



AUSTRALIA AND CANADA (5) (26/04/2021)

AUSTRALIA

The first Australian handball court was built in Melbourne in 1847 by Irish hotel owner Michael Lynch who also organized the same year the 1st Australian Handball Championship. In 1923, recognition of the Australian 3-walls version began. The Australian Handball Council, created in 1928, manages the various events and championships around the country. During the 1950s and 1960s, school events and championships were very popular. In 1970, there were over 1000 registered players in the various associations of Australian states.

The Australians have made regular appearances at the World Championships even hosting the 1988 one in Melbourne. For the past three decades the National Handball Championships have been held for one weekend a year in Warrnambool, Victoria.

CANADA

It seems that Canada has followed the same pattern as several countries in the development of handball. Some Irish players brought the sport to the country, followed by Catholic priests for promotion in schools and colleges. There are records indicating that handball games have been played in Victoria (BC) and Saint-John (NB) year 1863. 3-wall courts were also used at the same time in the Province of Quebec. The YMCAs also did their part by building 4-walls courts. So did some fire stations who supplemented the physical training of firemen by giving them access to handball courts built in the station. The creation of the Canadian Handball Association (CHA) in the 1970s helped to structure and promote the sport across the country. The CHA works closely with the provincial organizations. The provincial association Balle au mur Québec (BAMQ) was created, thanks to the initiative of Paul Wintle Desruisseaux, in 1972. Raymond Morin was its first President with Denis Laberge as secretary-treasurer. In the 1980s, the rise of racquetball encouraged the construction of new courts which were being used by handball enthusiasts. Canada has hosted five World Championships so far and Canadian players have won several international titles. Here are some names and the number of titles won by each athlete: Merv Deckert (5), Lisa Fraser-Gilmore (5), Jessica Gawley (5), Danny Bell (4), Lavonah Muloin-Madden (3), Kathleen Bédard (2) and Tyler Hamel (2).

Next theme: Quebec 1870-1950

VIDEOS ET PICTURES SECTION

Some peculiarities of the "Aussies" regulations:

- the dimensions of the court are 60'x30' compared to the American court which is 40'x20';
- The regular 3-walls rules state that the long line at 40 feet is the limit of the court. In Australia, as long as the ball stays inside the sidelines, it is still playable even beyond 40 feet from the front wall.
- The Australian ball is roughly the same size as the American ball but is much slower;
- Players, when serving, can initiate their movement in front of the service box and even at a very short distance from the front wall.

It should be noted in the video below that the "Irish Whip" is the favorite tool.

<https://youtu.be/VhA75t5-Jj4> 2016 Australia National 3-walls Championships.

<https://youtu.be/ffdMXmmWePE> Mens Open Final - World Handball Championships – Melbourne 1988. Danny Bell (Canada) vs Naty Alvarado Sr. (USA).

Our athletes at the Worlds : Other Canadian champions to add to the previous list Denis Gingras (1), Diane Vallée (1), Bob Pruden (1), Ron Mruss (1), Shane Vigen (1), Rebecca White (1), Grant Jennings (1), John Cammett (1), Pat Brennan (1), David Coulter (1), Alex Carew (1), Mark Broverman (1), Rob Pearse (1) and Joey Maher (2).

Joey Maher came from Ireland to the first World Handball Championships in 1964 and felt the only way to win the title was to quit his job as a painter and decorator and enlist in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police at Toronto. His move to Canada saw him win the Canadian National titles against Barrie Leech twice (1966/68) and against Dinty Moore in 1967. He also won two US titles and he became the first Irish / Canadian to win the World handball title in 1967 in Toronto. The city of Drogheda (Ireland) honored Joey Maher on October 14, 2008 by erecting a sculpture. What about some statues for our champions across Canada?



Statue and a picture of Joey Maher in his youth



L. Fraser-Gilmore, B. Mythen, K. Bédard, S. Carey – World 1988 Melbourne (Australia). Women Open Doubles won by the Canada team (Lisa and Kathleen).

ADDENDUM THEME #4 : UNITED STATES



Babe Ruth – Baseball 1927



Mike Tyson – Jimmy Jacobs

These pictures were used to promote our sport even if these two stars were not actually playing handball on a regular basis.

On the other hand, we have to pay tribute to an American football star, Jake Plummer, who has truly invested his energy in the promotion of handball. He had even largely covered handball during an interview for the prestigious Sports Illustrated.

Below is a WPH report on Jake Plummer (note Danny Bell in the court) as well as a summary of his football exploits.

<https://youtu.be/YR0akUYshTs> Jake Plummer - Handball

https://youtu.be/XKvQm_1bHJk Jake Plummer - Denver Broncos and Arizona Cardinals.

Note that a novel published in 1979, whose action takes place in the world of handball, has created a certain interest in the brotherhood: KILLSHOT by Tom Alibrandi.



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