

TIPPERARY ATHLETES



John J. O'Doherty

by Michael O'Dwyer

John O'Doherty was born on 21 May 1909 at Sologheadbeg, Sologhead, County Tipperary. He was a son of Thomas Doherty, a farmer, and Kate Doherty (née Hayes). His parents got married in Cappamore church on 18 February 1903. John first started athletics in the sprints and learned his hammer-throwing from Paddy Ryan, of Pallasgreen, the Olympic hammer champion in 1920, and who had been the world record holder since 1913. Under Ryan's guidance, John O'Doherty was slinging the hammer with ease and in his first year was runner-up to Maurice Curtin, of Cork, in the Irish championships at Fermoy in 1934. That was the year John O'Doherty joined the Garda Síochána in Dublin. He was out of form in 1935, but took the Irish title the following season. The athletics championships that year was held at Clonmel on 28 June 1936 and he won the hammer with 153 ft 8 in. (46.84 m), came second in the 56 lb weight for height with 13 ft 6 in (4.11 m), and was third in the discus with 117 ft 7 in. (35.84 m). Ned Tobin was the winner of the latter two events. John O'Doherty won five hammer titles in the national championships throughout his athletics career. He was runner-up on seven occasions, and five times he was third. He twice came second in the 56 lb weight for height and twice came third in the discus. When he came second in the 56 lb weight for height in 1941 he tied with Ned Tobin. John's best hammer throw was 164 ft 0 in. (49.99 m) when he won the Leinster championship title on 10 July 1955 at the Kilmacanogue sports. He represented Ireland in the hammer at the triangular international contest against England and Scotland on 13 August 1949 at Balmoral Showgrounds, Belfast. In the last Irish athletics championships he competed in, he finished third to Tommy Kelly, native of Ballinasloe, and second-placed Bill Shannon, native of Balla, who played Gaelic football for Mayo and Sligo. Both were coached by the Tipperary man, and all three were Gardaí at Kevin Street station in Dublin. Among others he coached were John Keaty, Paddy Crehan, Ned Coy and Bill Clarkson. After retiring as a Garda in 1966 he lived at Rathnaveen, Tipperary town. John O'Doherty died on 7 August 1970, aged sixty-one, and is interred in St Michael's Cemetery, Tipperary town.

Titles Won at Senior National Championships:

National Athletic and Cycling Association Championships

1936	Hammer	153 ft 8 in.	(46.84 m)
1941	Hammer	155 ft 6 in.	(47.39 m)
1954	Hammer	159 ft 3 in.	(48.54 m)
1955	Hammer	147 ft 5 in.	(44.93 m)
1956	Hammer	146 ft 9 in.	(44.73 m)