



The International *Back to Back* Wool Challenge Story

In 1811 at Newbury in Berkshire, UK, a one thousand pound wager was made to make a coat from the sheep's back to a man's back in one day.

Watched by 5000 people, the coat was completed in thirteen hours.

The sheep was eaten with much quaffing of beer to celebrate.

Today's Challenge began in 1992 when Richard Snow, a keen young spinner at the Scottish Wool Centre at Aberfoyle in Scotland, developed thyroid cancer. His desire to raise funds for cancer research sparked off their **Back to Back Challenge**, a competition very similar to that run almost two hundred years ago.

The event created enormous interest in the UK, not only because of the clever wool promotion but also because of the funds raised for cancer research.

That same year, Australia held a similar contest.

Teams representing football clubs The Cats, Geelong, Victoria and the West Coast Eagles, Western Australia competed in a race to spin & knit a football scarf from freshly shorn wool.

When Australian Wool Showcase member, Wendy Dennis took part in the 1994 Fourth World Congress on Coloured Sheep at York University, UK, she also visited the Scottish Wool Centre. With similar annual competitions held in Scotland and Australia, combined with fundraising for Cancer Research, the seed was sown for a combined International Competition and the rules were developed to suit.

Teams consist of a blade shearer, a sheep and seven handspinners & knitters. Team nominate time keepers, assessors & coordinators monitor each team competing at their own wool related venue. All teams follow the identical Challenge rules and pattern exactly as they are written.

The 1995 inaugural Challenge with nine teams competing from three Australian States, Scotland and the Shetland Isles, was won by the **Shetland Isles in 5 hours 57 minutes 58 seconds.** **Over 1,350 Pounds** was raised by the Scottish Wool Centre for the Cancer Research Campaign.

1996 saw twenty two teams competing, sixteen in Australia from four States. USA entered a team from Michigan and the UK had teams from Scotland, the Shetland Isles, Devon and Cambridge. Again, the Shetlands were unbeatable, breaking their blistering 1995 record by 39 minutes. They clipped another nine minutes off the next year.

In 2004, **Merriwa**, New South Wales, Australia broke the 5 hour barrier.

Their time:- **4 hours 51 minutes 14 seconds** recorded for the first time in the *Guinness World Records* book. Merriwa also raised a record **AUD\$15,000 for Cancer Research.**

Ireland, Wales, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, Czech Republic, Republic of South Africa & The Netherlands have since joined the Challenge.

The Netherlands broke the Guinness World Record in 2017 in a time of **4 hours 45 minutes 53 seconds.**

In just a few short years, the Challenge has developed at a remarkable rate.

It is a simple and direct method of promoting wool from 'sheep's back to spinners back' using the ancient skills of blade shearing, spinning and knitting.

Originally it was timed to coincide with Australia's long weekend in June and the tourist summer season in the Northern Hemisphere. Now it is the last weekend in June.

Can you knit a jumper in a day?
Blade Shears and Knitting Needles:
Watch them race against the clock.

The International Back to Back Wool Challenge Story (continued)

Record Times

Guinness

World Record :-	4 hours 45 minute 53 seconds	Groenewoud, Swalmen, The Netherlands 2017
Australia Record :-	4 hours 51 minutes 14 seconds	Merriwa, New South Wales 2004.
UK Record:-	5 hours 9 minutes	Islesburgh, Shetland Isles 1997
Japan Record:-	5 hours 33 minutes 46 seconds	Hitsujkoubok Masako, Chibaken, 2006
Canada Record:-	5 hours 52 minutes 48 seconds	Toronto Spiders, Toronto, Ontario 2010
New Zealand Record:-	7 hours 5 minutes 24 seconds	Canterbury Combo, South Island. 2001.
Czech Republic Records:-	6 hours 52 minutes 10 seconds	Team One, Pelhrimov 2010.
USA Record:-	7 hours 52 minutes 00 seconds	San Diego County Spinners, Bonita, California USA 2019
Republic of South Africa	8 hours 13 minutes 40 seconds	Senekal Spinners Academy, Bloemfontein 2010.
The Netherlands	4 hours 45 minute 53 seconds	Groenewoud, Garden Pension Groenewoud, Swalmen 2017
Mainland Europe	4 hours 45 minute 53 seconds	Groenewoud, Garden Pension Groenewoud, Swalmen 2017

Annual Fund Raising Record

\$15,000.00 to Cancer Research Merriwa, New South Wales, Australia 2004

28th Challenge Date Year 2024

Sunday 30th June on or before.

Trophy Sponsors of Perpetual Trophies

Scottish Wool Centre -	The winning team.
City of Geelong -	Winning Australian team.
Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers Ltd -	The winning Canadian team.
Shipway Trophy -	For the winning New South Wales, Australia, team.
Brigadoon Trophy -	The team with the greatest donation to charity

For further information and Entry Forms, please contact:-

Wendy Dennis
Tarndwarncoort
Warncoort 3243 Victoria AUSTRALIA

Mobile Phone:- 0409 001 899
E-mail:- wendy@tarndie.com
Web:- www.tarndie.com

International Wool Challenge metal badges are available from the above address.

For team members and organisers only.

2023 Results Annual Challenge

27th International *Back to Back* Wool Challenge

Promoting Wool World Wide
Fund Raising for Cancer Research

PLACE	TEAM	2023 TIME	PREVIOUS BEST TIME
1st	Poly Westers, Lethbridge, Alberta, CANADA	7hr 49min 00sec	7hr 47min 00sec 2016
NEW INTERNATIONAL WOOL CHALLENGE RECORD Competing for 19 years in the <i>Back to Back</i> .			
2nd	San Diego County Spinners, Bonita, California, USA	8hr 18min 00sec	7hr 52min 00sec 2019 USA RECORD TIME
3rd	The Maine Spinners, Milford, Maine, USA	13hr 50min 02sec	11hr 49min 00sec 2022
	The Granite Web Makers, New Hampshire, USA	16hr 36 min 00 sec	Unfinished 2022
	Team Blue, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia	Unfinished	New Team
	Team Green, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia	Unfinished	New Team

Guinness World Record Time :-

**4 hours 45 minutes 53 seconds ~ Groenewoud ~
Swalmen ~ The Netherlands ~ 2017**

Scottish Wool Centre for the winning team world wide.
Poly Westers, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers Ltd for the winning Canadian team.
Poly Westers, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

City of Geelong for the winning Australian team.
Not awarded.

Shipway Trophy for the winning New South Wales (Australia) team.
Not awarded

Brigadoon Trophy for the greatest donation to Cancer Research by a Group associated with an International Wool Challenge.
T. B. A.

Wendy Dennis:- International Coordinator 2023
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International *Back to Back* Wool Challenge

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2023 Fund Raising Results

Annual Challenge

Promoting Wool World Wide & Fund Raising for Cancer Research

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WEB: www.tarndie.com

Position	Team	Amount Raised	Organisation
1.	The Mainely Spinners, Milford , Maine USA	USD \$2,752.27 AUD \$4,130.97	Cancer Care of Maine
2.	Granite Web Makers, Rollinsford, New Hampshire, USA	USD \$1,510.00 AUD \$2,266.38	Amy's Treat, Dover.
3.	San Diego County Spinners, Bonita, California, USA	USD \$1,418.16 AUD \$2,128.54	Rady Children's Hospital Cancer Center.
4.	Team Green, Team Blue, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia	AUD \$950.00	Rare Cancers
	Poly Westers, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada	CAN \$54.50 AUD \$61.74	Lethbridge Breast Cancer Research
Brigadoon Trophy for 2023 awarded to:-		The Mainley Spinners.	
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL TEAMS COMPETING THIS YEAR			

2023 TOTAL FUNDS RAISED AUD \$9,537.63

RECORD FUNDRAISING TEAM

Merriwa Jumbucks

\$15,000.00 to Cancer Research Merriwa, New South Wales, Australia 2004

Rules

Fund Raising for Cancer Research
Promoting Wool World Wide

OBJECTIVE:-

To complete the sweater/jumper, following the identical International Wool Challenge rules & pattern *exactly*, within a day.

1. A team consists of eight (8) members. One (1) blade shearer and seven (7) handspinnners & hand knitters with up to seven (7) non electric spinning wheels. One (1) sheep, any colour or breed but must not be housed or coated for two (2) months prior to shearing.
2. With the exception of the shearer, team members shall be allowed to perform whichever function is requires within the team. Eg a member may start as a spinner and become a knitter, knitters or spinners may wind wool, members of the team may exchange roles with one another.
3. The *continuous* time starts when the shearer, holding the sheep, begins shearing. Shearing can begin from any part of the sheep.
4. An independent timekeeper and assessor are required to verify the time and that the pattern has been complied with.
5. Spinners may start spinning as soon as the wool is available.
6. Only the team members may touch the wool.
7. Scissors, handcarders, flickers or combs are not permitted.
8. A HAND ball winder tool may be used.
9. Two wool singles are plied for a 'double knit' of approximately 8 ply yarn.
10. Use oversew stitch in wool to sew up the sweater.
11. Time ends when the completed sweater is handed to the timekeeper.
12. The winning team shall be the one which produces the finished sweater in the best recorded time.

ALL TASKS TO BE CARRIED OUT BY HAND OPERATION ONLY !!

May 2023



International *Back to Back* Wool Challenge

Additional Notes

Use any public **venue** central to team members.
Access to phone, refreshments, toilet facilities etc essential.
Free entry for the public is preferred but not compulsory.

Charity **fundraising**, especially for Cancer Research, is encouraged.

The International Wool Challenge is now recorded in the **Guinness World Records**.

Awards:-

Scottish Wool Centre for the fastest team world wide.

City of Geelong. for the winning Australian team..

Shipway Trophy for the winning New South Wales (Australia) team.

Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers Ltd for the winning Canadian team.

Brigadoon Trophy for the greatest donation to Cancer Research by a Group
associated with an International Wool Challenge venue.

Entry forms will be sent to previous participating teams annually in February.

New teams, please contact Australia for entry forms.

Wendy Dennis
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Mobile Phone:- 0409 001 899

Email:- wendy@tarndie.com

Website:- www.tarndie.com

Entry Form

28th International *Back to Back* Wool Challenge

30th June 2024 (on or before)

Team Name

Contact Name

Contact Address

.....

.....

.....

.....

Ph.....

Email.....

Web Site.....

Date of Challenge.....

Challenge Venue.....

Starting Time.....

Ph.....

Team Members

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Blade Shearer.....

Time Keeper(s)

Assessor(s)

Breed of Sheep to be Shorn.....

Makes of Spinning Wheels

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Entry Fee Nil

Cancer Research Organisation (fund raising)

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Please advise your team entry as soon as possible & no later than 30 April 2024 to:-

Wendy Dennis –

Tarndwarncourt, Warncoort Victoria 3243 AUSTRALIA OR

64 Skene Street, BIRREGURRA VIC 3242 AUSTRALIA

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Web: www.tarndie.com

Please don't hesitate to call if you have any further queries.



International *Back to Back* Wool Challenge

Annual Challenge
Promoting Wool World Wide & Fund Raising for Cancer Research

Sweater / Jumper Pattern

Each team will follow this International Wool Challenge pattern ***exactly*** as it is written. On completion, the team assessor is responsible for counting the stitches and rows.

Yarn - To be equivalent to Double Knit.

Back and Front (both the same)

Using one pair of size 10 (3.25mm) needles cast on 96 stitches.

Work 16 rows in k1, p1 rib.

Change to one pair of size 8 (4mm) needles and knit 1 row plain and 1 row purl (Stocking stitch).

Continue until 134 rows have been completed from 16 rows of rib.

(Total from cast on edge 150 rows).

Change to k1, p1 rib (still using the size 8 needles) work 12 rows.

Cast off loosely in rib.

Sleeves (Make two alike).

Using size 10 (3.25mm) needles cast on 46 stitches.

Work 16 rows k1, p1 rib.

Change to size 8 (4mm) needles and knit 1 row plain and 1 row purl (stocking stitch).

Increasing 1 stitch at each end of first and every following 4th row until 96 stitches.

Continue without further increase until 100 rows have been completed from 16 cuff rib.

(Total from cast on edge 116 rows).

Cast off loosely.

Making Up

Join Back and Front at shoulder edge (quarter of the way from the sleeve edge - leaving half of the top edge as neck opening)

Sew in Sleeves.



International *Back to Back* Wool Challenge

Tarndwarncoort – Warncoort - Victoria 3243 Australia

Annual Challenge ~ Promoting Wool World Wide & Fund Raising for Cancer Research

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Yearly winning teams.

- 1995** Islesburg Exhibition Team, Community Centre, Islesburgh, Shetland Isles
5hours 57minutes 58seconds **World Record**
- 1996** Islesburg Exhibition Team, Community Centre, Islesburgh, Shetland Isles
5hours 18minutes 00seconds **World Record**
- 1997** Islesburg Exhibition Team, Community Centre, Islesburgh, Shetland Isles
5hours 09minutes 00seconds **World Record**
- 1998** South Ham Weavers Spinners & Dyers, Ivybridge, Nr. Plymouth Devon, UK
6hours 07minutes 00seconds
- 1999** South Ham Weavers Spinners & Dyers, Ivybridge, Nr. Plymouth Devon, UK
5hours 54minutes 00seconds
- 2000** Morisset Crafty Crafters, Merriwa Tourist Welcoming Centre, Merriwa, New South Wales, Australia
6hours 17minutes 19seconds **Australian Record**
- 2001** Murray Bridge Woolly Chambermaids, Murray Bridge Town Hall, Murray Bridge, South Australia. Australia
5hours 58minutes 01seconds **New Australian Record**
- 2002** Pembroke Merriwa Jumbucks, Merriwa Sports Club, Merriwa, New South Wales, Australia
5hours 42minutes 39seconds **New Australian Record**
- 2003** Pembroke Merriwa Jumbucks, Merriwa Sports Club, Merriwa, New South Wales, Australia
5hours 33minutes 30seconds **New Australian Record**
- 2004** Pembroke Merriwa Jumbucks, Merriwa Sports Club, Merriwa, New South Wales, Australia
4hours 51minutes 14seconds **New World & Australian Record**
GUINNESS WORLD RECORD
- 2005** Hitsujikouboh Masako, Kimitsu Chuuou Public Hall, Kimitushi, Chibaken, Japan.
6hours 09minutes 24seconds **Japan Record**

2006	Hitsujikouboh Masako, Kimitsu Chuuou Public Hall, Kimitushi, Chibaken, Japan. 5hours 33minutes 46seconds	New Japan Record
2007	Toronto Spiders, Pickering Museum, Greenwood, Ontario, Canada 6hours 00minutes 18seconds	Canadian Record
2008	Toronto Spiders, Black Creek Village, Toronto, Ontario, Canada 5hours 55minutes 50seconds	New Canadian Record
2009	Spinning Knitwits (Newcastle), Tocal College, Patterson, New South Wales, Australia 6hours 3minutes 20seconds	
2010	Toronto Spiders, Toronto, Ontario, Canada 5hour 52minutes 48seconds	New Canadian Record
2011	Toronto Spiders, Toronto, Ontario, Canada 5hour 53minutes 34seconds	
2012	Groenewoud ~ The Netherlands/Germany, Swalmen, The Netherlands 6 hour 03 minutes 28 seconds	Main Land Europe & The Netherlands Record
2013	Groenewoud ~ The Netherlands/Germany, Swalmen, The Netherlands 5 hour 32 minutes 37 seconds	New Main Land Europe & The Netherlands Record
2014	Groenewoud ~ The Netherlands/Germany, Swalmen, The Netherlands 5 hour 26 minutes 31 seconds	New Main Land Europe & The Netherlands Record
2015	Groenewoud ~ The Netherlands/Germany, Swalmen, The Netherlands 5 hour 01 minute 28 seconds	New Main Land Europe & The Netherlands Record
2016	Groenewoud ~ The Netherlands/Germany, Swalmen, The Netherlands 5 hour 01 minute 07 seconds	New Main Land Europe & The Netherlands Record
2017	Groenewoud ~ The Netherlands/Germany, Swalmen, The Netherlands 4 hour 45 minute 53 seconds	NEW GUINNESS WORLD RECORD New Main Land Europe & The Netherlands Record
2018	Spinning Knitwits-Newcastle, Tocal College, Patterson, New South Wales, Australia 6hr 08min 37sec	
2019	San Diego County Spinners Bonita, California, USA 7hr 52min 00sec	New USA Record Time.
2020	Cancelled due to the worldwide Corona virus.	
2021	Cancelled due to the worldwide Corona virus.	

2022	Poly Westers, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada 10hr 55min 00sec	Record for competing for 18 years
2023	Poly Westers, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada 7hr 49min 00sec	Record for competing for 19 years

