

Police Athletes of the Past

MARTIN SHERIDAN

OF ALL the track and field athletes of the past century, there is perhaps only one who could have been claimed to be well-nigh invincible. He was Patrolman Martin Sheridan. Inside a fourteen year span, he won athletic contests that brought him and the department five Olympic championships, twelve National championships and more than thirty Canadian and Metropolitan Championships.

As many of the immigrants of his time, Martin Sheridan was enchanted by the word "America." His brother had come here and made a name for himself in track and field meets. This news spurred the younger Sheridan on and in 1900 at the age of nineteen, he arrived in the United States from Ireland.

After settling down to earning a livelihood, he took up weight throwing with his brother, and in 1901 he won his first prize for the Pastime A.C., which was then known as the "cradle of athletes." He was entered in a discus throw, and with a handicap outstripped the field. The next year, 1902, with only two previous meet experiences, he created a new world's record in the discus throw. In 1904, he won his first Olympic Championship in the same event at St. Louis. In 1905, the world knew that he was destined for great heights when he captured his first All-Around Championship.

Paying heed to his older brother, Martin Sheridan applied for the position of patrolman, and was appointed to the "force" in 1906. This was a great occasion for the Police Department as Sheridan not only continued to win sports honors, but helped in organizing the Police Carnival and Games which for many years was recognized as one of New York's outstanding sporting events.

The young patrolman did not cease his own activities, but rather gathered more and greater honors. In 1906, the Olympics were held in the mythical

home of the gods, Athens, Greece, but never before had any Olympic Games witnessed the exhibition put on by the New York cop. He scored more points in track and field events than any other nation's team except the United States.

Sports writers of his time acclaimed him on his return to the United States as the greatest track and field athlete

of all time. His records garnered against the world's outstanding athletes stood unchallenged.

In the All-Around Championships, Sheridan competed in the discus throw, (both free and Greek styles), the 56 lb. weight for height, the pole vault, three standing jumps, the javelin throw, and the shot-put. In all, his victories added to sixteen world's records in these events. The climax of this great athlete's career came in 1908 in the old Madison

Square Garden when he scored thirty-two points in the National Indoor Championships. This was an unparalleled feat in the history of track and field competition.

In March 1918, at the age of thirty-seven, Patrolman Sheridan contracted pneumonia and passed away. The members of the department showed their great admiration for him by contributing funds to erect a magnificent Celtic Cross Memorial to him in Calvary Cemetery. Then to perpetuate his name for future generations in the department, the Martin E. Sheridan Award for Valor was established. This award is given each year to a member of the department for bravery above and beyond the call of duty.



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