



Athletics at the 1904 Summer Olympics – Men's marathon

The men's marathon at the [1904 Summer Olympics](#) in [St. Louis](#), Missouri, United States, took place on August 30 of that year, over a distance of 24 miles 1500 yards (40 km).^[1]

The race was run during the hottest part of the day on dusty country roads with minimal water supply; while 32 athletes coming from seven nations (the United States, France, Cuba, Greece, the [Orange River Colony](#), Great Britain, and Canada) competed, only 14 managed to complete the race,^[2] which was a bizarre affair due to poor organization and officiating.^[3] While [Frederick Lorz](#) was greeted as the apparent winner, he was later disqualified as he had hitched a ride in a car for part of the race. The actual winner, [Thomas Hicks](#), was near collapse and hallucinating by the end of the race, a side effect of being administered brandy, raw eggs, and [strychnine](#) by his trainers. The fourth-place finisher, [Andarín Carvajal](#), took a nap during the race after eating spoiled apples.

Background

This was the third appearance of the [marathon](#) event, which is one of 12 athletics events to have been held at every Summer Olympics. [Arthur L. Newton](#) of the United States was the only runner from 1900 to return, while other significant American runners included the winners of the past three [Boston Marathons](#): 1902 winner [Sammy Mellor](#), 1903 winner [John Lordon](#), and 1904 winner [Michael Spring](#).^[5]

Cuba and South Africa each made their first appearance in the event, while the United States was the only nation to have runners in each of the first three Olympic marathons.

The marathon included the first two black Africans to compete in the Olympics: two [Tswana](#) men named [Len Taunyane](#) and [Jan Mashiani](#), who happened to be in St. Louis as part of the South African exhibit at the [1904 World's Fair](#).^[6] Both had served as long-distance message runners during the then-recent [Second Boer War](#).^[7] Although some accounts report that both ran barefoot, Mashiani was wearing shoes in photographs taken during the event.^{[4][7]}

Men's marathon at the Games of the III Olympiad



Thomas Hicks and supporters

Venue	St. Louis
Dates	August 30, 1904
Competitors	32 from 7 nations
Winning time	3:28:53

Medalists

- 1 [Thomas Hicks](#)
 [United States](#)
- 2 [Albert Corey](#)
 [France](#)
- 3 [Arthur Newton](#)
 [United States](#)

Competition format

The marathon distance had not yet been standardized; in St. Louis, the course was 24 miles and 1500 yards (40 km). The organizers started the marathon at 3:00 pm, whereas most modern marathons start in the early morning to take advantage of cooler times of day.

The start included five laps, or $1\frac{2}{3}$ miles (2.68 km), around the stadium track.^[5] The remainder of the course was on dusty country roads, with race officials riding in vehicles ahead of and behind the runners: this created dust clouds that exacerbated the severely hot and humid conditions,^[6] with a temperature of around 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius) at the starting time.^{[7][8]} The route had to be altered at the last minute after roads in the Creve Coeur area were washed out by rain.^[9]

Also, the course was not cleared of obstacles for the marathon; the runners had to dodge cross-town traffic, delivery wagons, railroad trains, trolley cars and even people walking their dogs.^[6]



Mashiani (left) and Taunyane before the race^[4]



Runners gathered immediately before the race start



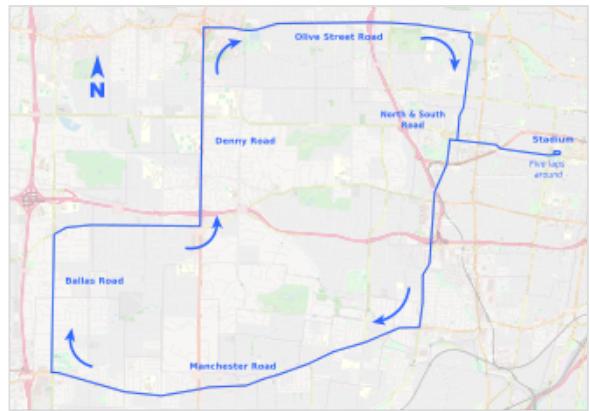
First runners leaving the stadium (Mellor and Spring in front of referees' automobile)



Andarín Carvajal on his way to fourth place

Summary

During the race, John Lordan, who had won the 1903 Boston Marathon, was violently ill after 10 miles (16 km) and retired, while Sam Mellor, who had won the 1902 Boston Marathon, was also overcome by the dust; despite leading the field at the halfway mark, Mellor became disoriented and ultimately dropped out of the race after 14.5 miles (23.3 km).^[7] Another near-fatality during the event was William Garcia of the United States. He was found lying on the road along the marathon course unconscious, with severe internal injuries that had been caused by breathing the clouds of dust kicked up by the race officials' cars.^[3]



Marathon route

The first to arrive at the finish line, after three hours and 13 minutes – more than 13 minutes slower than the winning time in 1900 – was Frederick Lorz. After being hailed as the winner, he had his photograph taken with Alice Roosevelt, daughter of then-U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt: she placed a wreath upon Lorz's head, and was about to award him the gold medal when spectators claimed Lorz had not run the entire race. Lorz, suffering cramps, had actually dropped out of the race after nine miles and hitched a ride back to the stadium in a car, waving at spectators and runners alike during the ride. When the car broke down at the 19th mile, he re-entered the race and jogged across the finish line.^[6]

Upon being confronted by furious race officials with these allegations, Lorz immediately admitted his deception. Despite his claim that he was playing a practical joke, the AAU responded by banning Lorz for life; this was commuted to six months on February 19, 1905, after Lorz formally apologized and it was found that he had not intended to defraud. Lorz later won the 1905 Boston Marathon.^{[3][10]}

Thomas Hicks ended up winning the event, although he benefited from various forms of aid that would not be allowed today.^[11] 10 miles (16 km) from the finish, Hicks led the race by 1.5 miles (2.4 km), but he had to be restrained from stopping and lying down by his trainers. From then until the end of the race, Hicks received several doses of strychnine – a common rat poison, which stimulates the nervous system in small doses – mixed with brandy and egg white.^[3] This was the earliest recorded use of performance-enhancing drugs in the revived Olympic Games.^[6] He continued to battle onwards, hallucinating, and was barely able to walk for most of the course. When he reached the stadium, his support team carried him over the line, holding him in the air while he shuffled his feet as if still running.^[6] Hicks had to be carried off the track on a stretcher, and might have died in the stadium had he not been treated by four doctors. He lost 8 pounds (3.6 kg) during the course of the marathon.^[6]



A 1904 editorial cartoon depicting Lorz riding a car during the marathon

Cuban postman Andarín Carvajal had also joined the marathon, arriving at the last minute.^[6] After losing all of his money gambling in New Orleans, Louisiana, he hitchhiked to St. Louis and had to run the event in street clothes that he cut around the legs to make them into shorts. Not having eaten in 40 hours, he saw a spectator eating two peaches. He asked if he could have the peaches, and the spectator declined. He then stole both peaches and ran away. Later, he stopped off in an orchard en route to eat some apples, which turned out to be rotten.^[6] The rotten apples caused him to have strong stomach cramps, and he had to lie down and take a nap. Despite his discomfort and the pause, Carvajal still managed to finish in fourth place.^{[6][12]}

Arriving without correct documents, Albert Corey, a French immigrant to the United States, is inconsistently listed as participating in a mixed team in the four mile team race (with four undisputed Americans) and competing for the United States in the marathon.^[10] The South African entrants, Len Taunyane and Jan Mashiani, finished ninth and twelfth, respectively. Mashiani was chased off course by a dog, which affected his placement.^[13]

Dehydration

The only two sources of water for the competitors were a water tower at 6 miles (9.7 km), and a well at about the halfway (12 miles 750 yards (19.998 km)) mark.^{[3][6]} James Edward Sullivan was a chief organizer of the Olympics, and set up no other water sources along the 24 miles and 1500 yards course of the marathon even though it was conducted in 32 °C (90 °F) heat over unpaved roads that were choked with dust. His ostensible reason was to conduct research on "purposeful dehydration": this, combined with poor officiating, saw the marathon end with the worst ratio of finishers to starters (14 out of 32), and the slowest winning time, 3:28:53, which was exactly 29 minutes slower than the second-slowest winning time.^[6]

Schedule

Date	Time	Round
Tuesday, 30 August 1904	15:00	Final

Results

**Athletics at the
1904 Summer Olympics**



Hicks resting after his victory



Track events

60 m	<u>men</u>
100 m	<u>men</u>
200 m	<u>men</u>
400 m	<u>men</u>
800 m	<u>men</u>
1500 m	<u>men</u>
110 m hurdles	<u>men</u>
200 m hurdles	<u>men</u>
400 m hurdles	<u>men</u>
2590 m steeplechase	<u>men</u>
4 mile team race	<u>men</u>

Road events

Marathon	<u>men</u>
----------	------------

Field events

Long jump	<u>men</u>
Triple jump	<u>men</u>
High jump	<u>men</u>
Pole vault	<u>men</u>
Standing long jump	<u>men</u>
Standing triple jump	<u>men</u>
Standing high jump	<u>men</u>
Shot put	<u>men</u>
Discus throw	<u>men</u>
Hammer throw	<u>men</u>
56 pound weight throw	<u>men</u>

Combined events

Triathlon	<u>men</u>
All-around	<u>men</u>

Rank	Athlete	Nation	Time
1	Thomas Hicks	United States	3:28:53
2	Albert Corey	France	3:34:52
3	Arthur Newton	United States	3:47:33
4	Andarín Carvajal	Cuba	Unknown
5	Dimitrios Veloulis	Greece	
6	David Kneeland	United States	
7	Harry Brawley	United States	
8	Sidney Hatch	United States	
9	Len Taunyane	South Africa	
10	Christos Zechouritis	Greece	
11	Harry Devlin	United States	
12	Jan Mashiani	South Africa	
13	John Furla	United States	
14	Andrew Oikonomou	Greece	
DSQ	Frederick Lorz	United States	3:13:00
—	Edward P. Carr	United States	DNF
	Georgios Drosos	Greece	
	Robert Fowler	United States	
	John Foy	United States	
	William Garcia	United States	
	Kharilaos Giannakas	Greece	
	Bertie Harris	South Africa	
	Thomas J. Kennedy	United States	
	John Lordon	United States	
	Ioannis Loungitsas	Greece	
	Georgios Louridas	Greece	
	Samuel Mellor	United States	
	Frank Pierce	United States	
	Petros Pipiles	Greece	
	Guy Porter	United States	
	Michael Spring	United States	
	Georgios Vamkaitis	Greece	
—	Louis Crancer	United States	DNS
	John Daly	Great Britain	
	William Heritage	United States	
	John Kennedy	United States	

Konstantinos Lontos	 United States
William Meyer	 United States
Billy Sherring	 Canada
Dimitrios Tsokas	 Greece

References

1. Longman, Jeré (April 20, 2012). "The Marathon's Random Route to Its Length" (https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/21/sports/the-marathons-accidental-route-to-26-miles-385-yards.html?_r=0). On Olympics. *The New York Times*. Archived (https://web.archive.org/web/20170614180807/http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/21/sports/the-marathons-accidental-route-to-26-miles-385-yards.html?_r=0) from the original on June 14, 2017. Retrieved February 3, 2016.
2. "Athletics at the 1904 St. Louis Summer Games: Men's Marathon" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200417171704/https://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/summer/1904/ATH/mens-marathon.html>). *sports-reference.com*. Archived from the original (<https://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/summer/1904/ATH/mens-marathon.html>) on April 17, 2020. Retrieved July 22, 2017.
3. Wallechinsky, David (1984). *The Complete Book of the Olympics*. New York: Penguin Books. pp. 44–45. ISBN 0140066322.
4. van der Merwe, Floris J.G. (1999). "Africa's First Encounter with the Olympic Games In....1904" (<http://isoh.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/5.pdf>) (PDF). *Journal of Olympic History*. September 1999. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210522125200/http://isoh.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/5.pdf>) (PDF) from the original on May 22, 2021. Retrieved May 22, 2021 – via International Society of Olympic Historians – ISOH.
5. "Marathon, Men" (<https://www.olympedia.org/results/56131>). *Olympedia*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201103051804/https://www.olympedia.org/results/56131>) from the original on November 3, 2020. Retrieved August 23, 2020.
6. Abbott, Karen (August 7, 2012). "The 1904 Olympic Marathon May Have Been The Strangest Ever" (<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-1904-olympic-marathon-may-have-been-the-strangest-ever-14910747>). History. *Smithsonian*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20140209105905/http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-1904-olympic-marathon-may-have-been-the-strangest-ever-14910747/>) from the original on February 9, 2014. Retrieved May 24, 2024.
7. Matthews, George R.; Marshall, Sandra (2003). *St. Louis Olympics 1904*. Chicago, IL: Arcadia Pub. ISBN 0-7385-2329-1. OCLC 52447869 (<https://search.worldcat.org/oclc/52447869>).
8. "Fleetest Runners of All Nations Start in Great Marathon Race" (<https://www.newspapers.com/article/st-louis-post-dispatch-04-st-louis-8-28/9311449/>). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. August 28, 1904. p. 27. Retrieved February 11, 2024.
9. "Marathon Course Changed; Recent Rains Caused Washouts of Many Highways" (<https://www.newspapers.com/clip/99809100/>), *St. Louis Republic*, August 24, 1904, page 9.
10. Cronin, Brian (August 10, 2010). "Sports Legend Revealed: A marathon runner nearly died" (http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/sports_blog/2010/08/sports-legend-revealed-a-marathon-runner-nearly-died-because-of-drugs-he-took-to-help-him-win.html). *Los Angeles Times*. Archived (https://web.archive.org/web/20111016041131/http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/sports_blog/2010/08/sports-legend-revealed-a-marathon-runner-nearly-died-because-of-drugs-he-took-to-help-him-win.html) from the original on October 16, 2011. Retrieved May 24, 2024.

11. "1967: Creation of the IOC Medical Commission" (<https://olympics.com/ioc/1967-creation-of-the-ioc-medical-commission>). *olympics.com*.
12. Martin, David E.; Gynn, Roger W. H. (2000). *The Olympic Marathon* (<https://archive.org/details/olympicmarathon00mart>). Human Kinetics. p. 50 (<https://archive.org/details/olympicmarathon00mart/page/50>). ISBN 978-0-88011-969-6 – via Internet Archive.
13. O'Toole, Sean. "The Athletes" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160826094009/http://www.cityscapesdigital.net/2015/12/09/athletes/>). CityScapes. Archived from the original (<http://www.cityscapesdigital.net/2015/12/09/athletes/>) on August 26, 2016. Retrieved August 8, 2016.

Sources

- Wudarski, Paweł (1999). "Wyniki Igrzysk Olimpijskich" (<http://olympic.w.interia.pl/>) (in Polish). Retrieved December 14, 2006.
- Charles J. P. Lucas, The Olympic Games, 1904. St. Louis, Mo: Woodward & Tieran Printing Co., 1905 (<http://library.la84.org/60ic/OfficialReports/1904/1904lucas.pdf>) (copy from LA84 Foundation library)

External links

- Bois, Jon (August 11, 2016). "Rat poison and brandy: The 1904 St. Louis Olympic marathon" (<https://www.sbnation.com/2016/8/11/12439622/1904-st-louis-olympic-marathon-pretty-good>). *SBNation*. Retrieved May 24, 2024.

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Athletics_at_the_1904_Summer_Olympics_-_Men%27s_marathon&oldid=1322547393"