



## Offaly Olympians and Paralympian sporting profiles

*Compiled by Kevin Corrigan*

### Shane Lowry



With years of competition still ahead of him, Shane Lowry is already Offaly's most successful sporting competitor. Offaly has had several fantastic sports stars across a variety of sports but Lowry's achievements have catapulted him above all others. He has achieved world stardom; and by winning the British Open in Royal Portrush in 2019, he took one of sports most sought after prizes, the oldest and arguably the most iconic of golf's four Majors

Son of Offaly football hero, Brendan Lowry; Shane Lowry's story is a fantastic feel good one. The Clara man enjoyed a very successful amateur career and turned professional after stunning the golf world when winning the Irish Open as an amateur in 2009. Since then, his game has evolved and developed and he is now one of the world's top professional golfers. He has made the top 20 in the world and is in a good position to play in the Ryder Cup in September. An affable, charismatic and hugely popular individual, he made an important breakthrough when winning the Portugal Masters in 2012. He won one of golf's biggest events, the WGC Bridgestone Invitational in 2015 and re-ignited his career with a great success at the 2019 Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship.

### Jordan Conroy



Jordan Conroy's success story provides a fantastic example of what can be achieved in sports with the right dedication and attitude. The Tullamore man is travelling to Tokyo as part of the Ireland men's sevens rugby squad and their achievement in making the tournament is a dream come true for him. A flying winger, he has achieved international recognition in the sevens game, winning national and international awards and accolades.

Born in 1994, he was a multi talented sports man in his youth; he excelled at athletics and soccer before concentrating on rugby with Tullamore. He joined Buccaneers in 2016 / 2017 and his rise since then has been meteoric. He first appeared for the Irish sevens side in 2016; and as the IRFU pumped more resources into that emerging game, he became one of their star performers. Conroy possesses sensational pace and has scored many fantastic tries as he shows a clean pair of heels to the opposition. The winner of a few player of the tournament awards, he has also played for the Connacht Eagles and was selected on the men's HSBC dream team at the 2020 HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series awards.

### **Darragh Kenny**



Darragh Kenny will join the small and very elite group of Offaly competitors to compete in the Olympics when he goes in the show jumping competition in Tokyo. The Belmont man has long been one of the top show jumpers in Ireland and was thrilled when the Irish team of him, Peter Moloney, Paul O Shea and Cian O'Connor booked their places to Japan when winning the €1.25 Million Longines FEI Nations Cup World Final in Barcelona. It is the first time in 15 years that the Irish show jumping team have qualified for the Olympics.

Kenny has won several national and international titles. A member of the Irish team that won the 2015 Nations Cup in Dublin, he took up show jumping at age 10 years; competed in his first Grand Prix at 14 years of age; and jumped in the Dublin Horse Show for the first time in 2007 at 19 years of age. A regular on the podium at events throughout the world, he is currently ninth in the Longines world rankings and his highest position was seventh

### **Nicole Turner**



Garryhinch (Portarlinton) woman, Nicole Turner has excelled in Para swimming events for over a decade. Just 19 years of age, she will be competing in her second Paralympics in Tokyo having competed in five events in the 2016 showpiece in Rio de Janeiro – her best placing was fifth in the 50 metres butterfly as she set personal bests in six out of her ten races and made all five finals.

A brilliantly talented and versatile swimmer, Nicole has made further progress since then and she will compete in the 50 metre freestyle, 50 metre butterfly, 100 metres breaststroke and 200 metres individual medley in Tokyo. Having started in the Laois Marlins club, she now races for the NAC Swim Club which is based out of the High Performance National Aquatic Centre in Abbotstown, Dublin.

Her first major event was the World Dwarf Games in 2009 when she took four gold medals and she has been a serial medal winner since then. She made a big breakthrough when competing in the World IPC Swimming Championships in 2015 when just 13 years of age and since then she has won medals at the European IPC Swimming Championships in 2016 (two silver, one bronze), 2018 (one silver) and 2021 (two silver and two bronze). She also won a World bronze medal in the 50m butterfly in 2019 and is currently ranked second in the world in the event.