



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

bondi
'bon-di'



All school-age groups (K–12)

Background

The Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had many water and diving games, which were often indulged in at any convenient creek, waterhole or at the beach. In various parts of Australia, contests in diving, floating, remaining beneath the water, and many other aquatic activities, were undertaken.

They also used recognisable swimming strokes, such as single overarm sidestroke, which was first observed in a lagoon at Bondi in the Sydney area in the 1800s and developed into an international stroke that was popular up to and including the 1896 Olympic Games.

Language

The activity is named after the Bondi area in Sydney, where Aboriginal children were observed swimming. *Bondi* means 'water breaking over rocks' in the language of the Eora people.

Thurakami is the word for swimming used in the Dieyerie (Diyari) language of South Australia.

Short description

This activity is related to swimming single overarm sidestroke.

Game play and basic rules

- Competitors swim on their side with a sidestroke or other type of kicking action. Only one shoulder may be in the water while performing the stroke and the other shoulder is clear of the water.
- The head should not be fully underwater. One arm is underwater at all times and the swimmer uses an underwater sidestroke-type arm action but the other arm comes out of the water in a crawl-stroke action (pull and push). The arm that is underwater may be changed at the end of each lap of the pool.

- Races can be held over 25, 50 or 100 metres, individually or as a relay. The stroke could also be used as part of a medley race or a training drill/activity.

Variation

- Long-distance race: Conduct a 1000 to 3000-metre swim race in a pool or other suitable location.

Suggestion

As part of a recognition of swimming activities undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, single overarm sidestroke could be included as part of physical education lessons and swimming carnivals.

Teaching points

- You know the rules. Change sides at the other end if you wish.
- Ready. Go.
- One arm over, other arm under. Kick.
- Ear in water and top shoulder out [of water].