



Patrick Fitzgerald

By P.S. Marshall

Pat was the champion 10-mile runner who had *“exhibited some astonishing bursts of speed on the Manhattan Athletic Grounds.”* He was *“tall and burly, with the muscular development of a champion oarsman.”*

“Paddy” Fitzgerald, who was born at Hill o’Listuff, Ireland, December 5, 1846, and who was taken to Canada by his parents at an early age, won five big races in his remarkable career.

Before he embarked in his long distance go-as-you-please career, he was the champion 10-mile runner. In his first crack at the big time, he led the 1st O’Leary Belt race in October of 1879 for about 50 miles before retiring hurt.

Remarkably, and a week later, Pat won the O’Leary-sponsored 14 hours-a-day, six-day go-as-you-please match at Madison Square Garden, with a score of 377 miles.

He then came in a creditable 5th of 65 starters when he scored 520 miles in the Rose Belt contest held in New York, in December.

On April the 26th 1880, he started a 72-hour competition at Buffalo a couple of days later. Incredibly, he took the bronze medal position with 386 miles!

He wasn’t seen on the racecourse again until the 1st O’Leary International Belt contest which began in January, of 1881. Having made a promising start, he gave it up after scoring 113.7. Then in the 2nd O’Leary International Belt, in May, he ended up in 4th position with a very respectable 536 miles, with Vint being the victor.

It wasn’t until December of that year that, once again, his name graced the leader board at the end of the match. However, this one would be really special. The *“Grand World Championship Six-Day Go-As-You-Please Tournament”* was held at the American Institute Building, in New York, and provided the perfect setting for Pat to overcome the existing world record held by Hughes. Bettering it by 4 miles, his final tally was 582 miles and 55yards. His score had crushed his previous best by 46 miles!

He made 5 miles less than that when losing out to Hazael, who broke his record by going 18 miles further in October, of 1882.

Finally, between the 28th of April and the 3rd of May 1884, *“Plucky Paddy”* went 10 miles further than Hazael had done 2 years previously when he scored a new world record of 610 miles.

Patrick J. Fitzgerald, Pedestrian and Runner, a Victim of Dropsy.

Patrick J. Fitzgerald, holder of two world’s running records and at one time champion six day pedestrian of the world, died at his home, 480 Hamilton street, Long Island City, early Sunday morning. His death was due to dropsy and he had been ill for some time. The deceased stood six feet high and was of heavy build. In his athletic days he was a fine specimen of physical manhood. Fitzgerald was a born runner and pedestrian, and during his career on the tan bark won many events. He was born in Ireland in 1847 and his family moved to Canada when he was an infant.

After winning this great race Fitzgerald settled in this city, investing part of his purse money in real estate in the Ravenswood section. He built an athletic hall and track and trained many athletes. He later started a saloon and conducted that until the day of his death.

Fitzgerald was unmarried. His father, three sisters and three brothers reside in Canada. In 1882 the deceased was appointed to fill a vacancy in the Long Island City Board of Aldermen, due to the death of Alderman Joseph Johnson.

Patrick Fitzgerald died in 1900.