

TIPPERARY ATHLETES



Jim Mitchell

by **Michael O'Dwyer**

Jim Mitchell was born on 26 January 1864 at Bartoose, Emly, County Tipperary. He was the eldest son of Daniel Mitchell, a farmer, and Elizabeth Mitchell (née Sheehan). His parents got married in the parish of Knocklong and Glenbrohane on 4 March 1862. He first competed in athletics in 1878 as a quarter-miler and in the long jump and high jump, and at the age of seventeen he cleared 5 ft 10 in. (1.78 m) in high jumping. He broke both ankles in 1882 and that was when he turned his attention to weight throwing. After winning eighteen national titles in Ireland, and three hammer titles and two shot-put titles in England, Jim Mitchell toured the United States with the Gaelic 'invasion' team in the autumn of 1888 – and ended up staying there. He was one of around fifty Irishmen who left Queenstown (Cobh) on 16 September 1888 on the SS *Wisconsin* and arrived in New York nine days later on 25 September. They were there to play exhibition hurling matches and compete in athletic contests, and Jim Mitchell was one of Ireland's main athletes. In the following years he not only won championship after championship in America and Canada but he also broke many world records. Hammer throwing was his specialty, and his strength made him one of the greatest hammer and weight throwers in the history of American athletics. He did not compete in the 1896 or 1900 Olympics but as the 1904 Olympics were in St Louis, USA he trained up for them. Jim Mitchell was now aged forty, and past his prime, but still managed to get an Olympic bronze medal in the 56 lb weight throw, as well as coming in fifth place in the hammer and sixth in the discus. He also competed in the tug of war at the Olympic Games in St Louis with a team all from New York Athletic Club, and came fourth. Jim Mitchell died on 3 July 1921 in Roosevelt Hospital, New York, aged fifty-seven, and is interred in Calvary Cemetery, New York. At the time of his death he was a member of the staff of the *New York Herald*.

Titles Won at Senior National Championships:

Irish Amateur Athletic Association Championships

1887	Shot-Put	39 ft 2½ in.	(11.95 m)
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Gaelic Athletic Association Championships

1885	Hammer (with run & follow)	106 ft 6 in.	(32.46 m)
1885	14 lb Weight (with run, no follow)	52 ft 10 ⁵ / ₈ in.	(16.11 m)
1885	56 lb Weight (unlimited run & follow)	29 ft 4 ³ / ₄ in.	(8.96 m)
1886	Shot-Put	38 ft 11½ in.	(11.87 m)
1886	Hammer (handle 3 ft 6 in., unlimited & follow)	126 ft 10 in.	(38.66 m)
1886	7 lb Weight	84 ft 11 in.	(25.88 m)
1886	56 lb Weight (unlimited run & follow)	34 ft 1 in.	(10.39 m)
1887	Shot-Put	42 ft 3 in.	(12.88 m)
1887	Putting 28 lb Weight	30 ft 11½ in.	(9.43 m)
1887	Hammer (unlimited & follow)	120 ft 2 in.	(36.62 m)
1887	7 lb Weight	84 ft 0 in.	(25.60 m)
1887	56 lb Weight (unlimited run & follow)	31 ft 8½ in.	(9.66 m)
1888	Shot-Put (7 ft run, no follow)	39 ft 3 in.	(11.96 m)
1888	Hammer (unlimited & follow)	136 ft 1½ in.	(41.49 m)
1888	7 lb Weight (with follow)	90 ft 2 in.	(27.48 m)
1888	14 lb Weight (with follow)	59 ft 5¾ in.	(18.13 m)
1888	56 lb Weight (unlimited run & follow)	34 ft 1 in.	(10.39 m)

Amateur Athletic Association of England Championships

1886	Shot-Put	38 ft 1 in.	(11.61 m)
1886	Hammer	110 ft 4 in.	(33.63 m)
1887	Shot-Put	39 ft 1½ in.	(11.92 m)
1887	Hammer	124 ft 0½ in.	(37.81 m)
1888	Hammer	124 ft 8 in.	(38.00 m)

National Association of Amateur Athletes of America Championships

1888	56 lb Weight for Distance	34 ft 1 in.	(10.39 m)
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American Amateur Athletic Union Championships

1889	Hammer	121 ft 7½ in.	(37.07 m)
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1890	Hammer	130 ft 8 in.	(39.83 m)
1891	Hammer	136 ft 1 in.	(41.48 m)
1891	56 lb Weight for Distance	35 ft 3½ in.	(10.76 m)
1892	Hammer	140 ft 11 in.	(42.95 m)
1892	56 lb Weight for Distance	34 ft 8¾ in.	(10.57 m)
1893	Hammer	134 ft 8 in.	(41.04 m)
1893	56 lb Weight for Distance	34 ft 5½ in.	(10.50 m)
1893	56 lb Weight for Height	15 ft 4½ in.	(4.68 m)
1894	Hammer	135 ft 9½ in.	(41.39 m)
1894	56 lb Weight for Distance	33 ft 7¾ in.	(10.24 m)
1895	Hammer	139 ft 2½ in.	(42.43 m)
1895	56 lb Weight for Distance	32 ft 7½ in.	(9.94 m)
1896	Hammer	134 ft 8¾ in.	(41.06 m)
1896	56 lb Weight for Distance	30 ft 7 in.	(9.32 m)
1897	56 lb Weight for Distance	32 ft 2 in.	(9.80 m)
1900	56 lb Weight for Distance	35 ft 3 in.	(10.74 m)
1903	Hammer	140 ft 1 in.	(42.70 m)
1903	56 lb Weight for Distance	32 ft 2¾ in.	(9.82 m)
1905	56 lb Weight for Distance	33 ft 1½ in.	(10.09 m)

American Amateur Athletic Union (Indoor) Championships

1890	56 lb Weight for Height	15 ft 2 in.	(4.62 m)
1897	Shot-Put	41 ft 9 in.	(12.72 m)
1897	Discus	99 ft 6 in.	(30.33 m)
1897	56 lb Weight for Height	15 ft 0 in.	(4.57 m)
1898	56 lb Weight for Height		<i>reputed to have won this title</i>

Canadian Athletics Championships

1889	56 lb Weight for Distance	26 ft 5 in.	(8.05 m)
1890	Hammer	127 ft 11 in.	(38.99 m)
1890	56 lb Weight for Distance	30 ft 6¾ in.	(9.31 m)
1891	56 lb Weight for Distance	31 ft 2 in.	(9.50 m)
1892	Shot-Put	40 ft 4½ in.	(12.30 m)
1892	Hammer	136 ft 3 in.	(41.53 m)
1892	56 lb Weight for Distance	32 ft 2 in.	(9.80 m)
1894	Hammer	134 ft 10½ in.	(41.11 m)
1894	56 lb Weight for Distance	34 ft 3½ in.	(10.45 m)
1895	Hammer	125 ft 4 in.	(38.20 m)
1895	56 lb Weight for Distance	34 ft 1 in.	(10.39 m)
1896	Hammer	128 ft 4½ in.	(39.13 m)
1903	Discus	106 ft 3½ in.	(32.40 m)
1903	Hammer	135 ft 10 in.	(41.40 m)