Basic Detail Report

00051439

Title

John Konrads on a rickshaw in Durban

Date

1961

Medium

Cellulose acetate slide, colour

Dimensions

Overall: 50 x 50 x 1 mm Image: 24 x 16 mm

Name

Slide

History

John Konrads (b1942, arrived Australia 1949) became a champion swimmer whose competitive career encompassed various NSW, Australian, Commonwealth and Olympic championship events during one of the golden periods of Australian swimming in the late 50s and early 1960s. John Konrads was a Latvian immigrant who came to Australia with his family in 1949 aged 7 as refugees after World War II. Konrads' father taught swimming at the migrants camp at Uranquinty in western NSW where John learnt to swim to recover after contracting polio. He trained with his younger sister Ilsa, and teamed up with rising swimming coach Don Talbot at Bankstown pool. Both teenagers followed Talbot's career trajectory as coach, rising to become champion swimmers. John and Ilsa became one of the public images of the Beautiful Balts campaign aimed at dispossesed peoples from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia as part of the Australian Government's aggressive Populate or perish immigration policy after the war. When aged 14, Konrads was selected as a reserve for the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. In 1958 and 59 he claimed more than twenty world records in six events at distances from 200 to 1500 metres, including both the Australasian championships of 1957 and the Cardiff Empire Games in 1958. With Talbot he cut back his competition program for the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome where he won medals in the three events in which he participated. Konrads won gold in the 1500 metres, and bronze medals in both the 400 metres and the 4x 200 metre freestyle relay in Rome. He gained a marketing degree at the University of Southern California on a sporting scholarship and worked as marketing director at L'Oreal in Australia when he retired from swimming. John Konrads was swimming during one of the most successful periods for Australian swimmers with champions like Dawn Fraser, Jon Devitt, Murray Rose, Lorraine Crapp and his sister Ilsa.