

Water Polo Australia Hall of Fame – inducted 2009

DEBBIE HANDLEY TUGUN (QLD)



Gold Medalist - FINA Women's World Championship, Madrid (1986)
Gold Medalist - FINA Women's World Cup, Irvine (1984)
Silver Medalist - FINA Women's World Championship, Guayaquil (1982)
Bronze Medalist - FINA Women's World Cup, Sainte Foy (1983)
Bronze Medalist - FINA Women's World Cup, Brisbane (1981)
Bronze Medalist - FINA Women's World Cup, Merced (1979)



Debbie Handley (Cummins) was a pioneer of women's water polo in Queensland and for Australia. She began her playing career with the Tugun club and was a continuous representative in the Queensland State team from 1974 to 1988, an impressive span of 15 years (14 years as captain). She was selected in the first Australian women's team in 1976 and accrued 93 caps for Australia over the next 13 years, the latter 10 years (69 games) as the national captain, leading the Australians in two World Championship campaigns at Guayaquil (1982) and at Madrid (1986). Debbie also competed in six FINA Women's World Cup tournaments at Merced (1979), Breda (1980), Brisbane (1981), Sainte Foy (1983), Irvine (1984) and Christchurch (1988), and was without doubt one of the greatest female water polo players.

At the international level Debbie was regularly voted the 'Player of the Tournament' and was the recipient of no fewer than six FINA medals as well as the AWPI 'Harry Quittner' medal, and also led the Maroons to six national titles in the Australian championships. Photo - AAWPA Archives.

Queensland Sport Hall of Fame – inducted 2006

Debbie Handley BEM



Voted the world's best player at the peak of her career, she played 93 times for Australia from 1976-88, was a 10-year captain and coached Australia from 1988-91. She was the first Queenslander to represent Australia at Open level and led the national team to gold medals at the World Cup in 1984 and World Championships in 1986, and was a catalyst in the sport earning Olympic recognition in 2000. She was the first inductee into the Queensland Water Polo Hall of Fame in 2006, and was the second inductee to the Australian Water Polo Hall of Fame in 2009.