

TIPPERARY ATHLETES



Michael Kennedy

by Michael O'Dwyer

Michael Kennedy was born on 16 June 1865 at Georgie's Lane, Golden, County Tipperary. He was a small man in stature at five feet and three inches and ran his first race in public at Carrick-on-Suir in August 1887, the distance being one mile and he won in 4 minutes 51 seconds. The following year he won races in Dublin, Limerick, Portarlinton and Clonmel. His biggest win in Ireland was on 30 March 1889 when he won the Irish cross-country championship at Baldoyle racecourse in Dublin with a part of the running course laid across a ploughed field. He was running for the Dublin athletic club, Elysian Harriers, which finished in third place. Later that year Michael Kennedy emigrated to the United States and it was not long before he was winning northwest championship races. On 25 April 1891 he won the American cross-country championship at Morris Park, New York and led his athletic club, Prospect Harriers, home to win the club competition. The report in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* of 26 April 1891 starts off, 'Over high hurdles, through pretty lanes of trees and across water jumps 13 feet in width ran 120 of the fleetest cross country runners in the country yesterday afternoon at Morris park. The event was the annual run of the National cross country association for the championship of the United States. The junior and senior events had as starters a number of the fleetest runners of the world, and with such men on the field as Tommy Conneff, the amateur champion runner of England, Ireland and the United States, representing the Manhattan A.C., and old warhorse Jack Floyd, and the phenomenal cross country runner from Chicago, M. Kennedy, competing under the colors of the Prospect harriers, the race could not fail to be exciting.' Written in *The Gaelic Athletic Annual and County Directory for 1907-8* is, 'Mickey Kennedy, of Cashel, won the Cross Country Championship of America in 1891. The finish was highly dramatic, for the Tipperary man ran away from his rivals. He waved a flag over his head, and shouted "Hurrah for Cashel" as he came to the post in a series of buck jumps.' The 1911 Irish census shows he was then living with and working for the Daltons in Cloughleigh, Golden. Michael Kennedy died on 6 February 1920 in Cloughleigh, aged fifty-four, and is interred in Ballygriffin cemetery.

Titles Won at Senior National Championships:

Cross-Country Association of Ireland Championships

1889 Cross-Country (Inter-Club) 40:12

American National Cross-Country Association Championships

1891 Cross-Country (Inter-Club) 46:30.4