

TIPPERARY ATHLETES



Mick Ryan

by **Michael O'Dwyer**

Mick Ryan was born in 1875 at Knocknacree, Cloughjordan, County Tipperary. According to local church records he was baptised on 10 April 1875. He was the third son of Michael Ryan, a farmer, and Sarah Ryan (née Ryan). His parents got married in Borrisokane church on 18 February 1871. Mick Ryan's main sports were athletics and hurling. He was a member of the famous Lahorna De Wet team that dominated North Tipperary hurling during the opening decade of the twentieth century. Competing in athletics, he won two national pole vault championships. He won his first pole vault title when both he and Jack Blackburn, of Galbally, tied with 10 ft 2 in. (3.10 m) on 10 August 1897 at Durrow, County Laois. His second national pole vault title was won the following year on 22 May 1898 at Cloughjordan. His winning height was 9 ft 9 in. (2.97 m), the runner-up was John Sullivan, native of Modreeny, Cloughjordan, with 9 ft 5½ in. (2.88 m), and third was Philip Sheppard, native of Main Street, Cloughjordan. Mick Ryan farmed at Newtown, Cloughjordan, and got married to Mary 'Minnie' Ryan, of Grennanstown, Toomevara, on 21 February 1928 at Grennanstown church. They had six children, two sons and four daughters. Two of their daughters, Annie (Sr Brendan Mary) and Siobhan (Sr Dominic Mary), entered the order of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, and nursed in Dublin. The former died at the age of twenty-seven as the result of a fatal scooter accident as she was on her way to attend to a sick mother in Ballyfermot on 18 October 1965. The latter, now known as Sr Siobhan, recalled, 'I was the youngest in the family and only ten years old when my father died, but I have great memories of his interest in sport and what he passed on to us. As soon as we could hold a hurley in our hands he had us out playing matches with the neighbouring children in the long summer evenings and most Sunday afternoons. My two brothers Michael and Pat went on to play with the local clubs at various levels, while I played camogie in secondary school. I still retain an avid interest in the GAA. My father was also a great ballroom dancer and Irish step dancer. From a very early age he sent the girls to Irish step dancing classes in Cloughjordan and would put us through our paces on that night. He taught all of us set dancing, waltzing and the brush dance with the aid of music from the old gramophone records, so our home was one of music and dancing on many a cold winters night, and all "ramblers" would get involved.' Mick Ryan died on 13 May 1950 at his residence in Newtown, aged seventy-five, and is interred in the cemetery adjoining Saints Michael and John's Church, Cloughjordan.

Titles Won at Senior National Championships:

Irish Amateur Athletic Association Championships

1897	Pole Vault	10 ft 2 in.	(3.10 m)	TIE
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Gaelic Athletic Association Championships

1898	Pole Vault	9 ft 9 in.	(2.97 m)	
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