

The programme of the Fourth Olympiad was based on that of the Athens Games. There was some debate over which events were suitable for Olympic competition. Certain sports were deemed too specific to one nation; cricket was excluded for that reason. In theory, as one reporter summarised it in an article in the *Country Gentleman*, 'If any given sport is found to be popular in half a dozen countries, it is admitted, but not otherwise.'⁸ The tug-of-war, which would hardly qualify under that definition, was retained from the Athens programme. Reflecting the military and hunting origins of many traditional European sports at the time, among the list of firearms events were 'Shooting: Running deer (single and double)', 'Individual Shooting against 1) moving and 2) disappearing targets' and 'International Military Rifle'. Some 'sports' were included as demonstrations rather than medal contests: bicycle polo, for instance. Fencing with the foil, too, was given exhibition status, the BOC, under Cook's influence, ruling it an art rather than a sport. (The knights felt privately that they had suffered from poor and partisan judging in the fencing contests at Athens, which may have influenced this particular categorisation.)

Robert Laffan submitted the BOC's proposed programme to the meeting of the IOC held at The Hague towards the end of May 1907. Dividing the Olympic events of 1908 into summer and winter Games, competitions ran from 27 April to 31 October. The principal two weeks of events in the stadium were to take place after the Amateur Athletic Association Championships and the Henley Regatta from 13 to 25 July. Before that, racquets, covered court tennis and jeu de paume competitions were to be held at the Queen's Club in London; lawn tennis at Wimbledon; polo at the Hurlingham Club; rifle contests at Bisley; and trap shooting at Uxendon Shooting Club.