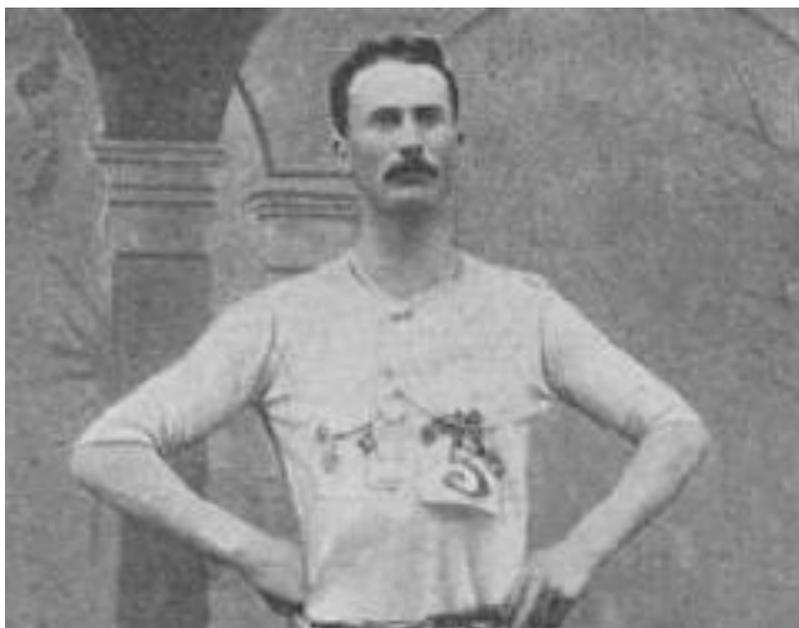


TIPPERARY ATHLETES



James M. Ryan

by Michael O'Dwyer

James M. Ryan was born on 3 April 1870 at Ballyslatteen, New Inn, County Tipperary. He was the eldest son of Michael Ryan, a farmer, and Mary Ryan (née Corbett). His parents got married on 25 February 1868 in the parish church, Annacarty. His father had the skill of been able to jump into a wooden barrel from a standing position, and out again. Jim, as he was popularly known, inherited his father's jumping ability and arrived on the athletics scene in August 1889 when he won the high jump at the Clonmel athletic and aquatic sports. He attended St Patrick's Training College, Drumcondra, for two years from 1890 to 1892, where he trained as a national teacher, and taught in Coolderry National School, near Roscrea, and Mount Bruis National School, near Tipperary town. Jim Ryan won a total of seven national high jump titles, five in Ireland, and two in England. Also, in the GAA national championships he came second in the high jump in 1892, and was second in the 14 lb weight throw in 1895. His clearance of 6 ft 2½ in. (1.89 m) in the AAA championships on 1 July 1893 at the County Grounds, Northampton, was a championship record in England until 1902 when beaten by the American athlete Sam Jones. The Irish high jump record of 6 ft 2¾ in. (1.90 m) by Pat Davin set on 5 July 1880 at Carrick-on-Suir was equalled by Murty O'Brien on 30 July 1893 at Coachford, County Cork. Less than a week later Jim Ryan broke the Irish record when jumping 6 ft 3⅛ in. (1.90 m) on 3 August 1880 at Nenagh. He broke his own record with a jump of 6 ft 3½ in. (1.92 m) on 1 August 1895 at Clogheen, and improved this with a world record of 6 ft 4½ in. (1.94 m) on 19 August 1895 at Tipperary town. This was set at the Tipperary athletic and cycling sports held under the auspices of the GAA and the south-eastern branch of the Irish Cycling Association. The high jump was a handicap event with Jim Ryan jumping off scratch, and the runner-up was Jack Blackburn of Galbally. Jim Ryan also won the hop, step and jump handicap event. The previous holder of the high jump world record, Mike Sweeney, an Irish-American born in County Kerry, reclaimed the record on 28 August 1895 at Travers Island, New York, with 6 ft 5 in. (1.95 m). Ryan's jump remained the European record until Paddy Leahy added a quarter of an inch to it at Millstreet in 1898. Jim Ryan represented Ireland in the high jump in the international athletic meetings against Scotland in 1895 and 1896. He won on both occasions. When he was asked to represent London Athletic Club against New York Athletic Club in 1895 in Manhattan it was reported his response was that if he went to America it would be to represent Tipperary, and Tipperary only. After an illness of some months, Jim Ryan died on 16 June 1900 at his residence, Davis Street, Tipperary town, aged thirty, and is interred in Ballintemple cemetery, near Dundrum.

Titles Won at Senior National Championships:

Irish Amateur Athletic Association Championships

1891	High Jump	6 ft 0¾ in.	(1.85 m)
1892	High Jump	5 ft 11¾ in.	(1.82 m)
1893	High Jump	6 ft 1¼ in.	(1.86 m)
1895	High Jump	5 ft 11 in.	(1.80 m)

Gaelic Athletic Association Championships

1895	High Jump	6 ft 0 in.	(1.83 m)
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Amateur Athletic Association of England Championships

1893	High Jump	6 ft 2½ in.	(1.89 m)
1895	High Jump	5 ft 11½ in.	(1.81 m)