

TIPPERARY ATHLETES



Joe Flannery

by Michael O'Dwyer

Joe Flannery was born on 25 March 1910 at Dublin Road, Nenagh, County Tipperary. He was the second son of Patrick Flannery and Mary Flannery (née Forde). His parents got married in Nenagh on 14 October 1890. The 1911 census shows Joe Flannery was the youngest of eight children of which two were deceased. His surviving siblings at the time were Elizabeth, Annie, Bridget, Mary and Margaret. A keen athlete and rugby player, Joe Flannery was noted for his speed and one of the cleanest and most sporting players on the rugby pitch. He first played rugby for his local Nenagh Ormond club, and played for Garryowen in the Munster Senior Cup and Munster Senior League in 1933. He soon moved to Dublin and played rugby for Blackrock College before switching to Clontarf with whom he played on the left wing and was a regular try scorer. In athletics he competed locally and further afield, and in Dublin he became a prominent member of Phoenix Harriers. At the national athletics championships on 11 August 1935 held at St James's Park, Kilkenny, in both the 100 yd and 220 yd finals Joe Flannery led up to around half-way when overtaken by the winner Fred Moran, with Joe Flannery the runner-up. Moran's brother, Jim, finished third. All three played rugby for Clontarf. The following year at the national athletics championships on 28 June 1936 held in Clonmel, Joe Flannery again finished runner-up to Fred Moran in the 100 yd final. Joe played his last rugby match for Clontarf on 10 January 1937 against Blackrock College at Williamstown. Less than two weeks later on 22 January he succumbed to an attack of influenza after pneumonia had developed. He was aged twenty-six, and is interred in Lisboney cemetery, Nenagh.