

TIPPERARY ATHLETES



Larry Kiely

by Michael O'Dwyer

Larry Kiely was born in 1880 at Ballyneale, Carrick-on-Suir, County Tipperary. According to local church records he was baptised on 2 October 1880. He was a son of William Kiely, a farmer, and Mary Kiely (née Downey). He came from a large family. Five of his sisters had taken holy orders: Sr Camillus (Dungarvan), Reverend Mother Ita (Lismore), Reverend Mother Benignus (Willesden, London and Crossmolina, County Mayo), Sr Teresa (Antwerp, Belgium) and Sr Brendan (Willesden, London). The eldest in the family was Mary Kiely (Sr Camillus, 1867–1956) who was a nun at the Sisters of Mercy Convent in Dungarvan, and Olympic gold medallist Tom Kiely (1869–1951) was the second eldest in the family. In 1908 at the London Olympics, Larry Kiely competed in the 110 m hurdles. He got a walkover in the heats on 23 July and the next day in the semi-final he finished third, with just the top two getting through to the final. The 110 m hurdles event was not run on the cinder track but on a grass track in the infield of the White City Stadium, where the London Olympic Games were held. The Kiely brothers are the only two from the same family born in County Tipperary to compete in the Olympic Games. Larry Kiely won two Irish GAA athletics titles, in 1901 the hammer (unlimited run and follow) and in 1904 the 120 yd hurdles. He also won two IAAA titles, in 1906 the 120 yd hurdles and in 1907 the hammer (tied with Denis Carey, native of Kilfinane, County Limerick). When he won his two GAA titles he succeeded his brother, Tom, as the holder of both. Larry won his Irish GAA hammer (unlimited run and follow) title in Cashel, County Tipperary on 4 August 1901. As well as competing in the 1908 Olympic Games he competed in the 120 yd hurdles in the Ireland v. Scotland athletics international on 14 July 1906 in Belfast, and the third time he competed for Ireland was shortly after the Olympics on 1 August 1908 in Ballsbridge, Dublin in the Ireland v. Irish-American Athletic Club athletics international again in the 120 yd hurdles. Larry Kiely farmed at the home place in Ballyneale and died on 12 December 1961, aged eighty-one. He is interred in the family plot in Ballyneale cemetery, as is his brother Tom Kiely.

Titles Won at Senior National Championships:

Irish Amateur Athletic Association Championships

1906	120 yd Hurdles	16.8	
1907	Hammer (9 ft circle)	127 ft 10 in. (38.96 m)	TIE

Gaelic Athletic Association Championships

1901	Hammer (unlimited run & follow)	130 ft 2 in. (39.67 m)	
1904	120 yd Hurdles	-	