

Basic Detail Report

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Title

Australian and International Dragon Boat Championship

Date

2006

Medium

Paper

Dimensions

300 x 210 mm

Name

Program

History

The Dragon Boat Festival is a Chinese tradition dating from 278 BC. Held traditionally on the fifth day of the lunar month to commemorate the death of Chinese poet and political advisor Qu Yuan, it combines Taoist principles and elements of dragon worship. Qu Yuan died by throwing himself into the Miluo River as a protest against official corruption. Upon hearing the news, people raced out in their boats to stop the river dragon and fish eating his body by beating drums, throwing rice and splashing the water. The festival has been held every year since, with teams of paddlers competing while keeping time to the beat of a drum. The sport was promoted outside China in the 1980s to foster cultural awareness and friendship. It has since crossed cultural and age boundaries to become one of the fastest growing team sports in the world. The first recorded Australian team to compete in dragon boat racing was in 1980, when a surf lifesaving team from Western Australia was invited to compete in the Penang Dragon Boat Festival, in Malaysia. A year later, Australian teams were sent to the unofficial dragon boat racing world championship in Hong Kong. In 1984 Sydney held its inaugural Sydney Dragon Boat Festival where 31 clubs of men's, women's and mixed teams competed at Farm Cove, Circular Quay. As exposure to the sport increased, dragon boat clubs formed around the nation. In 1991 Australia was a founding member of the International Dragon Boat Federation, and in 1995 an Australian team competed in the first official World Championships held in Yue Yang, China. Competitive and recreational dragon boat clubs and paddlers throughout Australia were officially represented with the foundation of the Australian Dragon Boating Federation in 1997. Another milestone was reached for Australian dragon boat racing in 2003 when it was recognised as an official sport by the Australian Sports Commission, and paddlers had permission to wear the Australian Coat of Arms on their uniforms. In September 2007, Australia hosted the World Dragon Boat Championships at the Sydney International Regatta Centre, Penrith. In attendance were 20,000 competitors from more than 20 countries, and thousands of spectators. In 2008, dragon boat racing featured as a demonstration sport at the Beijing Olympic Games. Today, Australian communities continue

to blend Chinese culture and sport by embracing this ancient tradition, which is celebrated with an annual Dragon Festival.