

TIPPERARY ATHLETES



Thomas P. O'Connor

by Michael O'Dwyer

Thomas P. O'Connor was born on 2 October 1867 at Lake House, Rockwell, Cashel, County Tipperary. He was the second son of Michael O'Connor and Mary O'Connor (née Moran). His father, who was more commonly known as Michael Connors, was a land steward at Rockwell College and a short few years later the family moved to nearby Rathcown, Cashel. From the age of eight Thomas P. O'Connor was a boarder at Rockwell College and left when he was eighteen in 1885. In his final year at the Rockwell College sports and regatta he won five athletics events, the 100 yd (11.0), 440 yd (1:07.0), 120 yd hurdles (18.0), high jump (5 ft 2 in.) and long jump (18 ft 3¼ in.), and he also stroked a coxed four to victory in a rowing race. He graduated from Blackrock College in 1889 when he obtained his BA degree (Royal University of Ireland) with an exhibition in modern literature. At the examination for inspectorships of schools in 1891 he gained second place, and became senior inspector in 1902 and chief inspector in 1912. Thomas P. O'Connor was a keen cricketer and athlete; he was a leading member and headed the batting averages at Leinster Cricket Club, and was national pole vault champion at the Irish athletics championships in 1887 and 1889. Both years the championships were held at Ballsbridge, Dublin and he won his respective titles with 9 ft 10 in. (3.00 m) and 9 ft 6 in. (2.89 m). After he won his first title he jumped 10 ft 3 in. (3.12 m) after the competition. He got married to Rose Delany in 1893, and from 1912 they lived in Dublin though prior to that they moved around because of work and lived mainly in Longford, Belfast, Derry and Cork. Thomas P. O'Connor died on 6 July 1939 at his residence, Rathrone Park Avenue, Sandymount, Dublin, aged seventy-one, and is interred in Deans Grange cemetery. Two of his sons competed in water polo for Ireland in the Olympic Games. His son Michael (1900–57) played for the Irish team in 1924 and 1928, and Joseph (1904–82) played in 1928, and was reserve in 1924 but did not play that year.

Titles Won at Senior National Championships:

Irish Amateur Athletic Association Championships

1887	Pole Vault	9 ft 10 in.	(3.00 m)
1889	Pole Vault	9 ft 6 in.	(2.89 m)