

THE WORLDS



The strongest Australian team for many years joined with 145 competitors from 35 countries at West Palm Beach, Florida, USA, for the 21st World Waterski Titles.

As the drama unfolded, the temperature soared into the 40's and the Aussies wondered if this would be the year they would finally break the USA stronghold on the team title.

The Australian team of four men, two women and two reserves included; Captain Geoff Carrington (Qld), Karen and Michael Neville (Qld), Brett Thurley (Tas), and Bruce and Toni Neville (NSW). Reserves Neil Ritchie (Vic) and Jodie Skipper (Vic).

The tension in the Australian camp started before the tournament. Bruce Neville crashed badly on the jump two days before qualifying and broke two ribs - he went on to qualify and place third (bronze medal) in the jump event showing excellent physical and mental strength. Bruce also placed 3rd in the overall, 9th in slalom and 12th in tricks.

Aussies take to the winning dias in the jump event. From left Andre Albessi (Italy) second, Geoff Carrington (Qld) first, Bruce Neville (NSW) third.



Although wife Toni did not make the finals, she just missed out in slalom and jump and jumped one of her longest distances at 38 metres.

Michael Neville placed 4th in slalom and 5th in the overall. Bad luck in the trick event, normally one of Michael's best, put paid to his chances of placing in the top 3 for overall.

Karen Neville skied very well placing third in overall behind Deena Mapple and Anna Maria Carrasco of Venezuela. Karen placed 4th in jump and 6th in tricks against a very strong field.

Tasmanian Brett Thurley placed 5th in the Slalom competing against a strong specialist field including gold medalist Andy Mapple. He also placed a credible 9th in the jump event.

Geoff Carrington stole the show winning his second jump gold medal. Geoff first won gold at the 1985 Titles and a bronze medal at the last Titles in 1987.

"Having won gold before in the jump people were expecting me to do well. That puts more pressure on, but I have been skiing consistently well and took an early lead."

"There is nothing quite like representing your country in a team situation. Not only do you not want to let down your country, you don't want

to let down your fellow team members," Geoff said.

"That kind of pressure can be difficult to deal with, but it can also provide you with the little extra motivation to perform that little bit better."

According to team manager George Birch, the Australian skiers conducted themselves very well, both on and off the water. "They displayed excellent sportsmanship at all times and were wonderful ambassadors," he said. "It is sometimes difficult to get individual athletes who are used to competing against one another to combine as a team. I was very proud of the way the members supported one another."

The Australian team were unable to beat a very strong USA team on their home base, but we will be ready to try again in 1991. Coming second against 30 other countries was an excellent result and our congratulations go to our Australian team.

The Aussie Assault. From left top: Kevin Spinks, Sports Psychologist; Brett Thurley (Tas), Michael Neville (Qld) with team mascot; George Birch, Team Manager; Glenn Thurlow, Coach.

Bottom row from left: Captain Geoff Carrington (Qld), Karen Neville (Qld), Jodie Skipper (Vic), Toni Kirby-Neville (NSW) Bruce Neville (NSW).

