

TIPPERARY ATHLETES



Michael O'Connor

by Michael O'Dwyer

Michael O'Connor was born on 20 January 1876 at Rathcoun, Cashel, County Tipperary. He was the fourth son of Michael O'Connor, a farmer, and Mary O'Connor (née Moran). He was a younger brother of Thomas P. O'Connor who won two Irish pole vault titles in the 1880s. His other two brothers died as children. Four of his sisters were nuns, Reverend Mother Xavier (Dominican Convent, Cabra, Dublin and foundress of African Missionary Convent, Killeshandra, County Cavan), Mother Reginald (Dominican Convent, Cabra, Dublin), Sr Saint Helen (Bon Secours Convent, Boulogne, France) and Sr Malachy (Dominican Convent, Capetown, South Africa). Two other sisters were Margaret O'Gorman, wife of Michael O'Gorman, who resided in the old family homestead at Rathcoun, Cashel and Teresa O'Connor, wife of Thomas O'Connor, who resided at Sunnyside, The Green, Cashel. Another sister was Annie Swan, wife of Thomas Swan, Boston. Although Michael O'Connor was expected to and did ultimately remain at Rathcoun to manage the family's farming interests, he expressed a desire to follow his sisters into religious life and de facto complete the family's decimation c.1900. Sadly his wish never materialised even if ostensible opportunity beckoned thereafter. He too, like his brother, distinguished himself in athletics, winning three national titles. He won the shot-put title at Thurles in 1899, and the putting 28 lb weight and the pushing 56 lb weight events, in 1900 and 1901 respectively, both held on the grounds of the Rock Athletic Club in Cashel. He also came second in the shot-put at the national championships in 1897 at Tipperary town and in 1899 at Thurles. Michael O'Connor died on 14 September 1926 at Rathcoun, aged fifty, and is interred in the cemetery adjoining Cashel parish church. In the *Irish Independent* on 20 September 1926 it is written, 'Mr. Michael O'Connor, Rathowen, Cashel, whose death is announced, was a noted athlete a generation ago, and as a weight-thrower was the equal of D. Horgan, the famous Banteer exponent. A man of extraordinary physique, he was prevented by intense modesty from seeking the athletic honours which were his for the trying.'

Titles Won at Senior National Championships:

Gaelic Athletic Association Championships

1899	Shot-Put	41 ft 0 in.	(12.49 m)
1900	Putting 28 lb Weight	33 ft 5 in.	(10.18 m)
1901	Pushing 56 lb Weight	21 ft 2 in.	(6.45 m)