

# Gold medal collections...

Jill Haynes, manager, National Sport Information Centre

**A** library devoted to sport? Do people interested in sport read? Is there more to sport than who won the footy on the weekend?

You only have to read about the latest developments in sport to understand the necessity of a 'gold medal' national sport information collection. Australia's dominance in the sport arena is due to a number of world leading initiatives. One of these is the National Sport Information Centre (NSIC), a program of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC). Based at the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) in Canberra, the NSIC takes a national leadership role in the provision of sport information.

One recent major Australian research project was the development of a testing protocol for EPO (erythropoietin), a performance enhancing drug. The recommendation from the International Olympic Committee Medical Commission to adopt EPO testing for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games followed intense research by AIS staff. The research relied heavily on the NSIC research journal collection and additionally required 400 interlibrary loan requests.

Sydney being awarded the 2000 Olympic Games has increased the demand for sport information, and the amount of literature being published about the games. Everywhere you turn (including this journal) you will find an Olympic flavour. This Olympics material along with all other Australian sport material is indexed for the AUSPORT database available on AUSTROM and via Informit Online. This data is also sent to Canada, to be included in the international database SPORT Discus, available from SilverPlatter and via the web. Australia is the largest international contributor to this database, and it has greatly enhanced the international profile and access to Australian sporting literature. The international database is loaded on our information management system and used to create monthly customised profiles for staff in their area of research.

As sport is such a visual activity a great deal of emphasis is placed on our audio visual area. This is the area most used by coaches and athletes and is a rapidly growing area.

The NSIC has a videotape collection of over 6000 tapes, which are available for loan to coaches and schools all over Australia. In addition we monitor free-to-air, pay and satellite television for footage of interest to our coaches and athletes. The NSIC has co-ordinated the cabling of



*Clients using the video monitoring service of the NSIC*

the AIS campus to provide coaches access to all pay-television channels in their offices and providing sports channels and the movie channel to the athlete residences.

A growing collection of over 6000 slides and photographs is held at the NSIC. The collection is digitised, and will soon be available on the web. Income from the sale of images to commercial organisations helps subsidise the development of the collection.

A new area that is rapidly developing in the audio-visual area is game analysis. The NSIC provides technical backup, equipment, training and has assisted in camera positioning to help coaches in the use of this new technology. We are recognised as a centre of excellence in this area, and in addition to the heavy use by our primary clients, we have many overseas visitors, and professional sporting clubs such as Australian Football League and National Basketball League teams make the trip to Canberra to discover more of how we work in this area.

The NSIC has looked beyond the boundaries of the ACT to create national and regional networks.

A national network of Australian sport information centres, AUSPIN has been working together for a number of years to improve access to sport information through the sharing of resources. AUSPIN also offers consultancy services to the Asia Pacific region. We have just been involved in a project to set up a sport information centre in Laos. Similar projects in Vietnam and Cambodia are set to follow.

The NSIC, through the International Association for Sports Information has

been the catalyst for the creation of the Oceania Sports Information Centre (OSIC). Based at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, OSIC provides services to the Oceania region. Funded by the International Olympic Committee, and supported by the NSIC the Oceania Sports Information Centre is using the infrastructure of the University of the South Pacific to provide access to sport information.

The NSIC developed and maintains the ASC web-site [<http://www.ausport.gov.au>]. In addition to corporate information, we also provide information of interest to our clients. The topics page for example was created to assist school students, and the range of subjects reflects the range of requests for information. This has considerably improved both the service to our clients, and reduced the number of calls to our reference desk. The web-site, soon to be revamped, aims to provide a comprehensive entry point for Australian sport information.

The NSIC has recently been inundated with Olympics assignments, and have set up an Olympics area on our web-site to cope with this demand. During the Games we will be providing analysis on a day to day basis of Australia's performance at <http://www.ausport.gov.au/olymp2000>. Although most of this information will be found elsewhere, the NSIC web-site will highlight performances by AIS athletes, and most importantly, archive the material for future reference.

If you would like to discover more about the NSIC have a look at our web-site <http://www.ausport.gov.au/nsic> or e-mail me at [jill.haynes@ausport.gov.au](mailto:jill.haynes@ausport.gov.au) or if you are in Canberra for the ALIA2000 conference, join the tour to the NSIC. ■