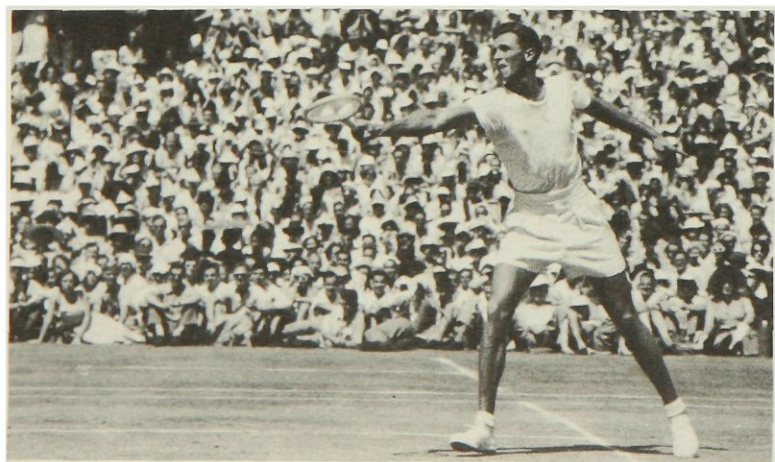


Popular field sports



inner areas. There are far more courts for each 1,000 of population in the eastern and southern suburbs where most private courts are located, than there are elsewhere.

The standard space requirements for a tennis court is 7,200 sq. ft. (60' x 120') and, including allowance for dressing accommodation, it can be taken that four courts can be accommodated on an acre of land. On this basis the present total of courts within the metropolitan area (3,500) would occupy some 875 acres, of which 300 acres (1,200 courts) are occupied by private courts attached to homes, and the remaining 575 acres (2,300 courts) by the courts of private clubs, private hire courts and by public courts.

The proportion of the population who play tennis is increasing and there is every reason to believe this trend will continue, providing adequate facilities are available. It is estimated that the present number of public hire courts (450) could well be doubled to meet current needs.

Golf: In terms of players golf is the second most popular sport. It is estimated that approximately 24,000 people play golf regularly at week-ends of which about 6,000 play on public courses and 18,000 on the courses of private clubs. In addition, there are a number of week-day players on both types of course. There are 34 private and 12 public golf courses within the planning area, the majority of which are located to the south and south-east of Melbourne and along the river flats to the north-east. Most of the public courses are within the urban area, but a considerable proportion of the private courses are outside it. Like tennis, golf is attracting an increasing proportion of the population and it is expected that this trend will continue. The game is played by men and women of most ages.

Golf occupies the largest area of land of all sport. The size of a standard golf course varies between 100 and 160 acres, which means that the location of future courses will be largely limited to the rural areas beyond the limits of urban settlement. The principal requirements besides area are adequacy of water and suitability of soil and this is why most of Melbourne's golf courses are located on the sandy areas to the south-east.

Bowls: Bowls is played by both sexes and the great majority of its players are in the over-40 age group. There are approximately 12,000 regular players, including 10,000 men and 2,000 women, who use 95 greens throughout the metropolitan area. Many bowling greens are located in or adjacent to public parks and gardens, and are largely local in character, with most members living within easy distance of their club. The greens are fairly well spread throughout the metropolitan area in relation to population, the most deficient areas being in the central and northern suburbs. A standard green with adequate surrounding space occupies at least an acre of land.

Most bowling clubs have waiting lists for membership indicating a shortage of facilities to meet current needs. It is expected that the requirements of the sport will continue in proportion to the population.

Cycling: This sport has increased in popularity since the war and now comprises 2,750 members who use six tracks within the metropolitan area. Membership is evenly distributed throughout most suburbs. The Victorian Cycling Authorities consider that four additional tracks are required for present use—two north of the Yarra and two to the south. New tracks are being constructed at Albert Park and Royal Park and there are proposals to develop an additional track in Hawthorn. The most suitable type of track has four or five laps to a mile, has two straights and requires approximately four acres of land. The area surrounded by a track is large enough to provide a playing field for a number of winter sports such as soccer, hockey and lacrosse.

Racing: Horseracing, like Australian Rules football, has a large public following and its importance is reflected more by the public following than by the number actually engaged in racing horses. It is estimated that in the Melbourne metropolitan area approximately 7,000 people are regularly engaged in racing as owners, trainers, jockeys and book-makers and in the administration of the sport. The public following at race meetings varies from 35,000 people on a normal Saturday to as many as 110,000 at a Melbourne Cup meeting.

Melbourne has three public racecourses in operation—Flemington, Caulfield, Moonee Valley—and two training courses at Mentone and Epsom. In addition, it is proposed to develop another racecourse at Sandown Park to the south-east, while land has been acquired at Somerton to the north to provide for a new Moonee Valley racecourse, if this should eventually be necessary. Flemington is generally considered to be the finest racecourse in Australia and the Melbourne Cup, held there each November, has achieved world renown as a racing event.

The size and capacity of each of the active racecourses is summarised in Table 76.

Table 76
METROPOLITAN RACECOURSES

Racecourses	Area (Acres)	Maximum Attendance		Average Number of Horses Training
		Persons	Cars	
Public Courses:				
Flemington (V.R.C.)	316	110,000	10,000	250
Caulfield (V.A.T.C.)	134	105,000	8,000	300
Moonee Valley (M.V.R.C.)	98	52,000	6,000	Nil
Training Courses:				
Mentone	100			350
Epsom	105			150
Areas held for Proposed Courses:				
Sandown Park (M.R.C.)	323			
Somerton (M.V.R.C.)	830			

The number of racehorses under training in the metropolitan area varies between about 1,000 and 1,200, according to the racing season, but the racing authorities generally believe that this will probably not increase above about 1,500 at any time in the future. At the present time, the horses trained at both Flemington and Caulfield are stabled at trainers' establishments adjoining or near the racecourses. The trend, however, is for an increasing proportion to be trained at either Mentone or Epsom, where the sandy soil and general conditions are very suitable. It is generally realised that the stabling of horses in residential areas adjoining the city is unsatisfactory, both from the public and racing viewpoints. Most authorities believe that eventually all horses in training will be stabled either in the Mentone-Epsom area, or at Flemington, which course is the only one with adequate space to provide facilities for stabling a number of horses within its grounds. The great majority, however, will be trained in the Mentone-Epsom area. The principal deficiency of all existing racecourses is car parking space and eventually all existing courses may need to use the centre of the course for car parking. This is already being done at Moonee Valley and on most large English courses.

The racing authorities consider that Melbourne's future requirements for this sport will always be adequately catered for by four main public courses, namely, Flemington, Caulfield, Moonee Valley and Sandown Park. As long as grass tracks are used it will probably be necessary to have four courses in Melbourne to give each track adequate time to recover between meetings during the wet winter season.

These four courses, together with the training tracks at Mentone and Epsom developed to provide training facilities for up to 1,500 horses, should provide adequate facilities for Melbourne's future racing needs. It is estimated that trainers' establishments adjoining the Mentone and Epsom tracks could eventually involve an area of some 250 acres if horses continue to be stabled off the tracks. Any additional training facilities that might be necessary would be developed outside the urban area.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING NEEDS FOR FIELD SPORTS

In reviewing the requirements of individual sports, it will be seen that the facilities for many sports are interdependent. This is especially so with the seasonal summer and winter games, where the same playing fields are often used. In summarising the present needs, therefore, it is necessary to group those sports that use the same fields as other sports and to segregate those specialised sports such as tennis, golf, bowls and racing whose space requirements are completely independent of other sports. It will be seen that practically all the seasonal field games can be accommodated on a playing field of three acres to which should be added an allowance for dressing accommodation. Table 77 summarises the existing facilities and needs of these interdependent