

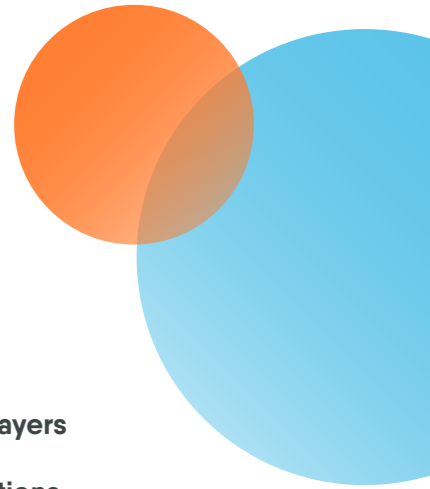
GAELIC GAMES
**PLAYER
PATHWAY**

THRIVE

Player Development Programme

A statement of intent for Player and Coach development in the GAA to establish a lasting and meaningful structure for the long-term benefit of both Players and Coaches at the F3 youth, T1 through to T4 player pathway stages.





WHAT IS OUR VISION?

Working better together for our young people to truly flourish.

Our vision is to work better together to foster and develop in our young players (aged ≈13-23) a desire to maximise their potential so that they can actively transition to adult Gaelic Games at both club and county level. Such transitions will be underpinned by an enjoyable development experience which will help to promote a lifelong association with the GAA.

We want to measure success differently ensuring we stay connected to our core values.

OUR VALUES

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Community and Club is at the heart of our Association

Everything we do helps to enrich the communities we serve

We foster a clear sense of identity and place

We support our members in contributing to the well-being of their respective communities

AMATEUR STATUS

All our players and members participate in our games as amateurs

We provide a games programme at all levels to meet the needs of all our players

We safeguard our position as the leading amateur games organisation in the world

INCLUSIVENESS

We welcome everybody to be part of our Association

We are open to diverse opinions and cultures while respecting our Irish heritage and language

We cater for all abilities

RESPECT

We respect each other on and off the playing field

We operate with integrity

We listen to and respect the views of all

PLAYER WELFARE

We provide the best playing experience for all our players

We structure our games to allow players of all abilities to enjoy our sports and reach their potential

As with our players, we value the welfare and wellbeing of all our members

TEAMWORK AND VOLUNTEERISM

We are a volunteer-led and democratic organisation

We flourish through the voluntary efforts of our membership

Our voluntary ethos inspires the engagement of members in the broader community

The cornerstone of our Association and sustainability is effective teamwork on and off the field.

We celebrate and support the contributions of our volunteers and employees

HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO THIS?

We strive to develop, nurture, and challenge our young people (players and coaches) by providing them with the right support at the right time.

This will be achieved through the promotion of our core GAA Values, promoting effective interconnected, player-centered environments across clubs, 2nd level schools, 3rd level colleges and counties. Each environment should have a shared understanding and

focus on developing players and coaches holistically, providing educational and learning opportunities to develop their knowledge that will empower them to embrace the many challenges they will encounter throughout their participation in our games and beyond.



Our Thrive Programme focuses on player and coach development in the F3 Youth (Age 12-18) and T1-T4 stages (Age 14-23) of our Gaelic Games Player Pathway (figure 1). Our programme will be led by our Provincial and National teams supporting each county to implement their plan.

WHY DO WE NEED TO CHANGE?

We have listened and learned from the findings of the Talent Academy Player Development (TAPD) Report 2019 and completed a comprehensive engagement, with Provincial and County Heads of Games, Games Staff, Operations Managers, volunteer coaches, and experts in the field of player and coach development.

A NUMBER OF ISSUES ON PLAYER AND COACH DEVELOPMENT WERE HIGHLIGHTED AS FOLLOWS

- Lack of role clarity and understanding
- Absence of talent identification and monitoring systems
- Inconsistencies in practice and communication
- Focus on junior success and a lack of understanding of relative age effect and maturation
- Coach recruitment, education, and retention
- Funding
- Competition and games structures
- Fixtures calendar and overall accountability for the system



WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

- Actively promote our core values and the long-term health, participation, and enjoyment of our Games for our players and coaches.
- Champion the volunteer coach, ensuring they have learning opportunities available to support them on their development.
- Create environments that gives both players and coaches access to supports that helps them reach their potential – but above all gives them a love for the game as lifelong participants.
- Establish a comprehensive integration between Club, Post Primary, Higher Education and County to create more opportunities to develop players and coaches.
- Promote 'Club is Core'. Our clubs are critical to the future participation, retention and development of our players and coaches.
- Support County 'Academy Squads' to continue to play their role in developing, challenging, inspiring players and coaches and in doing so, complement the club and school programme, by offering and exposing players to higher-quality coaching and competition.
- Get the balance right by providing opportunities for more players to get exposure to quality coaching and a meaningful games programme across club, schools, and county level.

- Ensure positive transitions are experienced by both the players and coaches. For players as they move across the club, county and/or school environments (F3 Youth, T1, T2 and T3) and transition into adult games (F3 Adult and T4). For coaches as they move across, as well as up and down, the Coach Pathway depending on the stage they are coaching at.
- Push-up the age focus, place a greater emphasis and investment on age 16-17 years to support players transitioning through the pathway and reframe the emphasis on age 13, 14 and 15 years.



WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES OF INSPIRE?

THINK LONG TERM

“As many as possible for as long as possible...”

Focusing on each player’s potential rather than simply their current performance, developing the skills of the game, physical and psychological development, and game understanding.

Each county Thrive programme will combine developmental components to meet individual needs, so that players experience a holistic, player-centered, and individualised approach to their unique developmental trajectory.

CHAMPION THE VOLUNTEER COACH

“When we get Coaching right, we give everyone a chance”

Identifying and recruiting coaches who aspire to learn and develop themselves to support players.

Providing coaches with a pathway, specific to their needs, which develops their skillset, knowledge, and coaching practice. Coaches will hold lead roles in our Inspire programme supported by full time staff.

WORK TOGETHER

“Shared Engagement; Shared Plans; Shared Understanding”

Promoting each county Inspire programme to include players, coaches, personnel, officials, parents/guardians, referees, teachers, staff and administrators in the development and successful delivery across clubs, schools, and counties.

SHOW WE CARE

“Be Fair, Include, Respect”

Creating environments where players feel valued and respected with opportunities to develop and grow.

Providing player centred environments with a focus on holistic development, providing the right support at the right time and developing player autonomy through education, learning and a broad range of experiences.



WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES OF INSPIRE?

EDUCATE

“Just in Time” & “Just for Me”

Developing autonomous players and empowering them to make informed decisions through a process of education and learning.

Educating and informing parents/guardians, club, school, and county coaches and officials on their important supportive and facilitative role in developing young players.

Supporting counties to reframe their games programme and providing a different experience for players including various small-sided games with reduced numbers to develop players.

Promoting player health and well-being as they partake in our games, ensuring they have adequate recovery and rest days as advocated by our Sports Science Guide for Practice.

STEP UP

“Good governance is our collective responsibility”

Establishing a County Games Development Committee that is responsible for all aspects of our Inspire programme.

This Committee leads the coordination and integration of this programme for club, school, and county to ensure appropriate development for players and coaches.

SUPPORT POSITIVE TRANSITIONS

“The Right Support at the Right Time”

Identifying players and coaches should encompass a range of criteria and input from various personnel at each age group. Referring to Principle 1, our collective focus should be on developing each player’s (and coaches) potential rather than simply their current performance.

Communicating clear ‘entry’ and ‘exit’ guidelines to all players and coaches to ensure a clear understanding of what participation in a county environment involves and the positive transition supports that are in place.

PROMOTE

“A Player Centred County Games Programme”

Promoting meaningful games opportunities to as many players as possible as they move through the pathway.

Overseeing this player and coach development as well as their transitions through the pathways should be facilitated by the lead coaches in each environment and supported by the leadership of the Games Development Committee in each County.

THE 9 KEY ELEMENTS OF OUR THRIVE PROGRAMME

Our National Player Development Advisory Group will be established to guide the development of the programme, specifically overseeing:



1. COMPETITION REGULATIONS

Competition regulations will be informed and delivered in accordance to the Development CCC Master Fixture Schedule.

Developing alternative models of player selection and management allowing for growth and maturation e.g. bio-banding tournaments/competitions and in season opportunities where multiple age groups are mixed and combined.

Camps

Movement towards provision of camps to support players in the 12-15 age bracket particularly during school breaks where players are exposed to educational and coaching opportunities.

Playing Time and Contact Time Guidelines

Providing support and guidance to coaches, personnel, administrators, and parents on the overall playing time for players, which are sensitive to the context within which a player operates (single/dual code, multiple team eligibility).

Player Leadership Programme and Wellbeing

Providing Leadership Programmes and other educational opportunities for players to develop their knowledge and understanding to support their decision-making autonomy and holistic development as they progress through the pathway while also providing education and resources to support player wellbeing and issue management.

2. COUNTY PLAN DEVELOPMENT, GUIDELINES & OPERATION STANDARDS

Each County will provide a plan to support the delivery of their Inspire programme. These plans will include reviewing and updating guidelines and operating standards to support development of their plan. These guidelines will incorporate best practice templates for self-analysis against the different areas. Support will be provided to all counties in this process and assistance to develop adequate structures and practices will be provided.

3. PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Player representation, selection, and bio-banding

Supporting counties to provide a greater number of players to gain exposure to our county development environments. This will place a greater focus on overall club player inclusion – moving from the traditional county ‘squads’ or ‘teams’ based representative model.

4. PLAYER ATTRIBUTES

Players will be the central focus of any effective player development environment. They will need a wide range of age-appropriate skills and characteristics, developed over time both on and off the pitch. These attributes will be developed through a coaching approach that is adaptive to the player, their environment, and the game, ensuring both the player and person reach their full potential.

5. PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Each county will have a specific induction programme for parents/guardians. This will begin an ongoing process of engagement and education on the broader topics regarding player welfare, nutrition, health, and wellbeing. These engagements will provide opportunities to educate, support and inform parents/guardians on the different challenges and decisions they encounter as their child develops.

Our games provide an important outlet and balance in young people’s lives as they mature and grow. Balance should be encouraged and promoted to ensure every young person has the opportunity to enjoy life growing up as a teenager outside of their games participation.

6. COACH DEVELOPMENT AND MENTORSHIP

Providing coach development opportunities to support volunteer coaches working with players in Club, School, Higher Education, and Inter-County environments. These opportunities include provincial and nationally supported workshops, conferences, and mentorship programmes.

7. HURLING/GAELIC FOOTBALL CURRICULUM

Designing a syllabus and curriculum to provide guidance and support on the age-appropriate development of technical and tactical skills for young players, including principles of play, skills of the game, tactical awareness, game intelligence and bilateral proficiency in each code.

8. RESEARCH

As part of an overall Gaelic games research strategy, a programme of research will be undertaken to support the continued evolution and progress of this programme.

9. GAELIC GAMES SPORT SCIENCE FRAMEWORK

Develop player and coach learning opportunities while also providing guidance on the appointment of practitioners providing

We look forward to working together with volunteers and staff to promote our core GAA Values, through well connected, player-centered environments across clubs, 2nd level schools, 3rd level colleges and counties.



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together for our
young people
To truly flourish**
