

TIPPERARY ATHLETES



Patsy Carroll

by Michael O'Dwyer

Patsy Carroll was born on 18 February 1922 at Ballyea, Rathcabbin, County Tipperary. He was a son of Daniel Carroll and Mary Anne Carroll (née Egan). His parents got married in Rathcabbin church on 25 October 1911. In his heyday, Patsy Carroll was one of the country's top cross-country runners. At the NACA inter-county cross-country championships he won no fewer than ten medals, including seven senior medals won when Tipperary finished first county seven years in succession from 1945 to 1951. Incidentally, no Irish inter-county championship took place in 1952, and Tipperary won again from 1953 to 1955. Patsy Carroll was the only athlete to be a top-six scorer for Tipperary in each of those seven years. The first NACA inter-county cross-country championship to be held was the national junior championship on 25 February 1945 in Belfast with Tipperary winning the county title. The first four to cross the line were Tipperary runners John Joe Barry, Patsy Carroll, Mick Blake and Jerry Kiely with Patrick Sheedy (eleventh) and Rody Teehan (thirteenth). Five weeks later in the national senior cross-country championship in Dublin, with Tipperary again winning the county title, the six scoring members for Tipperary were John Joe Barry, Mick Blake, Jimmy Sweeney, Jerry Kiely, Jack Fitzelle and Patsy Carroll. In fact, in each of those seven years Patsy Carroll was never outside the first fifteen runners to cross the finish line. His best individual performance was second in 1949 when he finished behind fellow Tipperary athlete Mick Cleary in Dublin. At the Tipperary senior cross-country championships he finished in second place in 1944 with Lorrha AC, in 1947 with Moneygall AC, and in 1949 with St Flannan's AC, and third place in both 1946 and 1950. He was on the winning team with Moneygall on four occasions. His biggest success on the track was at the Ballinree sports in County Carlow on 7 August 1949 when he won the national 3 miles title. He also won an Irish army 3 miles title in 1949, second on both occasions being Mick Cleary. Patsy was renowned as a masseur and was with the winning Offaly senior hurling teams of 1985 and 1994, and he was constantly available to the Lorrha players at his home at Ballyea. He got married to Celia Dowd from Ballymacegan, Lorrha in September 1949 at Redwood church. Patsy Carroll died on 31 May 1996, aged seventy-four, and is interred in Bonaham cemetery, Rathcabbin.

