Trinity Olympians

Alfred Delany

Sport: Sailing
Olympics: 1948, London
1952, Helsinki

Trinity College Dublin:
BA (1933); BAO, BCh,
MB (1935); MD (1943)

Alfred Delany was born in Mohill, Co. Leitrim on 16 May 1911. He was first selected to represent Ireland at the 1948 Olympic Games in London, where he competed in the Swallow Class, Mixed Two-Person Keelboat (included for the first time in the Olympic Sailing Programme). The event took place at Torquay, Devon, England and there was a total fleet of 14 boats. Scoring over the 10 nautical miles course (1 nautical mile = 1,852m) was based on the best six of seven races. Delany's best race placing was 5th and he finished in 11th place overall.

He became a double Olympian when he was selected for the 1952 Games in Helsinki and competed in the Finn Class, Mixed One-Person Dinghy. There were 28 boats in the competition, held at the Helsinki Sailing Society, Liuskasaari, Helsinki. The single-handed event was staged on the 5.4 nautical-mile long course and scored on the best six of seven races. Delany's best race placing was 4th and he finished in 21st place overall.

Alfred's son, Owen Delany, would follow in his father's footsteps to become an Olympian in 1972 at the Munich Games, also in the sport of Sailing and is featured as a Trinity Olympian.

Trinity Olympians

David Guiney

Sport: Athletics

Olympics: 1948, London

Trinity College Dublin: 1945-46, Diploma in Public Administration

David was born in Kanturk, Co. Cork and competed for several clubs during his athletic career including Civil Service AC, Dublin University Harriers & Athletic Club, Clonliffe Harriers AC and Donore Harriers AC.

Dave Guiney's outstanding valid throw with the 16 lb shot during his N.A.C.A.I. period of competition took place at the Civil Service Harriers & Athletic Club Sports at the Iveagh Grounds, Crumlin on 25 June, 1944 – 48 ft 1½ in (14.67 m), just short of Denis Horgan's 40-year-old Irish record of 48 ft 10 in (14.88 m), set at Mallow on 18 September 1904. Guiney would not break Horgan's record until 1950.

Guiney was the winner of 7 N.A.C.A.I. Youth Championship titles, 4 N.A.C.A.I. All-Ireland Senior Championship titles, and 11 I.A.A.B. All-Ireland (A.A.U.E. – N.I.A.A.A.) Shot Putt titles. In total he set 5 ratified Irish Shot Putt records, his best being 15.19m (49 ft 10 in) in Tolka Park on 15 April 1953, a record that stood for 10 years.

In 1946, he was Ireland's sole representative at the 3rd European Athletics Championships in Oslo (Bislett Stadion) and in 1948, he represented Ireland at the XIV Olympiad in London in Shot Putt – 14.01m (45 ft 11½ in) in qualifying round, ranked 16th overall.

Trinity Olympians

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity Sport

Robert 'Robin' Tamplin

Sport: Rowing
Olympics: 1948, London

Trinity College Dublin:
BA (1950)

Robin Tamplin was Captain of Dublin University Boat Club in 1948–49 and rowed in the Men's Coxed Eights. He won a series of honours with the Club including consecutive victories in the Dublin Metropolitan Regatta in 1948 and 1949. In the Trinity Regatta from 1948 – 1950, DUBC defeated University College Dublin (UCD) in the Grand Challenge Cup, winning by 3 lengths in the 1949 race.

Having lost to UCD in the 1948 Gannon Cup, DUBC regained the title in 1949 and the crews could not be separated the following year with the race ending in the only dead heat in the history of event.

Tamplin was also a member of the DUBC Boat that won the Irish Senior Eights Championship in 1948 in Galway, beating UCD by 1 length.

He was selected to represent Ireland in the Eights at the 1948 Olympic Games in London, rowing at No. 7.

*Pictured second from the left

Trinity Olympians

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity Sport

Robbert van Mesdag

Sport: Rowing
Olympics: 1952, Helsinki

Trinity College Dublin:
BA, BComm (1952)

Robbert van Mesdag was an active member of the Dublin University Boat Club and would hold the position of Club President from 1989-2006. He was a 'sculler' and was Irish Single Sculls Champion in 1949, winning the Trinity Regatta Senior Sculls in the same year – 2.5 lengths clear of the runner up. van Mesdag also won the Trinity Regatta Senior Sculls title in 1951.

In 1950, he was Runner Up in the Diamond Sculls at the Henley Regatta and in 1951, van Mesdag won the Dutch Single Sculls Championship.

He was selected to represent The Netherlands at the European Rowing Championships in 1951 (Burgundy, France) and 1953 (Copenhagen, Denmark) and was 4th in the Final at the 1951 event.

van Mesdag became an Olympian at the 1952 Games in Helsinki where he represented his native country in the Men's Single Sculls.

Trinity Olympians

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity Sport

Richard Miller

Sport: Athletics
Olympics: 1952, Helsinki

Trinity College Dublin:
BA (1955); MA (1962)

Richard 'Dick' Miller broke the Irish Native Javelin Record on 7 occasions between 1951 and 1954. He was the first Irishman to throw the javelin over 200 feet (60.97 m) when he achieved an Irish Native Javelin Record of 206 ft 7½ in (62.98 m) at Clonliffe Harriers Sports, College Park on 9 August, 1951. Miller broke the record again 3 times in Trinity's College Park.

Miller won 5 N.I.A.A.A Championships between 1951 and 1966 and set a new Northern Ireland Record in 1962 with a throw of 66.77 m.

He was first selected to represent Northern Ireland at the British Empire Games in Vancouver, Canada in 1954 but was unable to travel owing to study for examinations at Trinity. He did represent Northern Ireland at the Games in 1958 in Cardiff, Wales finishing 4th and then again in 1962 in Perth, Australia, achieving a final placing of 7th.

At the Sward Trophy match in London in 1963, at 34 years old, he threw a Northern Ireland Native Javelin Record and All-Comers Record of 74.30 m. This distance was not bettered by an Irishman until 1985 (Terry McHugh, 75.04 m).

Miller represented Great Britain at the XV Olympiad in Helsinki in 1952 where he reached the final, a feat equaled by no other Briton or Irishman in the javelin until David Ottley won the Silver medal for GBR in 1984 at the XXIII Olympiad in Los Angeles.

Maeve Kyle

Sport: Athletics
Olympics: 1956, Melbourne
1964, Tokyo | 1960, Rome

Trinity College Dublin:
BA (1950) – Natural Science
MA (1977)

Maeve competed in the 100m and 200m at the XVI Olympiad in Melbourne, Australia in 1956 and also qualified for the Rome Olympic Games in 1960, competing in the 100m and 200m. She became Ireland's first triple Olympian at the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964 at age 36, where she reached the semi-finals of both the 400m and 800m. In 1961 she became the first Irish women to win a British AAA title at 440 yds in 56.3 sec.

Maeve set a British 400m record in 1961, a World Indoor 400m record at Wembley, London in 1962 and an Irish 800m record in 1964.

In 1966 at the inaugural European Indoor Athletics Championships in the Westfalenhalle, Dortmund, Germany (then called the European Indoor Games), Maeve Kyle won a Bronze medal in the 400 m in a time of 57.3 sec. That same year she also represented Ireland at the 8th European Athletics Championships in Budapest at 400m and 800m. At the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh in 1970, representing Northern Ireland at age 42, she placed 8th in the final of the 400m and 7th as a member of the 4 × 100m relay.

Over the years Maeve, with her husband Sean of over 50 years, has given much back into athletics. She and Sean were founder members of Ballymena & Antrim Athletic Club. Together they set up the first coaching structure for Northern Ireland in 1961. In 2000, Maeve was sprints' and relay teams' coach of the Irish team at the Sydney Olympic Games.

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity Sport

Shirley Armstrong-Duffy

Sport: Fencing

Olympics: 1960, Rome

Trinity College Dublin:
BA (1984) – TSM: History of Art & Classical Civilisation; MPhil (2007)

Shirley Armstrong competed in the Foil discipline. Although she had medalled at the Irish National Fencing Championships (Bronze, 1960), the Irish Open Fencing Championships (Bronze, 1960) and the South of Ireland Open Championships (Silver, 1958 & 1959), she claimed her first senior title in 1961 at the East of Ireland Open Championships in Kilkenny.
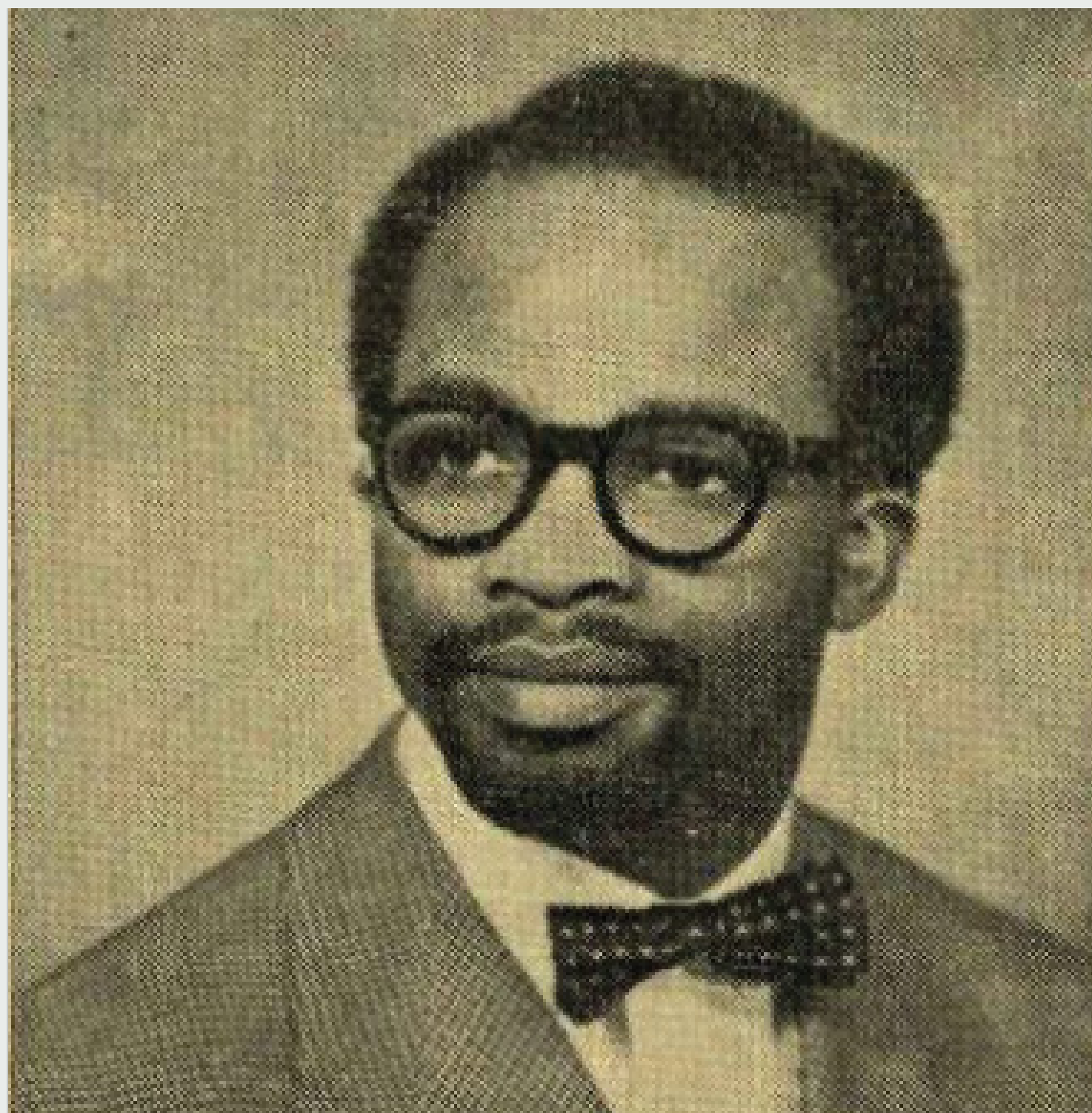
She won 9 medals in Foil at the Irish National Fencing Championships (6 Gold, 2 Silver and 1 Bronze). The first of her Gold medals at this event was won in 1962. At the Irish Open Fencing Championships, she also captured a total of 9 medals (5 Gold, 2 Silver and 2 Bronze) up until 1978. Five of her Irish Open medals were won at the Trinity College Gymnasium.

In 1966, Shirley completed a season's treble of National, Irish Open and East of Ireland Champion. She was selected to compete for Ireland at two World Fencing Championships – 1965 in Paris and 1971 in Vienna.

Shirley Armstrong was one of only two women selected for Ireland to go to the Olympic Games in Rome in 1960 (the other is fellow Trinity Olympian Maeve Kyle).

Trinity Olympians

John Oladitan

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity Sport

Sport: Athletics
Olympics: 1960, Rome

Trinity College Dublin:
BA (1958) – Modern History & Political Science

John Oladipo Oladitan developed his athletic prowess at Trinity. He competed for the College in long jump, high jump, 100 yd sprint, 4 x 110 yd relay and triple jump in various intervarsity and inter-club competitions during his four years at TCD. At the University Athletic Union (British Isles) Championships he was Long Jump Bronze medallist in 1955 and Champion in 1957 (6.78m). Oladitan was Captain of D.U.H.A.C. in 1957–58 and gained a University Pink.
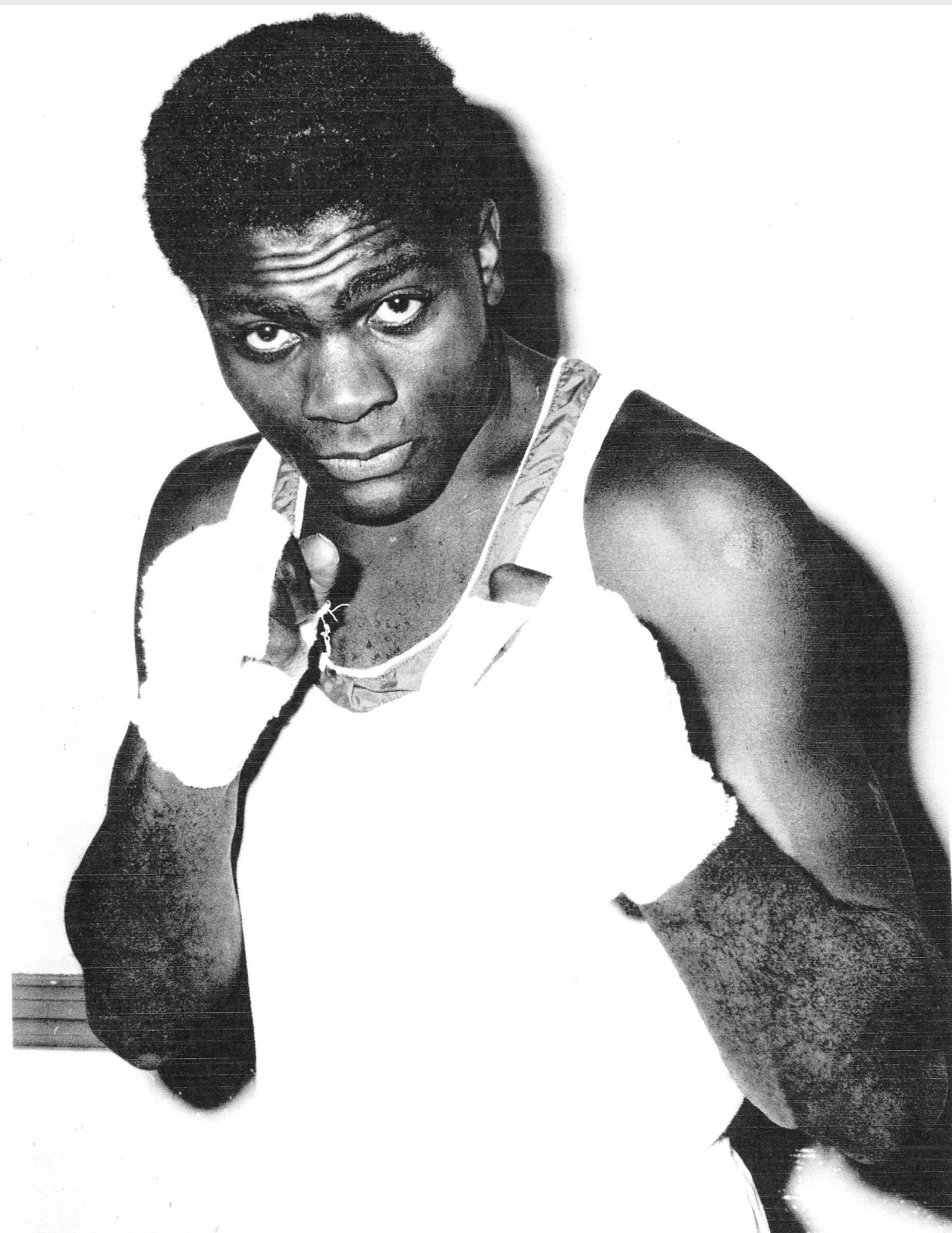
At the A.A.U.E. Irish Championships, he won Gold in the 4 x 110 yds Relay in 1955 and in 1958, was champion in the Long Jump and the Triple Jump. At the Outdoor A.A.A Championships in 1961, he claimed Gold in the Long Jump (7.38m) and won the A.A.A. Indoors Long Jump title in 1964 (7.33m).

Oladitan set a College Record in the Triple Jump in 1958 of 13.56m and his Long Jump personal best was achieved in 1961 at 7.71m.

For the XVII Olympic Games in Rome in 1960, he was named as Captain of the Nigerian team by the Nigerian Olympic Council. Oladitan competed in the Long jump where the automatic qualification distance was 7.40m. In his Group B Qualifying Round, he was 4th of 15 competitors with 7.38m. In the Qualifying Round 14 athletes jumped 7.40m or better; therefore he did not qualify by right for the final by 2cm.

Trinity Olympians

John Coker

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity Sport

Sport: Boxing
Olympics: 1968, Mexico City

Trinity College Dublin:
BA (1965)
Economics & Political Science

John Coker was born of Sierra Leonean parents in Conakry, Guinea in 1943. At Trinity he played rugby for DUFC First XV for four years. He was encouraged to take up boxing with Dublin University Boxing Club where he was coached by Fred Tiedt, who had won the Welterweight Silver Medal at the Olympic Games in Melbourne in 1956.

In 1963 Coker won the Leinster Heavyweight Boxing Championship, but lost the I.A.B.A. National Junior Heavyweight title on a controversial points decision. In 1964, he won the All-Ireland Bronze Medal in the same division. He moved up to Senior in 1965 and claimed the Heavyweight Bronze.

In the summer of 1966 he sparred with Henry Cooper, the British Heavyweight Champion. Coker went to the British Empire & Commonwealth Games in Jamaica to represent Sierra Leone. He was regarded as a medal contender but lost his first fight in the Heavyweight (81kg+) division by a walkover in totally bizarre circumstances. Coker's thumbs were exceptionally long and the gloves provided to him to wear by the Boxing Tournament's Organising Committee could not be laced up. As no available pair would fit either, he was forced to forfeit the contest when a postponement of the fight to obtain suitable gloves was disallowed.

Coker was selected for the Sierra Leone Olympic Boxing team for the Mexico City Games in 1968, where he was the team Captain and Flag Bearer at the Opening Ceremony. He lost to Ion Alexi (ROM), the then European Champion, by 5–0 in the Heavyweight (81kg+) division. The 1968 Olympic title was eventually won by George Foreman (USA).

Trinity Olympians

Donnacha O'Dea

Trinity Sport

Sport: Swimming

Olympics: 1968, Mexico City

Trinity College Dublin: Mathematics

Born in Dublin, Donnacha O'Dea was the son of famed Irish actors Denis O'Dea and Siobhán McKenna.

O'Dea qualified for the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City after being the first Irish swimmer to complete a 100m swim in less than one minute.

Donnacha studied at Trinity College but left before completing his degree to pursue a career as a professional poker player.