



Fastest times 'will be set by women'

Make a note for your descendants: the 2156 Olympics will be the one to watch, for it may well mark the first time in human history that women will overtake men as the fastest runners on the planet.

That's the confident prediction of a team of British scientists who have plotted the times for the Olympic 100 metres since 1900 and say a century of ever-improving athletic prowess in this discipline is set to continue.

They say the figures point to "remarkably strong linear trends": a steady improvement by both men and women that runs like a straight line surging up a graph.

In addition, women are improving faster than men, so a century and a half from now they may well be the world's fastest sprinters, the team of scientists say.

The winner of the 100m women's sprint in Athens this year was Yuliya Nesterenko of Belarus, with a time of 10.93 seconds. The men's winner was

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Justin Gatlin of the United States, with 9.85 seconds.

In the 2008 Games, according to the computer model, the women's champion will come home in a range of 10.34-10.80 seconds, and the men's champion in a range of 9.586-9.874 seconds.

"Should these trends continue, the projections will intersect at the 2156 Olympics, when – for the first time ever – the winning women's 100m sprint time of 8.079 seconds will be lower than that of the men's winning time of 8.098 seconds," they say.

That scenario could happen as soon as the 2064 or as late as the 2788

No quick-fix solution