



The XVII Commonwealth Games is a world-class event and the most significant multi-sport event to be held in the UK since the Olympics of 1948. It will be the largest ever Commonwealth Games with athletes from 72 nations competing for Gold in 14 individual sports and three team sports from 25 July – 4 August 2002.

Alongside a celebration of sporting excellence, the Games will provide an opportunity to celebrate multicultural, modern Britain at the start of the new millennium. The Games will involve more competitors from more Commonwealth nations than ever before. Women will compete across all sports with the exception of rugby 7s, boxing and wrestling and comprise 41% of the athletes. Elite athletes with a disability will be included in the main sports programme and medal table for the first time ever at a major international multi-sports event.

Plans for the Games are well advanced, with the sporting programme in place, all the capital committed for superb new sporting facilities, including a world class stadium in East Manchester, and plans for their use after the Games secured.

The City of Manchester Stadium will be the jewel in the crown - the centrepiece of the XVII Commonwealth Games. It will herald the start of the Games with an Opening Ceremony that will be a blaze of colour and pageantry as competitors from 72 nations proudly carry their nation's flag into the arena. And after 10 days of competition, it will also be the scene of the Closing Ceremony. Victors and vanquished traditionally join hands in celebration of a very special friendship that gives the Commonwealth Games its unique appeal.

The 38,000-seat Stadium - at the heart of the new Sportcity - will provide a spectacular backdrop to the Games by hosting athletics and the rugby 7s competition.

There will be an athletics' final every day of competition and the finale will be the rugby 7s which promises to be a momentous occasion, featuring most of the world's premier rugby nations including New Zealand, Australia, England and South Africa.

The City of Manchester Stadium, funded by Sport England to the tune of £77m, is situated within three kilometres of the Games Village, many hotels and the media centre. And when the Games are over, the Stadium will become home to Manchester City FC for the 2003/4 season and beyond.

Among the other event locations, Manchester Velodrome is an internationally renowned venue for track cycling and other major sporting events. The Centre was developed as a joint venture between the English Sports Council, Manchester City Council and the British Cycling Federation and is one of only two facilities in the country to be awarded British Olympic Association Accreditation.

The track surface is supported by approximately 380 trusses upon which 80 kilometres of 40mm square Siberian pine is laid. The venue area has permanent seating for 3,500 spectators, hospitality boxes and facilities for VIPs, officials and media. It also provides accommodation for management, competitor, spectator and technical services and extensive car and coach parking

But onto the events themselves, whatever your aquatic penchant, spectators at the new and widely acclaimed Manchester Aquatics Centre are guaranteed non-stop spectacular action when the Games gets under way. Swimming and diving were among the six sports included in the first Commonwealth Games in Hamilton, Ontario,

in 1930. However, synchronised swimmers are very much new kids on the block, even though synchronised swimming was developed in America at the start of the 20th century, It was not until the Los Angeles Games of 1984 that it became an Olympic event, appearing at the Commonwealth Games two years later.

Gymnastics has been an Olympic sport since the first modern Games were held as a men's event in Athens in 1896 and for women at Amsterdam in 1928. And it really took off on the international stage with the emergence of superstars like Russia's Olga Korbut in the early Seventies. Korbut, Nadia Comaneci, Nelli Kim and others gave the sport a massive profile worldwide and it remains one of the most popular

