

Ireland and Olympism



"The interest of the Irish in sport, with a history of many centuries, is proverbial. Here in the United States we are especially indebted to them for their contribution to our sport development. Sixty years ago, when I was a competitor, most of the national sport leaders, as well as a large proportion of the athletic champions, were of Irish descent."
Avery Brundage, 1970

IRELAND

32,000 square miles

4,500,000 inhabitants

THE OLYMPIC COUNCIL OF IRELAND (OCI)

Founded in June 1922

President: Patrick J. Carroll*

Secretary General: Desmond O'Sullivan*

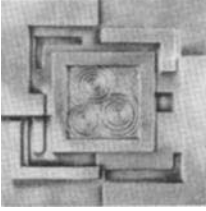
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* See biographical notes.



The commemorative medal of the 50th anniversary of the OCI.



Role of the OCI

- a) To protect and develop the Olympic Movement in Ireland**
- b) To spread and explain the Olympic philosophy at every level, especially in schools and clubs**
- c) To select and enter Irish athletes for the Olympic Games; to organise this participation in close co-operation with the national sports associations.**
- d) to encourage the youth of the country to accept the Olympic spirit.**
- e) To promote a programme educating the public and the press on the philosophy of amateurism**
- f) to assist the government in the development of the practice of sport in Ireland.**

Creation:

Well before their accession to political autonomy, the Irish took part in the first steps of the renovated Olympism. Thus, Messrs. D. Bolger and J.T. Magee, two representatives of the *Irish Amateur Athletic Association*, took part in the work of the 1894 Congress which led to the renovation of the Olympic Games and the creation of the IOC. The influence of this Association, run by E. J. Walsh (Rhodaville, Churchtown, Dundrum, Ireland), stretched over the whole of the country, it represented the famous Amateur Athletic Association which at that time exerted an

indisputable control over almost every athletics society even outside England.

Moreover, from 1896 onwards the participation of Irish sportsmen in Olympic events was constantly brilliant both in quantity and in quality.

After the First World War a robust, sturdy and dedicated leader by the name of John J. Keane* applied himself to developing sport in Ireland. He re-organised the sports federations. He managed to create the union between two powerful rival associations-The Irish Amateur Athletic Association and the National Athletic Association of Ireland. He then set himself the aim of creating an Irish Olympic Committee able to permit the participation of an Irish delegation, under the British flag but in a separate group, at the Antwerp Olympic Games. The IOC, at its Session shortly before the opening of these Games, turned down this request by stating that it would be preferable to wait until the political problem was settled.

The Irish Free State having been announced, Mr. John J. Keane achieved recognition of the creation of the Olympic Council of Ireland at the IOC Session in Paris, on 3rd June 1922, and became the first member of the IOC for Ireland. The OCI at that time represented 365 athletic clubs where every sport could be practised. From its origin the Irish Committee was open, with respect to Olympic principles, to all, without religious or ethnic distinction. Its president forcefully declared that he would not accept any political interference. The Olympic Games celebrating the VIIIth Olympiad approached; Ireland was to take part in them for the first time autonomously.



Mr. John J. Keane.



12/9/1972, Lausanne: transfer of power at the headquarters of the IOC. The syndic of the city, Mr. Georges André Chevallaz, is preparing to hand the key to Lord Killanin, the new President of the IOC. On the left, the former President of the IOC, Mr. Avery Brundage.

1st Board of the OCI

PT: M. John J. Keane; *SG* and *T:* Maj. Gen. W.R.E. Murphy.

Successive presidents of the OCI

- I. John J. Keane* 1922-1929
- II. Gen. Eoin O'Duffy 1929-1 933
- III. Col. Eamonn Bray* 1933-1950
- IV. Lord Killanin* 1950-1973
- V. Patrick Carroll* B.L. since 1973



Gen. Eoin O'Duffy.

Members of the IOC for Ireland

- I. John J. Keane* from 1922-1 951
- II. Lord Killanin* since 1952, President of the IOC since 1972

* * *

Ireland and the Olympic Games

Date of first participation:

1924. First delegation of the Olympic Council of Ireland at the Olympic Games—but many Irish sportsmen took part in the celebrations of the first seven Olympiads as individuals or under the colours of other OCI countries. Since 1924, although the OCI abstained from taking part in the Winter Games, it was present at all the Olympic Games except those of 1936. For these Games the OCI refused the Organising Committee's invitation in protest against a change in the IAAF's rules limiting national representations to political borders. This statutory modification still remains today a cause of difficulty for Irish athletics.



Irish representation at the Olympic Games¹

	Athletics	Rowing	Basketball	Boxing	Canoeing	Cycling	Fencing	Football	Gymnastics	Handball	Field Hockey
1896											
1900											
1904											
1908											
1912											
1920											
1924	11			7				12			
1928	10			8		2					
1932	4			4							
1936											
1948	10	9	14	8			5(1)	11			
1952	2			8			4				
1956	3(1)			7							
1960	8(1)			10		5	6(1)				
1964	7(1)			5			2				
1968	4			6		3	4				
1972	13(3)	1		6	4(1)	4	1				

¹ In parentheses the number of women included in the figure



	Wrestling	Swimming	Modern pentathlon	Weight-lifting	Riding	Judo	Shooting	Archery	Volleyball	Yachting	Total
1896											
1900											
1904											
1908											
1912											
1920											
1924		7									37
1928		9(1)									29(1)
1932											8
1936											
1948					3					5	65(1)
1952					3					1	19
1956					6					1	18(1)
1960				2	8					6	49(2)
1964					4	1				4	25(1)
1968		4(2)			7(5)		3				31(7)
1972		7(4)		1	7(1)	5	4			10	63(9)



*John J.
Flanagan.*



Irish Olympic Champions

Ireland is probably the country which has produced the greatest number of Olympic champions. This statement might seem at first sight very exaggerated. Yet taking into account both the population and the large number of Irish emigrants who took part in various teams, in particular those of the USA and Great Britain, we arrive at quite an impressive total of victories or places of honour. In athletics alone thirty-nine Olympic medals were awarded to athletes of Irish origin between 1896 and 1920.

John Pius Boland, a tennis-player, may be considered as the first Irish Olympic

champion; at Athens in 1896 he won two titles, the singles, and with the German F. Thraun, the doubles.

Four years later another Irish tennis-player, Harold S. Mahony, was victorious in the singles and John J. Flanagan, who won more titles than any other Irish athlete, carried off his first gold medal in the hammer throwing. John J. Flanagan held his title in 1904 and 1908. Martin J. Sheridan won the discus in 1904 and 1908.

The October 1904 edition of the Olympic Review states that, among the results of the first part of the Olympic Games cele-



brating the IIIrd Olympiad at St. Louis, the Irish athlete Thomas F. Kiely refused all offers of financial assistance and said he would represent no country but his own, and paid his own way to St. Louis where he competed in nine events and won four. After his victory he returned for a quiet holiday to his family home in Co. Tipperary to avoid any fuss.

The London, Stockholm and Antwerp Games allowed other competitors of Irish stock to win Olympic gold medals: Peter O'Connor, Con Leahy, Timothy J. Ahearn, John J. Hayes, Robert Kerr, George Con O'Kelly, Patrick J. MacDonald, Matt J. McGrath, K. K. McArthur, Patrick J. Ryan, Noel Purcell.

Apart from these three glorious athletes, the OCI is honoured with the silver and bronze medals of the following boxers:

1952, John McNally (2nd in the bantam weight); 1956, Frederick Tiedt (2nd in the welter weight); 1956, John Caldwell (3rd in the fly weight); 1956, Freddy Gilroy (3rd in the bantam weight); 1956, Tony Byrne (3rd in the light weight); 1964, Jim MacCourt (3rd in the light weight)...

Irish Medallists in the Art Competitions

- 1924 Silver medal awarded to Jack Yeats for a painting on swimming, and bronze medal to the poet Oliver Gogarty for his Ode to the Tail-team Games.
- 1948 Bronze medal to Letitia Hamilton for her pictorial work on stag-hunting.



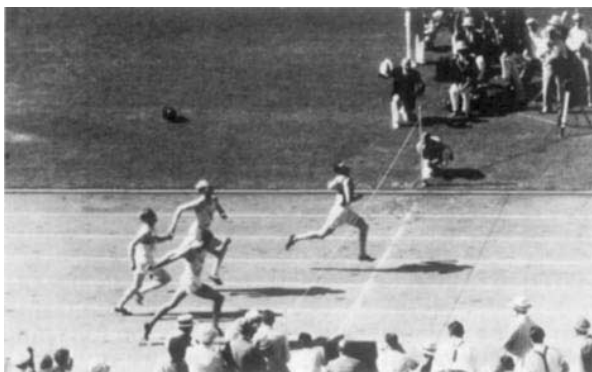
1964—The Irish team on their return from Tokyo. In the centre, the most recent Irish Olympic medallist, the boxer Jim Maccourt.

- Naturally only the Olympic champions entered for the Games by the OCI are listed in the following table.
- The names in italics indicate that the champion in question will be mentioned again later.
- We thank in advance any reader able to help us to complete this table and provide us with information about all the Olympic champions of the past.



Titles obtained at the Summer Olympic Games

Name	Christian Name	Sport	Event	Year
O'Callaghan	Patrick	Athletics	Hammer	1928
O'Callaghan	Patrick	»	»	1932
Tisdall	Robert	»	400 m hurdles	»
Delany	Ronald	»	1500 m	1956



*1932 - Robert Tisdall.
In 4th position, Lord Burghley, future member
of the IOC.*



Birth

Death

Notes

6.3.1935



▲ 1956 - Ron Delany. Patrick O'Callaghan. ►



● Irish Cities having requested to organise the Olympic Games

Dublin twice put forward its candidature for the Olympic Games of 1936 and 1940.

The Present Organisation of the OCI

The constitution of the Olympic Council of Ireland was radically altered in 1969.

● *Composition:* The OCI groups together the members of the IOC for Ireland (ex-officio members), the delegates of the national sports associations (three for

each of the associations recognised by the International Federation concerned and whose sport is included on the Olympic programme) and various personalities or delegates of other amateur sports organisations capable of helping the Council in its work. The latter are recruited by co-optation.

● The Officers, (*President*, two *Vice-Presidents* who may hold other functions, *Secretary General*, *Treasurer* and *Medical Adviser*) and the members of the Executive Committee are elected every four years at the Council’s general meeting. They remain in office for four years in order to prepare for the next Olympiad.

Associations affiliated to the Olympic Council of Ireland

Olympic Sports	Year of Affiliation
Athletics	1969
Basketball	1947
Boxing	1924
Canoeing	1964
Clay pigeon shooting	1966
Cycling	1966
Equestrian	1950
Fencing	1946
Football	1970
Hockey	1949
Judo	1963
Rowing	1948
Swimming	1924
Weightlifting	1960
Wrestling	1948
Yachting	1947

The Irish archery, gymnastic, handball and volleyball associations will soon also be affiliated.
 Other sporting organisations: Gaelic football, hurling, rugby and golf.



● *The Executive Committee* is composed of the officers mentioned above and five members also elected from among the delegates of the national sports associations. It was in 1969, at the first meeting of the Council after the Mexico Games, that the proposal to create an executive committee, put forward by the then Secretary General, Mr. P.J. Carroll, who has since 1972 become President of the OCI, was adopted. The OCI's efficiency was thus increased.

● **Members of the present Executive Committee**

PT: Patrick J. Carroll* B. L.; *VPT* and Medical Adviser: Dr. Kevin O'Flanagan*; *SG:* Desmond O'Sullivan*; *T:* Peter Gray*; *M:* Lord Killanin, IOC President and Member for Ireland, and the representatives of the following five national associations: Col. J. Devine, Mr. Brendan Foreman, Mr. Gabriel Walsh, Capt. Louis Magee, Mr. Kenneth Ryan.

Financing of the OCI

Private donations and State subsidies constitute the Council's two principal sources of finance.

Since 1970 the OCI received an annual subsidy of £10,000 from the Department of Education. This money was used specifically for the preparation of potential Olympic athletes, enabling them to take part in international competitions.

Private donations for the XXth Olympiad amounted to £10,275 (FS. 76,035.—)¹ Contributions from competing associations amounted to £7,633 (FS. 56,484.—) Government grants amounted to £8,000 (FS. 59,200.—)

Dr H. Ritter, chief of protocol for the Olympic Games at Munich, presents the official invitation to Lord Killanin; from left to right: Dr K. O'Flanagan, Mr. P. Carroll and Mr. D. O'Sullivan.

The OCI and Olympism

● **The Olympic Day**

The OCI does not celebrate the Olympic Day, but each year cultural manifestations promote the Olympic ideals. Nevertheless, the seminars which are held periodically allow the Olympic Idea to be spread.

● **The protection of the Olympic emblems**

The OCI's constitution mentions that the reproduction of these emblems for commercial purposes is forbidden and states that only the Council may authorise their use. No action has been taken legally, principally on account of the respect of this tradition in Ireland.

The International Olympic Academy

Apart from Lord Killanin in his capacity as IOC Member, no Irish representative has as yet participated in the Academy.

OCI Publications

Although the Olympic Council of Ireland does not publish a news bulletin, it does however, every four years since 1948, issue an official report on the Irish participation at every celebration of the Olympiads.

Irish Olympic Bibliography

David Guiney "Ireland's Olympic Heroes (1896-1964)" published in 1965.

¹ 30.8.1973: £ = 7.40 FS.

Sport in Ireland

● Other sports bodies

Apart from the OCI and the national sports associations, a National Council of Sports, created in 1970, aims to improve the condition of sport in Ireland by applying itself principally to the development of school sport. The creation of this body, which corresponded to a real and urgent need, was to a large extent the result of pressure brought to bear on the government by the OCI and various national associations.

● State aid to the sports movement

The State subsidises the sports organisations to a total of £200,000 annually, covering all the sports federations including the Olympic Council of Ireland.

The training of sports administrators is taken care of by the national associations themselves.

● Sport at school

Sport only enters into the educational programme at secondary level.

● Sports installations in Ireland

Unfortunately Ireland does not yet have any installations of international standard. However, we can count:

82 swimming pools, of which 50 are 20 metres, 24 are 25 metres, 7 are 33 metres and 1 is 50 metres (open air), 1 athletics stadium (2nd class), 6 gymnasiums, 4 large football stadia without running track.

● Most popular sports from the point of view of spectators

Gaelic football, hurling and rugby.

● Sports experiencing the greatest development

Water sports (swimming, yachting, canoeing and rowing), as the country undeniably possesses the most favourable natural conditions for the development of these sports activities.



Mr. Desmond O'Sullivan.



Dr. Kevin O'Flanagan.



Mr. Peter Gray.



Col. Eamonn
Broy.



Mr. Patrick
J. Carroll.

Biographical Notes

Col. Eamonn Broy, president of the OCI from 1935 to 1950. In spite of the many difficulties he had to face while he was President, his action allowed the Council to develop and ensure a worthy participation in the 1948 Olympic Games. From his preface to the Official Report of the Irish participation in these Games, we quote: *"My opinion, after twenty-four years of Olympic experience, is that the world would be definitely the poorer without the Olympic Games."*

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John J. Keane, founder of the Olympic Council of Ireland and first member of the OCI from 1922 to 1929 and remained at the heart of the IOC until 1951. Seriously ill, he was obliged to retire and give up his exceptional career as a sports leader.

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* *

Lord Killanin. We will briefly note that the present President of the IOC presided over the destiny of the Olympic Council of Ireland from 1950 to 1973 and that in spite of the ever increasing international duties which he took on since becoming a member of the IOC in 1952, he never

ceased to devote himself to the service of sport in his country.

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* *

Patrick J. Carroll B. L. President of the OCI since 1973. Since 1939 he has remained the permanent President of the Irish Amateur Boxing Association. A former commissioner of police, he was Treasurer of the OCI from 1947 to 1950 and Secretary General from 1950 to 1973.

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* *

Dr. Kevin O'Flanagan. Present Vice-President of the OCI and the Council's medical adviser since 1960.

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* *

Desmond O'Sullivan. Hon. Treasurer of the Olympic Council of Ireland from 1957 to 1973, he has just been elected to the post of Hon. Secretary General, where his experience constitutes the principal token of success. He is also Vice President of the OCI.

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* *

Peter Gray. Elected Hon. Treasurer of the OCI in 1973. Former Olympic representative in yachting. Manager of the Irish yachting team.