



BACKGROUNDER: 2018 QUEEN'S BATON RELAY / VICTORIA RELAY ATHELETE BIOS

2018 Queen's Baton Relay

The Queen's Baton Relay is a Commonwealth Games tradition that connects all nations and territories of the Commonwealth prior to the Games being held.

The 2018 Queen's Baton, which is on an epic 388-day journey, carries a message from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, calling the Commonwealth's athletes to come together in peaceful and friendly competition to the Games in Gold Coast Australia April 4-15, 2018.

The Queen's Baton Relay was launched at Buckingham Palace on March 13, 2017, when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth, placed her message to the Commonwealth into the baton.

Over its 388-day journey through 70 Commonwealth nations and territories, the baton will have covered close to 230,000 kilometres, averaging one to four days in each nation or territory. The baton is travelling to Africa, the Caribbean, North America and then Europe and Oceania. It will finish its journey at the Opening Ceremony of the XXI Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast Australia on April 4, 2018.

Learn more at: www.gc2018.com/qbr

Quick Facts:

- The Commonwealth Games has its history rooted in Canada with the first-ever games, called the British Empire Games, being held in Hamilton Ontario in 1930.
- The 2018 Queen's Baton will be in Canada from July 27 – August 1, 2017, visiting all four of the Canadian Commonwealth Games Host Cities (Hamilton 1930; Vancouver 1954; Edmonton 1978; and Victoria 1994).
- The Queen's Baton's stops in Canada include Hamilton (July 28), Edmonton (July 29), Victoria (July 31), and Vancouver (August 1).
- Before arriving in Canada, the Baton will have just visited the Bahamas and Bermuda.
- After departing Vancouver, the Baton will make its way to Belize.
- The 1994 British Commonwealth Games in Victoria were the first games to integrate para-sport. The Commonwealth Games became the first major Games to integrate both para-and able-bodied athletes. Sixty-three nations competed in 1994.
- PISE (Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence) was developed from a vision of the leadership from the 1994 Commonwealth Games. PISE is the training hub for many high performance athletes in our region and is also recognized as a passionate and innovative leader in physical literacy development for children, youth and adults. In 2014, PISE celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the 1994 Games.

- Unlike the Olympic Torch, of which there are many in one relay, there is only one Queen's Baton that is passed between thousands of people around the world. To date, the Queen's Baton has travelled further and to more nations than any Olympic Torch.
- The Queen's Baton Relay is a way of connecting Canadians to the games and the Commonwealth, uniting the "Commonwealth Family" as the Baton makes its way to each nation and territory in the Commonwealth.
- The Queen's Baton Relay in Canada builds momentum for the Canadian Team participating in the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

The Queen's Baton:

- Designwork, a Brisbane-based firm, designed, manufactured and engineered the Gold Coast 2018 Queen's Baton so that it is accessible to people of all abilities.
- The Baton is designed to capture the energy of the Gold Coast and is an inspiring symbol that will connect the Commonwealth with Australia, Queensland and the Gold Coast.
- The Baton's shape, form and the contrasting materials used are reminiscent of surfboards, surfboats and other surf craft heritage. Smooth elegant lines, perfect surface, and clean crisp changes between materials evoke the feeling of gliding over and through the water. Light reflects off the metal stringer, mimicking the sun striking the Gold Coast skyscrapers and glinting at sunrise and sunset.
- The Baton is made of spinifex paper (a grass-like plant), macadamia wood and reclaimed plastic. Consideration was given to ensure there was minimal manufacturing waste in its creation.
- The Baton has its own App that is being used to control the different settings for the energy-efficient LED colour illumination. GPS technology allows the Baton to be tracked as it travels around the Commonwealth.

VICTORIA RELAY ATHLETE BIOS

Bruce Deacon

Bruce Deacon began running at the age of 11 at summer camp in Ontario, where Victoria's Rob Reid coached him in the camp's running club. Deacon's international accomplishments as a marathoner include representing Canada at the 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games, the IAAF World Athletics Championships (1995, 1997, 1999, 2001), the Commonwealth Games (1994), and the 2003 Pan American Games where he won a silver medal. His career included masters wins at the New York City Marathon and second at the Boston Marathon. He was also a frequent winner of local races such as the Times Colonist 10k and various events at the Victoria Marathon. Deacon has been the online coach for GoodLife Fitness Victoria Marathon for the past nine years. He coaches a group of 25 champion youth runners with the Prairie Inn Harriers. One of these youth is Liam Stanley.

Liam Stanley

At the age of 19, Victoria-based runner and soccer player Liam Stanley won a silver medal in the men's 1,500-metre T37 final at the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. His coach is Bruce Deacon. The T37 category is a designation for athletes who have coordination impairment. Although a stroke at birth left him with weakness on the right side of his body, it doesn't slow him down. Stanley is one of Canada's top soccer players and is part of the national para-soccer team. He has twice been named the Canadian para-soccer player of the year (2013 and 2014), joining the national team when he was just 14. He also played on Canada's seven-a-side squad at the Parapan Ams in summer 2015. Stanley has just

returned from London, England where he won a silver medal in the T37 1,500-metre at the Para World Track and Field Championships.

Ravi Kahlon

Ravi Kahlon is a champion field hockey player who earned his first international senior cap for the Men's National Team in 2000 against Malaysia in Brussels. He began playing field hockey as a defender in the Victoria League at 12 years of age, and was selected to the Junior National Team in 1999 as team captain. Kahlon has represented Canada at the Commonwealth Games and Pan American Games, has played three times in World Cup qualifying tournaments, and earned a 10th-place finish at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. In 2013, Kahlon was inducted into the Delta Sports Hall of Fame. Ravi Kahlon is the MLA for Delta North and was recently named BC's Parliamentary Secretary for Sport and Multiculturalism.

Suzanne Weckend

Suzanne Weckend is a high-performance athlete, born and raised in Victoria, who twice competed at the Commonwealth Games and World Championships in two different sports. At 16, she represented Canada at Victoria's 1994 Games in Swimming. Twelve years later, she was part of Team Canada in Triathlon at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, Australia. For the 2010 Commonwealth Games she served as a member of Team Canada's Mission Staff in Delhi, India. In 2011, Weckend was appointed to the Executive Board of the Commonwealth Games Federation as the Athlete Representative. In the past, she has served on the Triathlon Canada, Commonwealth Games Canada and AthletesCAN Boards of Directors. Recently, Weckend moved back to her home town of Victoria with her husband and are enjoying raising their three children here. Prior to being in Victoria, Weckend was department head at St. George's School in Vancouver, focused on the creation of vision and strategic action plans for both athletics and environmental stewardship. She is a certified teacher with a master's degree in leadership (Royal Roads University) and taught within the school's Physical Education Department as well as managed the pool facility. Weckend currently serves on the Board of Directors of PISE (Pacific Institute for Sport) and is part of the 2022 Commonwealth Games bid team working to get the Games to Victoria.

Commonwealth Games Canada

Commonwealth Games Canada (CGC) is the franchise holder for the Commonwealth Games and Commonwealth movement in Canada, and an active, contributing member of the Canadian sport community. The mission of Commonwealth Games Canada is to strengthen sport within Canada and throughout the Commonwealth by participating in the Commonwealth Games and by using sport as a development tool. Learn more at: www.commonwealthgames.ca

Commonwealth Games Federation

The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) is the organization that is responsible for the direction and control of the Commonwealth Games. As a means of improving society and the general well-being of the people of the Commonwealth, the CGF also encourages and assists education via sport development and physical recreation. Learn more at: www.thecgf.com