

# TIPPERARY ATHLETES



## **Mick Cleary**

by **Michael O'Dwyer**

Mick Cleary was born on 9 June 1927 at Behamore, Cloughjordan, County Tipperary. He was the eldest child of Martin Cleary, a farmer, and Sarah Cleary (née Doonan). His parents got married in Dunkerrin church on 10 February 1926. Mick received his primary education in the school that was known as the 'Little Chapel' in Cloughjordan village. His athletics career began in earnest in 1946 when he came third in both the Tipperary novice and junior cross-country championships. He competed for Moneygall Athletic Club, a Tipperary-affiliated club though the village is in County Offaly, and whose secretary at the time was Séamus Ó Riain, later to become president of the Gaelic Athletic Association from 1967 to 1970. Mick finished eighth in the Irish junior cross-country championship in 1946 and helped Tipperary to win the inter-county title. The following year he made his debut in the senior championships, coming third in Tipperary, and runner-up in the national championships. In this golden era of cross-country running, from the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s, Mick Cleary won three Tipperary titles (1949, 1950, 1951) and two Irish titles (1949, 1950). He also helped Moneygall win seven county senior cross-country titles, and helped Tipperary win an impressive eight national senior cross-country titles. On the track Mick Cleary won eleven national titles. His last national title was on 21 August 1954, when competing for Nenagh McDonagh AC, he won the 10 miles at Belfield, Dublin in a championship record time of 53:42.8, beating his own record time from 1952 of 53:46.0. At the time he was an employee of the North Tipperary county council machinery staff. In the Irish army championships he won three cross-country titles (1951, 1952, 1953) and three track titles (mile, 1948; 3 miles, 1950, 1952). He was married to Margaret Ogle, native of Walshpark, Rathcabbin. Mick Cleary died on 13 March 2011 at St Joseph's Hospital, Nenagh, aged eighty-three, and is interred in Templederry cemetery. His sons Mattie and Tommy were successful runners with Premier AC in the 1970s and 80s.

**Titles Won at Senior National Championships:**

**National Athletic and Cycling Association Championships**

1948	1,500 m	4:30.0
1950	3 Miles	15:02.0
1951	3 Miles	15:46.1
1952	3 Miles	15:20.0
1952	4 Miles	20:35.0
1952	8,000 m	-
1952	10 Miles	53:46.0
1953	4 Miles	20:18.0
1953	8,000 m	-
1953	10 Miles	54:24.0
1954	10 Miles	53:42.8