

## TL7 1896 A MAJOR OUTLIER

If the men's results are taken from 1896, they show much greater improvement than if they are taken from 1900. We label the 1896 data as outliers that do not provide a fair comparison.

Today's pupils have grown up with the Olympics being the elite competition. Things were very different in 1896. There were very few competitors; only 64 in all the athletics events from only 10 counties, moreover these were far from the best in their countries –the American team of 10 athletes had only one who was a national champion in his event. There were only 9 competitors from 5 countries in the long jump and 7 athletes from 4 countries in the shot put; in other words the event in no way brought together the best athletes in the world.

The track events were run on a 200m track (see photos below) that had very tight bends, this meant that the runners in every event longer than 100m had to slow down on the bends much more than runners on a 400m track. In swimming, the events were not held in a pool but in a roughly measured course in the open ocean, moreover the modern freestyle swimming stroke was not developed until 1902 and a much slower stroke was used in 1896. In shot put they threw from a square not a circle.

The following table compares the men's improvement from 1896 with the next time the event was run (1900 in all but 100 freestyle when it was 1904).

Event	Men's improvement from 1896	Men's improvement from the next year of the event
100m track	2.31sec	1.31 sec
400m track	10.2sec	4.8 sec
800m track	26.4sec	16.6 sec
Long jump	2.2m	1.35 m
Shot Put	10.29m	7.41 m
100m freestyle	35sec	15.6 sec

