

= Quietly Confident Quartet =

The Quietly Confident Quartet was the self @-@ given name of the Australian men 's 4 × 100 metres medley relay swimming team that won the gold medal at the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow . The United States boycotted the Moscow Olympics in protest against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and , as of 2015 , the Australian victory remains the only occasion the United States has not won the event at Olympic level since its inception in 1960 . The quartet consisted of backstroker Mark Kerry , breaststroker Peter Evans , butterflyer Mark Tonelli and freestyler Neil Brooks . The team was nominally led by its oldest member Tonelli , who was 23 and was also a spokesperson for the Australian athletes ' campaign for their right to compete at the Olympics against the wishes of the Fraser Government . The team was seen as an unlikely prospect to win ; all four of the swimmers had clashed with swimming authorities over disciplinary issues and three experienced suspension or expulsion from the Australian team during their careers .

Australia had previously won medals in the event , but was not regarded as one of the favourites for the gold , as the Soviet Union , Great Britain , and Sweden all fielded more decorated swimmers over the component legs of the relay . After the backstroke leg , Australia was in fourth place and more than a second in arrears of the Soviet leaders . However , Evans was the fastest among the breaststrokers and moved the team into second position at the halfway point in the race ; and Tonelli , a makeshift butterflyer , completed his leg in a time much faster than his previous best , allowing Australia to keep the Soviet lead reasonable . Australia 's anchor swimmer Brooks overtook his more credentialled Soviet counterpart Sergey Kopliakov in the latter half of the final leg to secure a narrow victory . The quartet disbanded after the Olympics due to Tonelli 's retirement , although some of the members continued to be present in the relay team at various times alongside new swimmers . By 1986 , all four members of the 1980 team had retired from international competition .

= = Personnel = =

The Australian team for the event was a young and inexperienced foursome . Mark Tonelli was the oldest at the age of 23 , followed by Mark Kerry , who turned 21 a month after the Olympics . Both were attending their second Olympics , while Peter Evans and Neil Brooks were 18 and 17 respectively and had never represented Australia at the Commonwealth , World Championship or Olympic level . Evans and Brooks were from Western Australia , a state that had never been prominent in Australian swimming . The team members had some contact prior to their Olympic selection ; Brooks ' family had billeted Tonelli in 1976 when the Australian Olympic team held a training camp in Perth . Brooks cited his experience with Tonelli as a motivating factor in his career .

The quartet was also marked by rebellious and anti @-@ establishment tendencies . Tonelli and Kerry were expelled from the 1978 Commonwealth Games team by the Australian Swimming Union for violating a curfew during a training camp in Hawaii before the team 's trip to Edmonton , Canada for the competition ; Tonelli had been out drinking and admitted to smoking marijuana , which was not illegal in Hawaii , while Kerry had been courting a female . In 1980 , during the lead @-@ up to the selection of the Olympic team , Brooks walked out of a training camp , alleging that the coaches were neglecting him , while Evans once stopped during a training session and refused to do extra mileage , emphatically proclaiming that " work is a poor substitute for talent " . Later in their careers , Evans and Brooks continued to have their clashes with swimming officialdom ; Evans over his coaches ' demands for more training mileage and Brooks over swimmers ' human rights . Brooks was later suspended twice in his career for his clashes with swimming authorities , and expelled from the Australian Institute of Sport for indiscipline .

The rebel qualities of the group were on show in the lead up to the Olympics . An obstacle arose with the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan , which resulted in a boycott of the Games by a large part of the Western world , led by the United States . The Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser was also the patron of the Australian Olympic Committee , and he and sections of the public put significant political pressure on the athletes to join the boycott . Tonelli realised that only the sportspeople would suffer from a boycott and that trade relations would continue unabated . He took

a leadership role among the athletes , fighting for their right to compete and publicising their cause to the Australian community . Evans was fully supportive of Tonelli 's campaign , reflecting that " We were political tools , and the only ones to suffer would be us . " He rhetorically asked : " Do you really think that if we didn 't go someone would come up to us after the Games and pat us on the back for not going ? "

Kerry was equally adamant that he was going to compete , unlike some swimmers who decided to make personal boycotts . He received offers from Australian officials to not compete in return for financial payments . He said

I felt the biggest statement we could make was to go to Moscow and show the world . If there was a total boycott , fine , but trade was still going on . It was disgusting . Why should the athletes be made to suffer ?

According to women 's swimming captain Lisa Forrest , Tonelli adopted populist tactics in championing the athletes ' cause . He said that Fraser was sending " wheat to feed the Russian army , wool to clothe the army and Australian metal to make Russian guns " , claiming that this contradicted the proposed protest against the invasion and Russian military aggression . Tonelli 's anti @-@ authoritarian and individualistic style manifested itself during media appearances , including a news interview in which he debated with Reverend Lance Shilton , who had called the athletes traitors . Shilton expressed sympathy for the athletes , which Tonelli interpreted as condescension . He responded by rolling his eyes and twirling his finger , a gaffe that was shown on national television ; Tonelli mistakenly thought that only his voice was being broadcast at the time and that the images were showing something else . Forrest said that " the damage was done ? one of our most prominent anti @-@ boycott lobbyists ... looked like a smart Alec " .

= = Event history and expectations = =

The United States had always won the 4 × 100 m medley relay since the event 's inception at the Olympics in 1960 with comfortable margins . The closest winning buffer was 2 @.@ 6 seconds and in 1972 and 1976 they had won by 4 @.@ 10 and 3 @.@ 72 s respectively ; their boycott opened up the field in the event . In the five previous times the event had been contested , Australia 's best result had come in the inaugural race in Rome , where the team of David Theile , Terry Gathercole , Neville Hayes and Geoff Shipton out @-@ touched Japan to claim silver . The only other time that Australia had won a medal was in Tokyo in 1964 , when Peter Reynolds , Ian O 'Brien , Kevin Berry and David Dickson finished behind the United States and Germany . The following two Games saw a fourth placing and an elimination in the heats . The previous outing in 1976 in Montreal had seen Australia come sixth . Kerry was the only veteran of the 1976 relay team who returned to the Olympics in Moscow .

Australia was regarded by swimming analysts as a medal chance , but were not seen as the main threats ? Sweden , Great Britain and the Soviet Union were the most heavily fancied teams . The hosts had the silver medallists in the 100 m backstroke and breaststroke , Viktor Kuznetsov and Arsens Miskarovs respectively , and their butterflyer Yevgeny Seredin had come fifth in his 100 m event . Their freestyler Sergey Kopliakov later came fourth in the corresponding 100 m event . The British boasted Duncan Goodhew , the 100 m breaststroke gold medallist , and Gary Abraham , who had placed fifth in the 100 m backstroke . Sweden 's butterflyer Pär Arvidsson and backstroker Bengt Baron had won their respective 100 m events and their freestyle swimmer Per Holmertz would win silver in the 100 m a few days later . Their weakest swimmer was the breastroker Peter Berggren , who came ninth in the 100 m . On paper , Australia 's team paled in comparison . Brooks later came seventh in his 100 m freestyle semifinal and 14th overall after having an asthma attack , and Evans was Australia 's only medallist in the corresponding individual event , winning bronze in the breaststroke . Kerry had been eliminated in the 100 m backstroke semifinals , while Tonelli was the Australian champion in the 100 m freestyle and backstroke but was swimming as a makeshift butterflyer ; the nation did not have an entrant in the 100 m butterfly . Adding to the pressure was Australia 's failure to win any gold medals in any sport at the 1976 Olympics . This meant that the public were still awaiting their first gold since the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich . Coming into

the Olympics , Australia was ranked seventh out of the thirteen competing countries .

= = Race = =

The medley relay was scheduled for Thursday , 24 July , the fifth day of swimming competition , with heats in the morning and the final in the evening . Australia 's prospects improved when Sweden was disqualified in the first heat . Australia and the Soviet Union swam in the second heat . With their superior depth , the home team was able to rest their entire first @-@ choice quartet in the heats . On the other hand , Australia was only willing to rest Kerry ? Glenn Patching swam the backstroke leg in his place . The hosts led the Australians from the start and extended their margin over each of the first three legs . Brooks reclaimed 1 @.@ 34 s on the freestyle leg , but the Australians fell 0 @.@ 13 s short to come second in their heat . Nevertheless , the Australians still qualified in second place overall , as they and the Soviets were more than 1 @.@ 5 s faster than the third @-@ placed Hungarians . In any case , despite resting all of their first @-@ choice quartet , the home team were still faster than the Australians , who had fielded all but one of their full @-@ strength team .

Evans brashly took the opportunity to attempt to regain the psychological ascendancy from Goodhew , confronting him privately and stating that " we will win it " , later reporting that the Briton was astounded by his posturing . The eldest swimmer in the quartet at the age of 23 , Tonelli convened the team as its de facto leader . He asked his compatriots to commit to swimming their legs in a certain time ; Kerry vowed to swim the backstroke in 57 s , Evans the breaststroke in 63 s flat , Tonelli the butterfly in 54 s and Brooks promised to anchor the team in 49 @.@ 8 s , even though he had never gone faster than 51 s . Tonelli named the foursome the " Quietly Confident Quartet " because they exhibited a reserved self @-@ belief as they lined up for the race . Whereas most of the other teams were " psyching up " in the marshalling area , the Australians were remaining light @-@ hearted and placid , confident that they could perform in the water .

Patching was one of several backstrokers who had slipped on the starting area earlier in the meet , so Kerry decided to rub a sticky red substance onto the soles of his feet . The Soviet organisers had provided a carpet following the incidents , resulting in Kerry leaving red footprints in the stadium . Kerry led off in a time faster than his effort in the individual event , but it was still two seconds slower than his personal best . He finished his leg in 57 @.@ 87 s , leaving Australia in fourth place . Kuznetsov gave the Soviets the lead after posting a time of 56 @.@ 81 s , with Hungary and Great Britain in second and third place . France was the last to reach the 100 m mark , recording a time of 58 @.@ 84 s . Evans then swam a personal best of 63 @.@ 01 s , the fastest split among the breaststrokers by 0 @.@ 63 s . His leg moved Australia into second place at the halfway mark , just 0 @.@ 45 s behind the hosts and roughly half a second ahead of the British and the Hungarians . The four leading teams had broken away , leaving a two @-@ second gap back to the fifth @-@ placed East Germans .

Tonelli then swam his leg in 54 @.@ 94 s , almost two seconds faster than his previous best over the distance . He began to lose ground in the last 50 m and was a bodylength behind Seredin until a late surge brought him to within a metre by the time the swimmers touched the wall . If Tonelli had replicated his relay leg in the individual event , he would have claimed the silver medal . Although he lost 0 @.@ 36 s to Seredin , he had minimised his loss and Australia were within 0 @.@ 81 s going into the final leg . Furthermore , the Australians were now more than a second clear of the third placed Great Britain .

Brooks then executed a powerful , well @-@ timed dive and surfaced almost even with his Soviet counterpart Kopliakov . He had drawn level halfway through his leg and made a superior turn to take the lead as they headed home . The Soviet freestyler pulled level with 25 m to go before Brooks again pulled away to seal an Australian victory by 0 @.@ 22 s . He did not breathe in the last ten metres , and claimed to be laughing for the final five metres , confident that his opponent could not pass him . Brooks had finished his leg in 49 @.@ 86 s as he had vowed to his team mates . In doing so , he recorded the swiftest freestyle split in the relay , faster than that of the individual 100 m freestyle gold medallist , Jörg Woithe of East Germany .

The time of 3 m 45 @.@ 70 s sealed Australia 's first win in a medley relay at the Olympics , for men or women . It remains the only time that the United States has not won the men 's event . The team made a celebratory dive into the water and did a poolside interview . Tonelli remarked that " I was totally stunned . After all the hassle , and my being the athletes ' mouthpiece , we 'd come through and done it " . Forrest hailed the win as " a gold medal that should never have been " .

Sportscaster Norman May 's dramatic call of the race on the 2UE radio network , ending with " Gold , gold for Australia , gold ! " , became one of Australia 's best @-@ known and most iconic sports commentaries .

= = Government reaction = =

Relations between the Olympians and the Australian Government remained tense after months of political struggle regarding the boycott . A prime minister would customarily send a congratulatory message to Olympic medallists . However , the Australian Olympic chef de mission Phil Coles confirmed at the following day 's press conference that the quartet had not received a message from Fraser . Australian journalists soon bombarded Fraser 's office with phone calls asking why he had not applauded the athletes . Various members of the government recommended that Fraser congratulate the swimmers , but the prime minister balked . When questioned in a radio interview , he said " I hope that circumstances do not arise over the next few years which will cause them to have very great regrets about the fact that they 've gone " . Fraser relented and late in the night , his office sent a telegram . However , he would not send his message directly to the Olympic village , so the telegram was sent to the Australian Embassy in Moscow . Fraser had ordered the Australian diplomatic mission to close its doors to the Olympians , so the embassy staff had to pass the envelopes containing the message through the fence to Australian Olympic officials . Fraser 's telegram said :

You know I did not and do not approve of Australia being represented at these Olympic Games . I do want to say however that your performance in the relay was a truly great sporting achievement . My personal congratulations .

Coles reported that the relay squad tore up the prime minister 's message .

= = Aftermath = =

The quartet never competed as a unit after the Moscow Olympics . Tonelli retired immediately after the Games , while Kerry took an extended break . The backstroker attempted a comeback in the leadup to the 1982 Commonwealth Games in Brisbane , but his abbreviated preparation before the selection trials was not enough and he was defeated by other swimmers . This left Evans and Brooks as the only members of the 1980 team to participate in Australia 's medley relay victory at the Commonwealth Games . In 1984 , Kerry secured a recall to the team as Australia 's preferred backstroker , while Brooks was surpassed by Mark Stockwell as the leading freestyler . Australia came third in the 1984 Summer Olympics in the medley relay as the Americans returned to the Olympic fold ; Evans and Kerry swam in the final , while Brooks did the freestyle leg in the heats . Evans and Kerry retired after the Olympics , and Brooks was not the first @-@ choice swimmer in 1986 , meaning that a totally different quartet competed in the medley relay at the 1986 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh . Brooks was suspended for drunken behaviour on the flight back to Australia , and then retired , and all four members of the Quietly Confident Quartet had departed the Australian swimming scene .