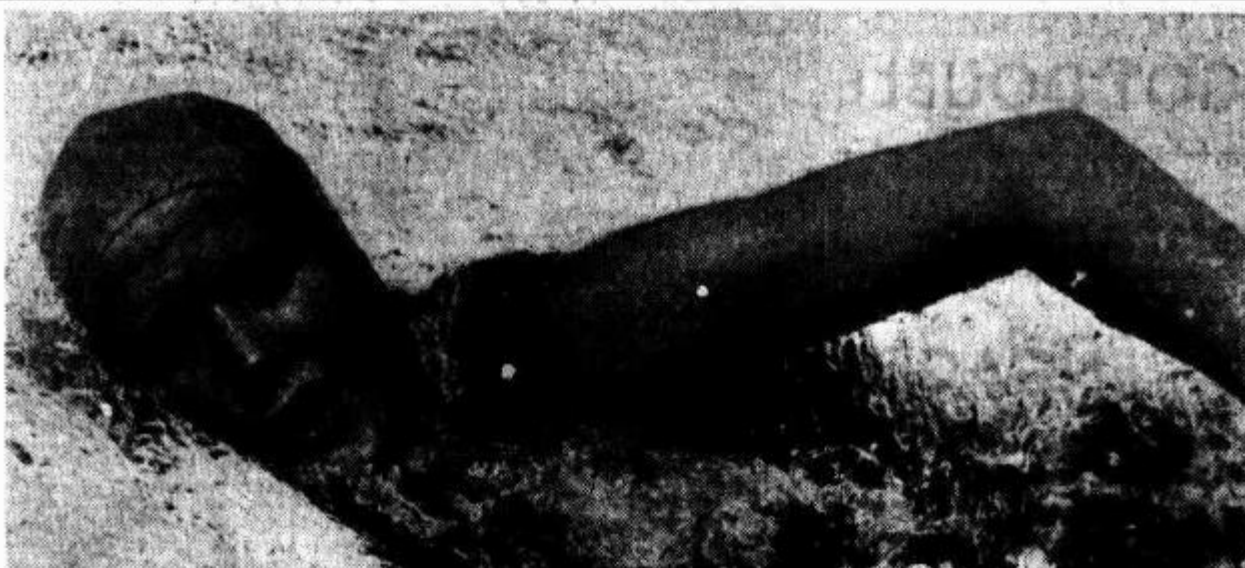
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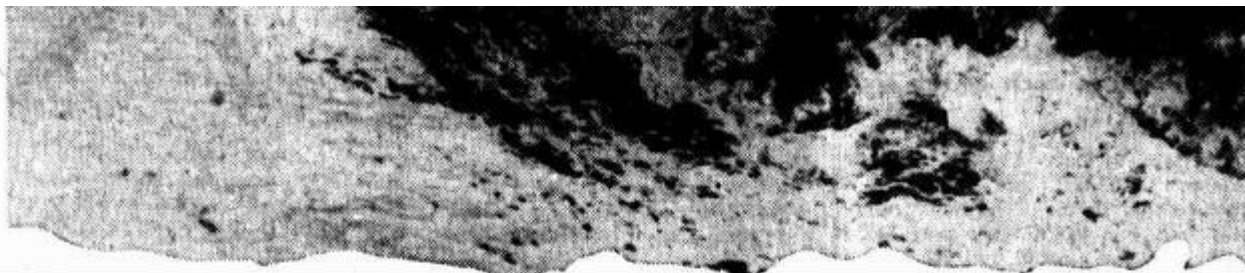
With an extra eight athletes Australia is truly well represented in the athletic section—in fact this is the largest representation she has ever had in a sporting contest of this kind. One would have liked to have seen Cora Hannan a fourth in the javelin event, for she really threw well considering that she had a shoulder muscle out. This has only just been corrected, and she will return to Sydney on Monday evening.

Miss Hilda Mott, the Queensland high jumper, is another who it was thought would gain a place when the team was enlarged.

Cycling Record Attempt.

Mrs. Valda Unthank, the well-known woman cyclist, will set out early this evening on her record ride to Nyah, during which she will attempt to establish a record for the 240 miles, finishing at the Nyah sports ground during the New Year's day carnival. Mrs. Marshall, secretary of the association, will be one of the officials who will accompany her, and it is expected that she will put up a time hard to equal. A number of the Windsor club members are making the trip to Nyah by train to take part in the club races which have been set down on the programme for them, and at the same time to welcome their club mate at the end of her long ride.





A champion in action. Miss Molly Ryde, the South African free-style champion and a member of the South African Empire Games team which arrived yesterday, is seen in action at the Olympic Pool. She is the holder of the Empire records for 440 yards and 220 yards.



Members of the South African and Rhodesian Empire Games teams photographed at the reception in their honor at the Amateur Sports Club yesterday afternoon. In the picture are Misses Baker, Robertson, Aitkens, Holmes and Mrs. Clark (chaperon).

