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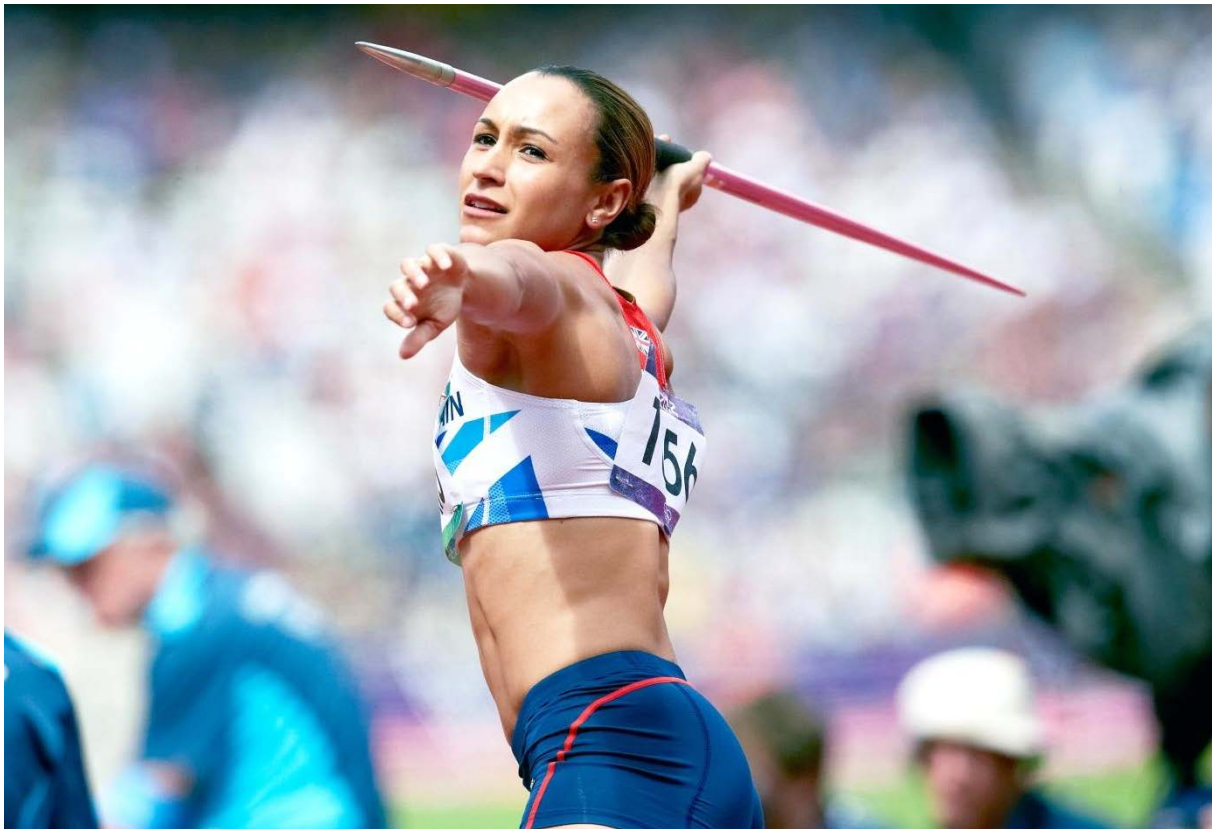
Olympic Studies Centre

ATHLETICS: History of Athletics at the Olympic Games

Reference document

Introduction, key stages and evolution in the number of events from this sport's beginnings to the present time.

March 2015



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Athletics

Introduction

Athletics was on the programme of the Games of the I Olympiad in [Athens in 1896](#), and has remained on the programme since then. Twelve men's events were on the programme of these first Games. Women were authorised to compete in athletics events for the first time at the [1928 Games in Amsterdam](#), with five events. The women's programme currently includes 23 events.

Key stages

Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1894: At the Paris Congress in June, the desire for athletic sports to be included on the programme of the Olympic Games was expressed.• 1912: At the 15th IOC Session, which was held in July in Stockholm, it was decided to divide the sports on the programme into three categories: indispensable, desirable and admissible. Athletics was included in the first category.
Reduction of the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1924: At the 23rd IOC Session, held in Paris in June and July, a discussion on reducing the programme was held: the 10,000m walk, 3,000m team event, cross-country and pentathlon were removed.
Women's inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1926: At the 25th IOC Session, held in Lisbon in May, it was decided to allow women to compete in a limited number of athletics events.• 1934: At the 33rd IOC Session, held in May in Athens, the participation of women in certain sports was questioned. A vote was held, and women's participation in athletics was accepted by 11 votes to 9.
Women's marathon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1981: At the meeting of the IOC Executive Board held in Los Angeles in February, it was decided to include women's marathon on the programme of the Games of the XXIII Olympiad in Los Angeles in 1984



Evolution in the number of events

- 1896: 12 events (men's)
- 1900: 23 events (men's)
- 1904: 24 events (men's)
- 1908: 26 events (men's)
- 1912: 30 events (men's)
- 1920: 29 events (men's)
- 1924: 27 events (men's)
- 1928: 27 events (22 men's and 5 women's)
- 1932-1936: 29 events (23 men's and 6 women's)
- 1948-1956: 33 events (24 men's and 9 women's)
- 1960: 34 events (24 men's and 10 women's)
- 1964-1968: 36 events (24 men's and 12 women's)
- 1972: 38 events (24 men's and 14 women's)
- 1976: 37 events (23 men's and 14 women's)
- 1980: 38 events (24 men's and 14 women's)
- 1984: 41 events (24 men's and 17 women's)
- 1988: 42 events (24 men's and 18 women's)
- 1992: 43 events (24 men's and 19 women's)
- 1996: 44 events (24 men's and 20 women's)
- 2000-2004: 46 events (24 men's and 22 women's)
- 2008-2016: 47 events (24 men's and 23 women's)

[Find out more](#)



Men's events

Athletics men	1896	1900	1904	1908	1912	1920	1924	1928	1932	1936	1948	1952	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	Total	
60m																													2	
100m																														28
200m																														27
400m																														28
800m																														28
1500m																														28
5000m																														24
5 miles																														1
5000m team																														1
4 miles team																														1
3 miles team																														1
3000m team																														3
10000m																														24
Marathon (1)																														28
3000m walk																														1
3500m walk																														1
10 miles walk																														1
10km walk																														5
20km walk																														16
50km walk																														19
Cross-country individual																														3
Cross-country team																														3
110m hurdles																														28
200m hurdles																														2
400m hurdles																														26
3000m steeplechase (2)																														26
4000m steeplechase																														1
4x100m relay																														24
4x400m relay (3)																														25
Shot put																														28
Shot put 56lb																														2
Shot put, both hands																														1
Discus throw																														28
Discus throw, ancient style																														1
discus throw, both hands																														1

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Men's events, continued

Athletics men	1896	1900	1904	1908	1912	1920	1924	1928	1932	1936	1948	1952	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	Total
Javelin throw																													25
Javelin throw, freestyle																													1
Javelin throw, both hands																													1
Hammer throw																													27
High jump																													28
High jump, standing																													4
Long jump																													28
Long jump, standing																													4
Triple jump																													28
Triple jump, standing																													2
Pole vault																													28
Decathlon																													25
Pentathlon																													3
Number of events men	12	23	24	26	30	29	27	22	23	23	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	23	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	28

(1) The distance of the marathon has varied throughout history: 40km in 1896, 40.26km in 1900, 40km in 1904, 42.95km in 1908, 40.2km in 1912, 42.75km in 1920 and 42.195km thereafter

(2) The distance in the steeplechase event has varied throughout history: 2,500m in 1900, 2,590m in 1904 and 3,200m in 1908

(3) The distances of the relays in 1908 were as follows: 200m, 200m, 400m and 800m

Women's events

Athletics women	1896	1900	1904	1908	1912	1920	1924	1928	1932	1936	1948	1952	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	Total
100m																													21
200m																													18
400m																													14
800m																													16
1500m																													12
3000m																													3
3000m steeple																													3
5000m																													6
10000m																													8
Marathon																													9
10km walk																													2
20km walk																													5
80m hurdles																													9

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Women's events, continued

Athletics women	1896	1900	1904	1908	1912	1920	1924	1928	1932	1936	1948	1952	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	Total	
100m hurdles																													12	
400m hurdles																														9
4x100m relay																														21
4x400m relay																														12
Discus throw																														21
Javelin throw																														20
Shot put																														18
Hammer throw																														5
High jump																														21
Long jump																														18
Triple jump																														6
Pole vault																														5
Pentathlon																														5
Heptathlon																														9
Number of events women	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	6	6	9	9	9	10	12	12	14	14	14	17	18	19	20	23	22	23	23	23	21	

Total

Athletics	1896	1900	1904	1908	1912	1920	1924	1928	1932	1936	1948	1952	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	Total
Number of events	12	23	24	26	30	29	27	27	29	29	33	33	33	34	36	36	38	37	38	41	42	43	44	46	46	47	47	47	28

Grey column total = number of times on the programme