

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

CEREBRAL PALSY

DESCRIPTION:

- A neurological condition affecting muscle tone, balance, and movement.
- Ranges from mild (slight balance or coordination difficulties) to severe (wheelchair use).

GAELIC GAMES COACHING TIPS:

- ✓ **Adapt equipment** – use softer, lighter footballs or larger hurleys for easier grip.
- ✓ **Allow seated or wheelchair participation** – hand-passing, striking stationary balls.
- ✓ **Short, low-impact games** – avoid fatigue by including rest breaks.
- ✓ **Balance & coordination games** – beanbag throwing, slow soloing practice.
- ✓ **Buddy support** – pair with peers to help with passing or positioning.
- ✓ **Focus on fun & inclusion** – team cheers and small-sided, non-contact games.

SPINA BIFIDA

DESCRIPTION:

- A spinal condition that may cause leg weakness or paralysis.
- Some children use wheelchairs or leg braces; may also experience bladder/bowel issues.

GAELIC GAMES COACHING TIPS:

- ✓ **Ensure an accessible pitch** – flat surfaces, ramps if possible.
- ✓ **Non-contact skill-based games** – hand-passing, throwing, or striking adapted balls.
- ✓ **Adapt equipment** – softer footballs or lighter hurleys.
- ✓ **Monitor fatigue & hydration** – children may tire quickly.
- ✓ **Avoid latex equipment** – latex allergy is common in spina bifida.

MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

DESCRIPTION:

- A group of conditions causing progressive muscle weakness.
- Children may fatigue quickly or require wheelchairs for mobility.

GAELIC GAMES COACHING TIPS:

- ✓ **Short sessions with plenty of rest** – energy conservation is key.
- ✓ **Focus** – Throwing, catching, and hand-passing rather than running drills.
- ✓ **Allow seated participation** – wheelchair users can pass and catch effectively.
- ✓ **Positive encouragement** – celebrate participation rather than performance.

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

JUVENILE IDIOPATHIC ARTHRITIS

DESCRIPTION:

- Chronic joint inflammation causing pain, stiffness, and fatigue.
- Symptoms can flare, so participation may vary week to week.

GAELIC GAMES COACHING TIPS:

- ✓ **Warm up gently & stretch slowly** – reduce stiffness before activity.
- ✓ **Low-impact games** – walking football, soft passing drills, or adapted Fun & Run games.
- ✓ **Avoid heavy contact & overexertion** – modify tackling or competitive play.
- ✓ **Allow flexible participation** – children may need to sit out during flare-ups.

LIMB DIFFERENCE/AMPUTATIONS

DESCRIPTION:

- Congenital limb differences or amputations affecting mobility or coordination.
- Many children adapt quickly with the right support.

GAELIC GAMES COACHING TIPS:

- ✓ **Modify equipment** – lighter hurleys, soft balls, or grip adaptations.
- ✓ **Adapt skills** – encourage hand-passing or kicking suited to the child's strengths.
- ✓ **Buddy system** – peers can assist with passing or positioning.
- ✓ **Celebrate all achievements** – highlight creative adaptations.