



WHERE WE ALL BELONG

INTRODUCTION TO COACHING GAELIC GAMES



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TOBAR Gaelic Games Learning **Planner** FAQ GAA.ie Camogie LGFA

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FOIREANN
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- Coach
- Referee
- Administrator
- Player
- Schools
- Community & Health
- Safeguarding
- Participation Programmes

STARTING YOUR COACHING JOURNEY

Congratulations – by starting this course you are taking the first step on the Gaelic Games Coach Pathway.

Coaches are at the heart of Gaelic Games. As a coach, you play a vital role in creating positive experiences for players and helping them enjoy their participation in our games. Your influence extends far beyond the pitch. Through your guidance, players develop not only their physical, technical and tactical abilities, but also important psychological and social skills.

Good coaching supports players to grow in confidence, build friendships, and develop a lifelong love of Gaelic Games. It contributes to their personal development and wellbeing while helping them reach their potential and experience fulfilment at whatever level they participate.

Whether you are a parent, a player, a teacher, a former player or simply an enthusiastic volunteer, your commitment to coaching will make a meaningful difference. By choosing to coach, you are helping to shape positive sporting experiences and supporting the continued growth of Gaelic Games in your community.

Your coaching journey starts here



TO BE A COACH

You must have completed **ALL** of the following:

- ✔ Minimum coaching qualification e.g. ICGG*/Foundation course
**Introduction to Coaching Gaelic Games*
- ✔ Garda vetting / Access NI Checked
- ✔ Safeguarding 1 Certification
- ✔ Be a member of the Association

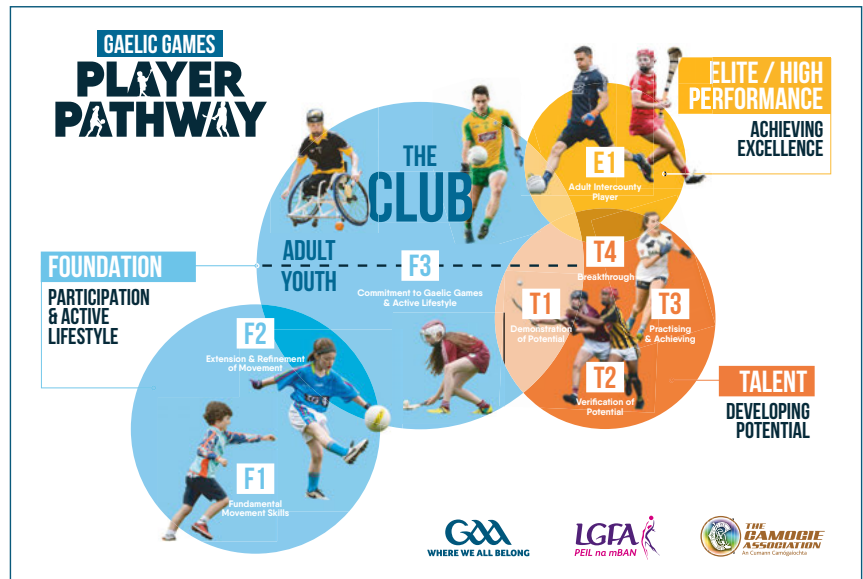
For information on Vetting search <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/vetting>

For information on Safeguarding search <https://learning.gaa.ie/node/280985>

PLAYER PATHWAY

The Gaelic Games Player Pathway is designed around a set of principles that align with the core values of the GAA, the LGFA & Camogie Associations, ensuring opportunities for everyone to experience Gaelic Games whilst providing the very best, most valid development experiences possible for all of our players.

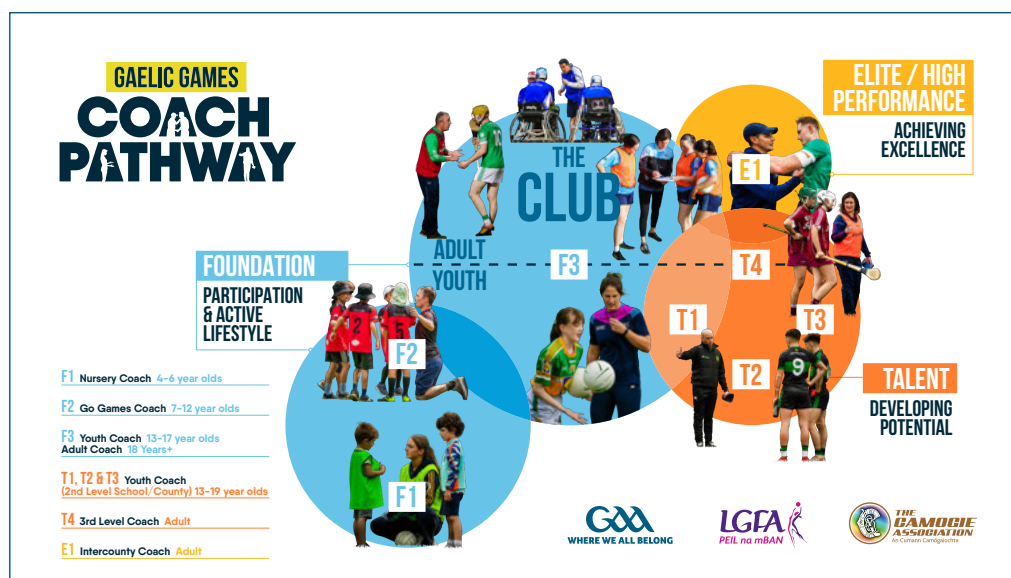
The pathway is underpinned by six key principles:



- **CLUB IS CORE** - Club is central to nurturing a love and passion for our games and sustaining communities and lifelong participation
- **PLAYER CENTRED** - We develop the player and the person
- **QUALITY COACHING EXPERIENCES** - Our coaches create an enjoyable coaching environment to meet needs and welfare of the player
- **CONNECTION** - Our pathway promotes connection through relationship building opportunities, communication and teamwork.
- **INCLUSIVE** - Gaelic Games are for All, regardless of abilities, background, beliefs or identities
- **AS MANY AS POSSIBLE FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE** - Our Pathway prioritises long-term development with a games programme that supports recruitment, development and retention of players

<https://learning.gaa.ie/GaelicGamesPlayerPathway>

<https://learning.gaa.ie/coachpathway>

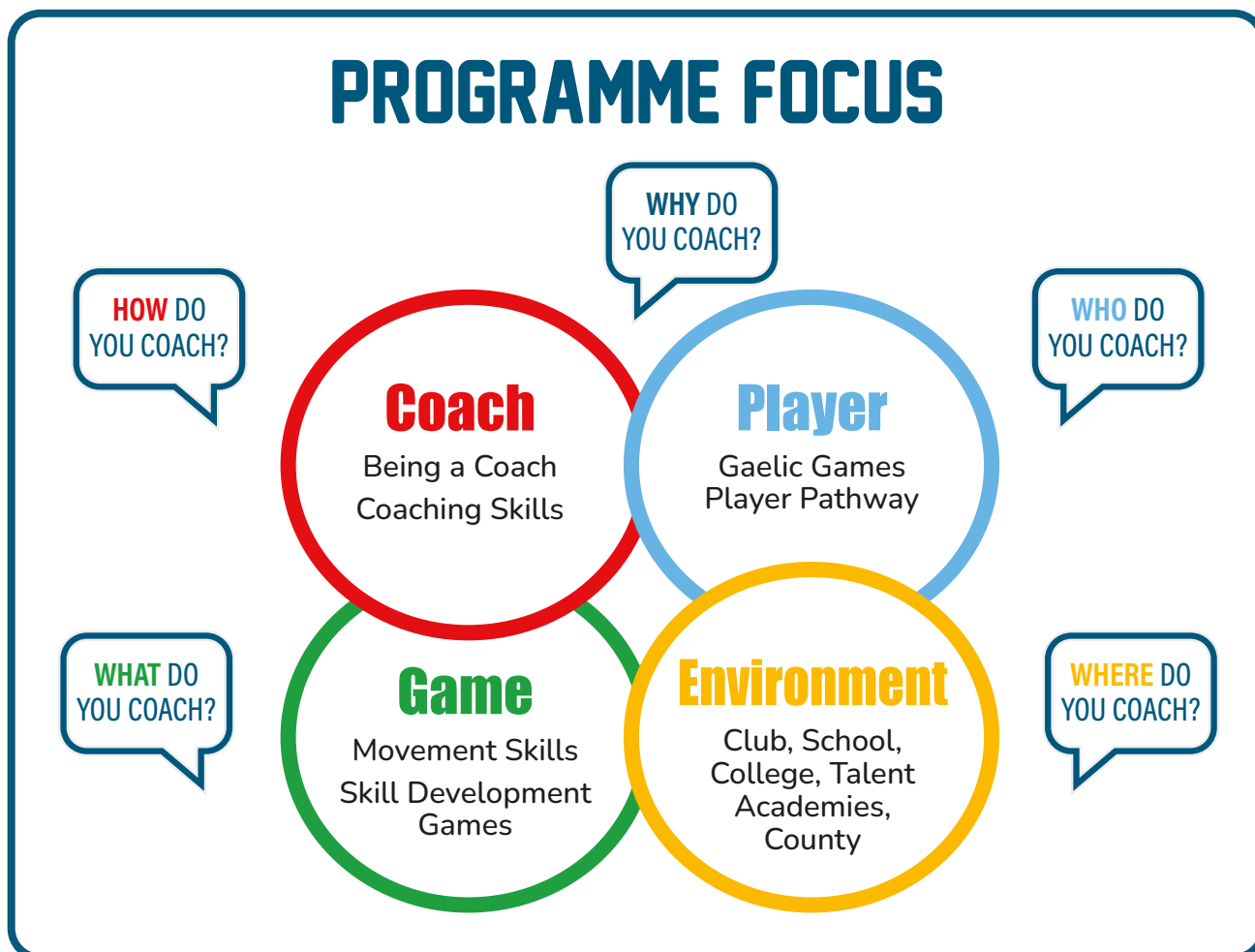


INTRODUCTION TO COACHING GAELIC GAMES

The Introduction to Gaelic Games is the introductory award for coaches of Gaelic games. The course is aimed at beginner coaches and will enable participants in the organisation of activities to develop Hurling, Camogie, Gaelic Football or Ladies Football. The course is 9 hours in duration.

The overall aim of the course is to prepare participants to deliver safe, inclusive and developmentally appropriate coaching sessions.

The Introduction to Coaching Gaelic Games award is structured around four key strands: The Coach, The Player, The Game and The Environment.



Under the **Coach** section we cover the role of the coach, why do you coach, being a coach and how to coach.

Under the **Player** section we examine the Gaelic Games Player Pathway and focus on who you are coaching. The Player Pathway highlights the characteristics of players at each age and stage of their development and helps the coach to plan appropriate activities for the players they work with, whether they are child, youth or adult players.

Under the **Game** section we cover elements from fundamental movements, through fundamental skills and then specific skill development for Gaelic Games. We progress from small sided-games to Go Games to full-sided games.

Under the **Environment** section we look at where we coach, the club, the school, college, talent academies and county teams. We examine how a coach creates a positive environment for learning and caters for players of all abilities.

THIS PROGRAMME WILL PROVIDE COACHES WITH KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES RELATED TO:



Why do you coach?

Every coach is an individual, and each of you are bringing your own experience and reasons for coaching. The values that you espouse will govern your behaviour as a coach so we will examine how your values and beliefs will influence how you coach.



Who do you coach?

We will focus on the players that you have within your team/group, looking at their age, stage of development, characteristics and how this will impact upon your coaching.



How do you coach?

Core coaching skills such as planning, communicating, demonstrating, observing and analysing are key to how you will perform in your coaching role.



What do you coach?

Introducing the right activities at the right time is the essence of good coaching. Movement skills, technical skills and games form the basis of well-structured coaching sessions.



Where do you coach?

Most coaches will work in club environments, but Gaelic Games are a core activity in primary and secondary schools as well as third level colleges. Coaches will also progress to working in talent academies and with county teams

The course is structured around the four strands and there are nine modules in total. The learning outcomes for each module are listed on the objective posters that are displayed around on the walls.

HOW TO USE THE INTRODUCTION TO COACHING GAELIC GAMES MANUAL

The Introduction to Coaching Gaelic Games manual is an important element of the Coach Education Programme. The Coach will spend time assisting in the preparation of a team, which will permit him/her to:

- Experience what it is like to have coaching responsibility
- Use and develop skills that the coach already possesses
- Record details relating to this experience.
- Establish areas where further training/experience/assistance is required

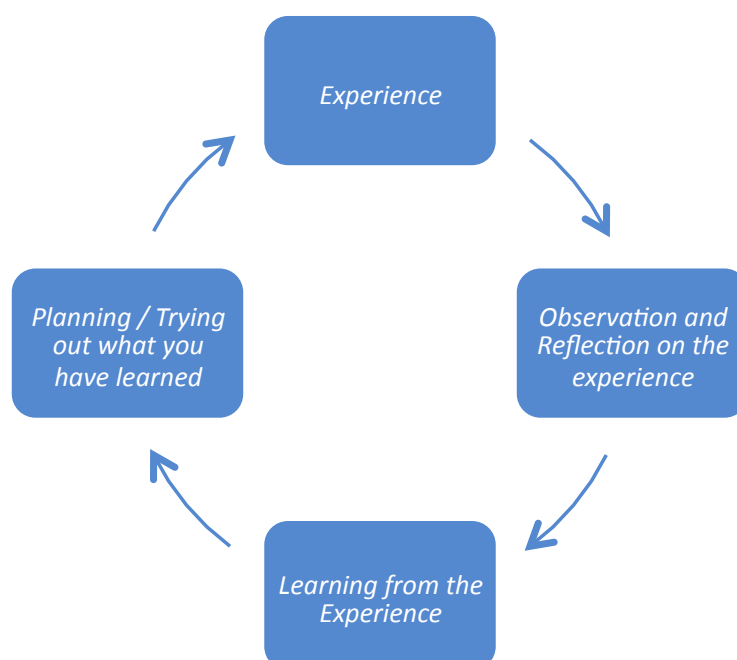
The purpose of reflection is to try to improve our coaching and improve the context in which our coaching takes place. Many coaches develop their skills and expertise through their experiences and by watching other coaches. However, simply acquiring experiences does not guarantee coaching competence. It is the integration of experience and knowledge in a meaningful way that promotes learning and in turn develops expertise. Coaches need to know how to best learn through their experiences. Reflective practice is a major learning tool that is at the heart of the learning process. It is a necessary component in learning to regulate one's thoughts, feelings and actions.

Reflection links experience and knowledge by providing an opportunity to explore areas of concern in a critical way and to make adjustments based on these reflections tool in this regard

Reflection allows coaches to think beyond what 'what went well' and 'what could have gone better'. It also stimulates coaches to ask why things might have gone well or not, and to how they can influence future practice. The reflective learning cycle below shows how coaches:

1. Experience their coaching practice
2. Consider their experience through observation and reflection
3. Learn from the experience
4. Plan and experiment with a different way of doing things based on what they have learned

REFLECTIVE LEARNING CYCLE



MODULE 1 INTRODUCTION



WHY DO I COACH?

Write down your top three motivations or reasons for getting involved in coaching.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

EXPECTATIONS OF PROGRAMME

Write down the top three reasons why you embarked on this course. These expectations will be revisited at the end of the programme to identify if we have achieved them.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

MODULE 2

HOW TO COACH



1. BUILD RAPPORT



1. Show interest in and respect for each participant and others
2. Smile and make eye contact with each participant
3. Learn and use participants names
4. Coach the person rather than just the sport

2. EXPLAIN



1. Plan what to say
2. Gain attention before starting
3. Keep it simple
4. Use questions to check for the players' understanding

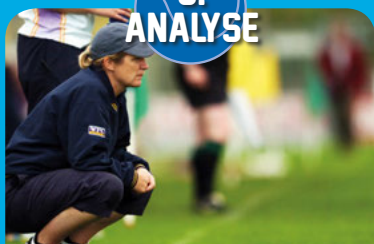
6. FEEDBACK



1. Ask 'what did you notice about...' to promote self-analysis
2. Limit information to 1-3 key points
3. Give specific, simple information in a positive way
4. Check for understanding: 'what will you now do?'

6 STEPS

5. ANALYSE



1. Compare your observation with your picture of good practice
2. Identify the matching key points
3. Identify the mismatching key points
4. Decide whether to reinforce, modify or note but take no immediate action

4. OBSERVE



1. One point at a time: head, hands (Hurley) and feet
2. Observe each participant from different angles
3. Observe each participant several times
4. Check if the activity is working

3. DEMONSTRATE



1. Position so all can see and hear
2. Provide correct demonstration then focus attention on 1-3 key points
3. Provide demonstration more than once from different angles
4. Check for understanding before they go for practice

HOW TO COACH - STEP 1



1. Show interest in and respect for each participant and others

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

How will you try to build rapport with your players?

What is the most challenging aspect to building rapport and how will you overcome this?

HOW TO COACH - STEP 2



1. Plan what to say

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

How will the language that you use be different when explaining to children, youths or adults?

Identify different methods of gaining attention:

HOW TO COACH - STEP 3



1. Position so all can see and hear

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

If you do not feel confident to demonstrate yourself, how will you ensure that a demonstration is provided?

Identify some questions that you can use to 'check for understanding'?

HOW TO COACH - STEP 4



1. One point at a time: head, hands (hurley) and feet

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Describe how coaches can observe a number of players at one time in practice?

Identify how you can establish if the activity is working?

HOW TO COACH - STEP 5



1. Compare your observation with your picture of good practice
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Describe how coaches can develop their picture of good practice?

Under what circumstances would it be best to take no immediate action?

HOW TO COACH - STEP 6



1. Ask 'what did you notice about...' to promote self-analysis

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Feedback must be accurate, relevant and positive. Outline a piece of feedback that meets these criteria.

How will the language that you use be different for providing feedback to children, youths or adults?

LEARNING & REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Complete the following self-reflection:

MODULE 2 - How to Coach

What aspects of this module will you apply in your next coaching session?

What aspects of this module should your club apply in their coaching environment?

What was the one 'stand out' or 'Ah' moment for you as a coach from this module?

MODULE 3

BEING A COACH



A **C**oach is someone that builds Competency by **A**ssisting and **C**hallenging players to achieve their potential

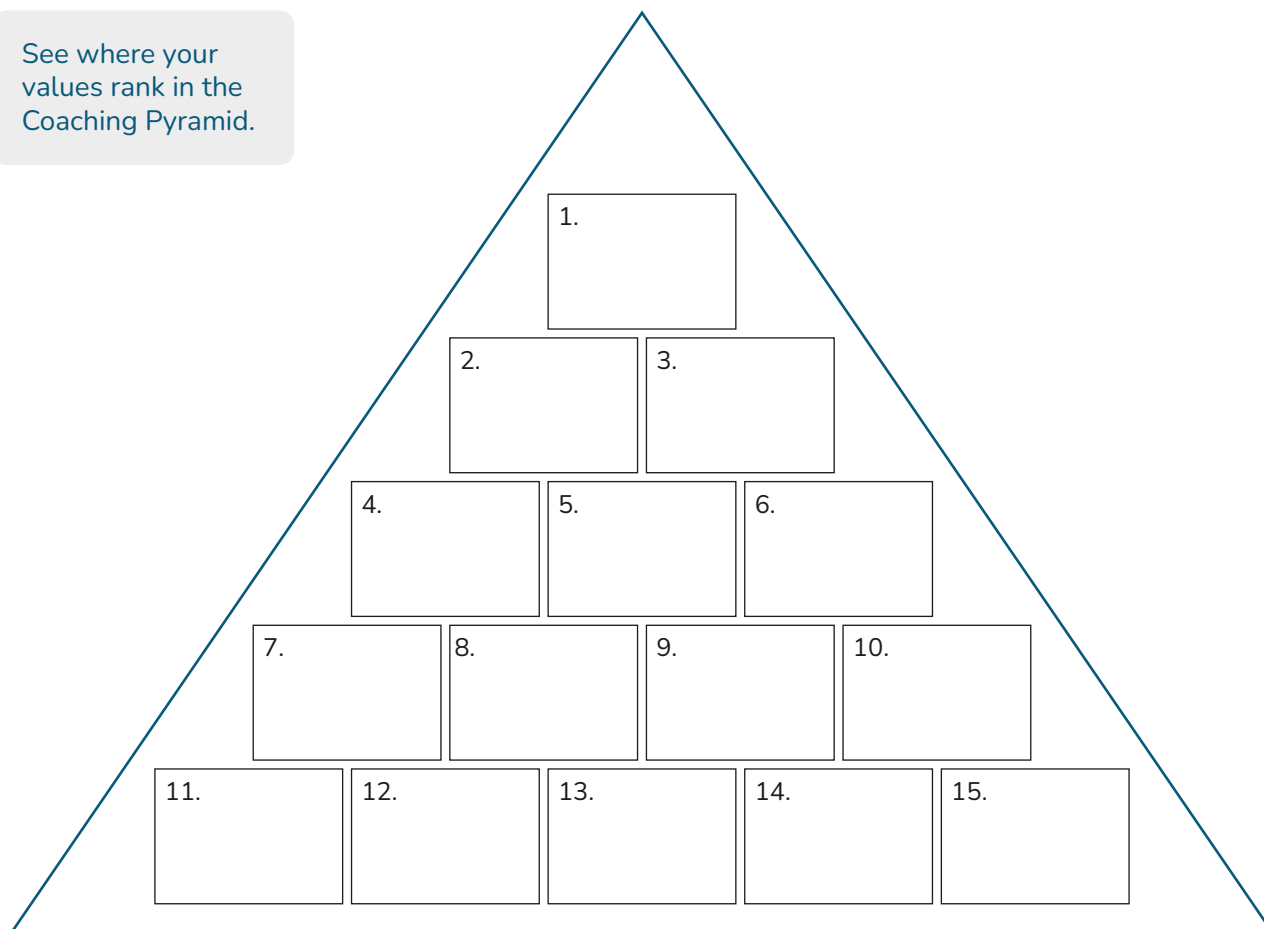
TASK - SAMPLE COACHING BELIEFS - HOW WE LEARN

Coach	Coaching Philosophy
Coach A	“I create a positive environment which allows players to construct knowledge from themselves. So therefore they attach meaning to it rather than the Coach barking out information to the players.”
Coach B	“My philosophy is anchored in providing meaningful experience to my players while enhancing their skills and values in life through sports. I aim to provide them with the opportunities for physical, social, emotional, and mental enhancement that will lead them to become a good and productive citizen.”
Coach C	“I want to teach my players sportsmanship and how to have fun and to love the game. And knowing that winning is not the reason to play, it is to have fun with the experience and getting to know your team mates and to help each other when its needed.”
Coach D	“My teaching philosophy is simple, I always provide an opportunity to develop their skills and create a learning environment that is constantly challenging and enjoyable.”

TASK – COACHING VALUES

- Values are qualities and standards that govern the behaviour of a coach

See where your values rank in the Coaching Pyramid.



Value	What to Look For?
Fun	Create a fun, safe, positive coaching environment where everyone feels valued and challenged appropriately
Enjoyment	
Integrity	Operate to the highest standards (everything, everyday) in our dealings with ourselves and all coaches we work with
Inclusive	Provide developmentally age appropriate opportunities catering for all to participate in an active way irrespective of ability and motivational level
Encourage	Provide the culture, structures, supports and resources to bring out the best in all our players
Respect	Promote mutual respect for all, between coaches, players, officials etc.
Pride	Take pride in the quality and positive impact of all our activities
Leadership	Seek to bring out the best in our players and work together to create the best future for our players
Innovative	Harness the creativity, practicality and energy of our players
Fair	Build accountability and transparency into all activities and are just and impartial in our decisions
Dynamic	Value positive thinking, learning, decisiveness and action
Identity	Be unique with everything we do helps to enrich the players and Communities we serve
Opportunity	Provide the best playing opportunities at all levels to meet the needs of all our players and to allow players of all abilities reach their potential
Direction	Have a clear focus with long term development for all our players
Humble	The players come first, inspires cooperation

COACHING VALUES

List three to five of your **core coaching values** and using one statement, how do you expect to express these values in your coaching sessions?

Core Value (WHAT)	Core Value Action Statement (HOW)
Example: Integrity	Always try to do the right thing
1.	
2.	
3.	

Richard Bowles & Anne O'Dwyer, September 2018 (Adapted from Gilbert, 2017 p.13)

OUR VALUES ABOUT LEARNING

- Learning as a topic, surpasses all others.
- Everyone has a basic right to learn and develop.
- There is no more important task than helping people take responsibility for their own learning.
- Its just as easy to learn wrong things as it is right things.
- Learning is a skill which, like any other skill, you can develop and improve.
- Learning to learn is your ultimate life skill.
- It is your duty to share your learning and spread your best practices.

LEARNING & REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Complete the following self-reflection.

MODULE 3 - Being a Coach

From your own experience – what do you think makes a good coach?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What is your definition of success as a coach?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write a description of the coach you want to be

Write down your thoughts and ideas on how you might become the coach you want to be

MODULE 4 MOVEMENT IN GAELIC GAMES



In early childhood, children begin to learn a group of skills called fundamental movement skills (FMS). Such skills are classified as locomotor skills, object-control skills or stability skills. Locomotor skills include skills such as hopping, skipping, jumping and running. Object-control skills are kicking/striking, catching, and throwing, whilst examples of stability skills include balance or turning.

These skills are the building blocks of movement, forming the basis of more advanced and specialised actions, and representing the foundation for future participation in physical activity and in Gaelic games.

In addition to running, players are also required to jump, catch, kick/strike, hand pass, tackle and use both sides of their bodies to excel at Gaelic games. These movements should be practiced throughout the career development of a player, and are typically utilised as elements of warm-up activities for both developing and elite players.



See video playlist for Nursery activities



See link to Activity Planner

HOW ARE THE FOLLOWING USED IN GAELIC GAMES?



AGILITY



BALANCE



COORDINATION



RUNNING



JUMPING



THROWING

LEARNING & REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Complete the following self-reflection.

MODULE 4 - Movement in Gaelic Games

What aspects of this module will you apply in your next coaching session?

What aspects of this module should your club apply in their coaching environment?

What was the one 'stand out' or 'Ah' moment for you as a coach from this module?

MODULE 5 WHO ARE YOU COACHING?



COACHING CHILDREN, YOUTHS OR ADULTS

For too long the practice in sport has been to identify and cultivate the talented players and elite teams at younger and younger ages. There is the tendency to nurture the perceived best and neglect the rest. This has contributed to adult training regimes and playing conditions being imposed onto young players.

For coaches of children, there must be a balance between the need to win games and trophies versus the need to develop players and recognise the importance of fair play - provide full participation within an environment where players are encouraged to achieve their full potential.

In their teens players are developing, where the behaviours of childhood are adapted and adjusted to fit the behaviour of adults. The beginning of adolescence is generally thought of as coinciding with the onset of puberty. Where this stage of development ends is hard to define exactly, as each player will develop at a different rate.

Many coaches of adult players are judged on their success – how many games and trophies they win, rather than on the development of the players.

Identify characteristics, issues and challenges that you would associate with the Child Player, the Youth Player and the Adult Player.

CHILD

YOUTH

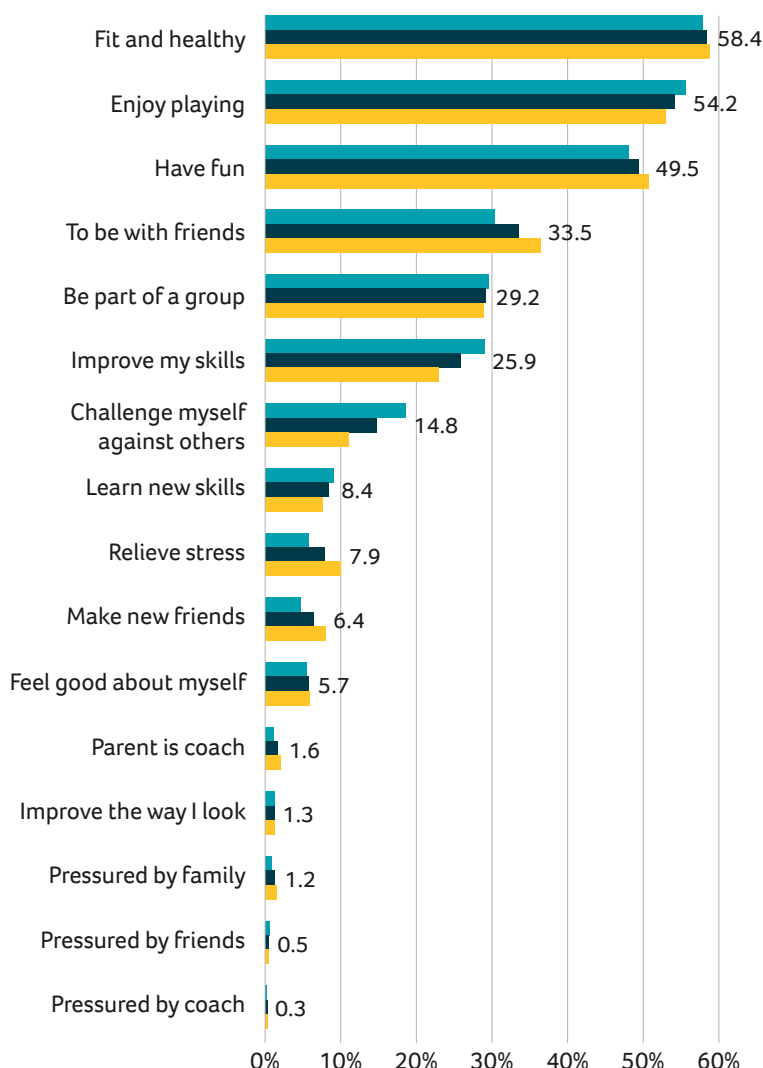
ADULT

YOUTH PARTICIPATION STUDY

This study sought to investigate the reasons why young people participate in Gaelic games currently, what specific factors motivate their continued participation, and what factors might motivate them to continue playing into the future.

Top 5 reasons reported motives for participation in Gaelic Games;

1. Fit and healthy
2. Enjoy playing
3. Have fun
4. To be with friends
5. Be part of a group



When asked why they intended to continue participating, **I enjoy being competitive** and **my friends are playing** were the most common reasons cited (see Table). This was in the overall sample, as well as individually for males and females. The next most common reason for girls was **getting on well with teammates** (26.4%). For males, the next most common reason was **being good at Gaelic games** (28.2%), followed by **I would like to play inter-County** (27.8%). Health reasons were more prominent for females than males, while an ambition to improve and having the opportunity to play in Croke Park were equally relevant for males and females.

Reasons for continued participation in Gaelic games by age band. The top 3 reasons are shaded.

	Overall % (n)	Males % (n)	Females % (n)
I enjoy being competitive	37.4 (1887)	40.2 (984)	34.7 (903)
My friends are playing	31.6 (1594)	32.2 (788)	31.0 (806)
I am good at Gaelic games	26.2 (1323)	28.2 (691)	24.3 (632)
I would like to play inter-County	24.8 (1254)	27.8 (682)	22.0 (572)
I get on well with my teammates	23.8 (1201)	21.0 (514)	26.4 (687)
I want to be successful with my Club	22.5 (1135)	25.4 (622)	19.7 (513)
I want to stay healthy	19.1 (962)	16.6 (407)	21.3 (555)

The Gaelic Games Youth Participation Study. Horgan, P., Donnelly, P., Lane, A., McKay, M., McGourty, P., O'Brien, W., Lawler, M., Donoghue, K., Fogarty, N., Meyers, E., Heffernan, J., and Harmon, W. (2024). https://learning.gaa.ie/sites/default/files/2025-10/Gaelic_Games_Youth_Study_Final_Report.pdf

LEARNING & REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Complete the following self-reflection.

MODULE 5 - Who are you coaching?

What aspects of this module will you apply in your next coaching session?

What aspects of this module should your club apply in their coaching environment?

What was the one 'stand out' or 'Ah' moment for you as a coach from this module?

MODULE 6

SKILL DEVELOPMENT



Gaelic games have a vast range of skills that must be mastered to successfully participate in games. As such the ability to facilitate the development of the skills of the game is central to successful coaching.

Many young or new players simply cannot learn all of these aspects of play simultaneously. As they are introduced to and practice the skills, players will develop at a rate particular to themselves and gradually extend their abilities. Effective coaching requires the coach to organise activities appropriate to the abilities of the players in order to help them develop. To do so requires the ability to:

- (a) identify the level at which your players are performing, and
- (b) identify an appropriate activity to gradually challenge that level

However, these are not simple tasks for even the most experienced coach.

SKILLS ARE DEVELOPED WHEN THE COACH:

- Aims for **mastery of the skill**
- Knows the **components of the skill**
- **Demonstrates how** to do the 'elements' of the skill correctly
- **Recognises and praises** the elements being performed correctly
- **Gives feedback about** skill performance
- **Spots the 'elements'** of the skill being performed incorrectly
- **Instructs how to modify** the 'elements' that need correction
- Allows players to **risk error** to achieve success
- Focuses on **one component** of the more complex skills at a time

IDENTIFY SOME OF THE DIFFERENT SKILLS OF GAELIC FOOTBALL:

GAINING POSSESSION	MAINTAINING POSSESSION	RELEASING POSSESSION	CONTESTING POSSESSION	OTHER SKILLS
The Pick Up*	The Bounce	The Fist Pass	Side to Side Charge	Agility
The High Catch	Solo	The Hand Pass	Checking/Shadowing	Balance*
The Body Catch	The Feint/Side Step	The Punk Kick	The Near Hand Tackle*	Coordination
The Low Catch	Evasion/Roll Off	The Hook Kick	The Block Down	Catching and Passing
The Reach Catch		The Penalty Kick	The Frontal Tackle*	Jumping

Please note the following differences between Men's and Ladies Football

*Pick Up (Ladies Football)

- A player may pick the ball off the ground with the toe or with one or both hands, providing she is in a standing position (both knees must be off the ground)

*The Tackle (Ladies Football)

- A player holding the ball into her body cannot be legally dispossessed. Any attempt to do will result in a free
- When making a tackle to dispossess a player of the ball, it must be timed when the player in possession is soloing, bouncing, kicking or passing the ball. The ball must be knocked from the opponents hand by flicking it with the open hand or hands.

*Contact / Shouldering

- No deliberate bodily contact is permitted

THE SKILLS OF HURLING/CAMOGIE

GAINING POSSESSION	MAINTAINING POSSESSION	RELEASING POSSESSION	CONTESTING POSSESSION	OTHER SKILLS
The Ground Block	The Dribble	Striking a Stationary Ball	The Frontal Air Block	The Grip
Controlling a Moving Ball	The Solo Run	Ground Strike on the Run	The Hook	The Swing
Blocking a Ball Overhead	Evasion/Roll Off	Doubling Back	Shoulder to Shoulder Clash*	
The Chest Catch	The Feint/Side Step	Striking from the Hand	Shoulder to Shoulder Charge*	
The Jab Lift		The Overhead Strike	The Frontal Ground Block	
The Roll Lift		The Hand Pass*	The Ground Flick	
The Overhead Catch			Batting a Ball Overhead	
			Checking	

Where Skill has a * Camogie Skill may differ.



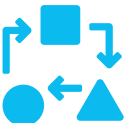


For playing rule differences between Hurling & Camogie please see www.camogie.ie



Skill Cards are available on Tobar

COACHING A SKILL

The following table provides a synopsis of each step.

SEQUENCE		HOW TO COMMUNICATE
1. Introduce the Skill		Verbally introduce the skill, providing a brief description.
2. Demonstrate		Demonstrate the skill; perform it in full at least three times.
3. Explain		Break the skill down, providing teaching points of note for the position of the head, hand, feet and hurley. Repeat the skill in full again
4. Action		Organise an activity to practice the skill and attend to the participants during the activity
5. Look and Observe		Provide feedback and correct errors as participants are practicing the skill

HEAD, HANDS, FEET FOR BETTER TECHNIQUE

Kerr.P.,Mc Williams.T & Morrison.J. (1998). Head Hands, Feet, for better Technique

1. Demonstrate the skill yourself or select a player who can do it properly. Be aware of the left-handed/footed player - Demonstrate using both sides of the body if possible.
2. On the second demonstration ask a few questions and allow them to come up with the Head, Hands, and Feet rules:

HEAD:

Where is the head? (Head up / down)

What about the eyes, where are they looking? (Eyes on the ball / looking up)

Why?

HANDS/HURLEY:

Is the hurley being held at its full length or has the player shortened it?

Do the hands lock?

What are the hands doing? (Hands together/apart)

What about the fingers? (Together / apart)

Are the arms straight? Why?

FEET:

What do you want the legs, knees doing?

How do the feet move, is there a sequence? (E.g. Step then kick)

What shape is the foot when striking the ball?

Which part of the foot do you want to strike the ball with? How far apart do you want your feet to be? Why?

3. Summarise the two or three key points.
4. Demonstrate again and then allow players to copy the demo within a structure (pairs, a drill etc.).
5. LET the players practice - you OBSERVE. If there are problems, use the SPOT and FIX rules. Look at the head, hands/hurley and feet to identify where the problem is, then suggest and show the child how she could improve.
6. Where more than one issue needs fixed in a player's technique, take it one at a time.

CHOOSING THE CORRECT HURLEY SIZE

Choosing the correct size hurley will increase a player's success at mastering the skills of the game. A shorter, lighter hurley is especially recommended for children and those new to the game.

HOW TO MEASURE THE CORRECT SIZE:

- Player stands nice and relaxed with their hands down by their sides.
- The distance from the ground to their wrist is the correct length.
- Player should be able to hold the hurley at the top and the hurley should be just touching the ground.
- If a player is between sizes it is still better to have the hurley too small rather than too big.

TOP TIP!

With the correct size, your finger should align with/touch the player's wrist bone.

Place your finger horizontally just underneath the grip as shown.

WHAT ABOUT THE WEIGHT?

Players should hold hurl in their dominant hand and be able to make ever increasing larger circles for 30 seconds comfortably. Then this is correct weight.



THE CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION
An Cumann Camógaiochta

HOW TO COACH

IDEAL

ABC, RJT
CPKS

HH(H)F

STEPR

GAMES

INTRODUCTION TO COACHING
GAELIC GAMES



SKILL DEVELOPMENT

FUN ROUTINES



CHASING AND FLEEING GAMES



TARGET GAMES



COURT GAMES



FIELD GAMES



BALL SENSE

Activities To Develop Technical Proficiency by maximising the amount of Ball Contacts in a Training period by striking/kicking the ball off a wall



BASIC DRILLS

Stationary



INTERMEDIATE DRILLS

Add Movement



ADVANCED DRILLS

Add Pressure

IDEAL PRINCIPLE



Introduce the skill



Demonstrate the technique



Explain the activity



Action



Look and observe

LEARNING & REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Complete the following self-reflection.

MODULE 6 - Skill Development

What aspects of this module will you apply in your next coaching session?

What aspects of this module should your club apply in their coaching environment?

What was the one 'stand out' or 'Ah' moment for you as a coach from this module?

MODULE 7 INTRODUCTION TO OUR GAMES



SMALL SIDED GAMES

Small sided games are versions of our games that have fewer than 15 players per team. For the Child player, Go Games rules outline the playing numbers per team.

Small sided games have been shown to increase the number of ball contacts, scoring opportunities and physical challenges of playing our games. Additionally, having played small sided games, players believe that they are more competent at playing the game.

CONDITIONED GAMES

Conditioned Games are based on the standard version of Hurling/Gaelic Football, but conditioned by a limitation to the playing area, playing rules or scoring system. These games can be devised to suit the particular needs and abilities of specific playing groups.

FULL-SIDED GAMES

As players progress and develop they should be gradually introduced to playing full-sided games.

Differences between Adult and child games

Adult	Child

Identify how you might alter a game to develop good defensive or attacking play:

STEPR PRINCIPLE

5 WAYS A COACH CAN VARY A GAME



SPACE

Where the activity is happening. E.g. increasing or decreasing the area in which the task is performed.



TIME

How long are players working for? Challenge the intensity by reducing the time.



EQUIPMENT

What is being used? E.g. Modify the equipment changing the size, level and height of equipment.



PLAYERS

Who's involved? E.g. Modify the players in pairs, small or bigger teams.



RULES

Adapt the rules of the game to assist with achieving a certain outcome. E.g Hand pass only, 3 points for a point, two touch hurling etc..)

TASK – Best Practice Demonstration

Plan an activity for your next training session. Fill in below how you might use STEPR acronym

S

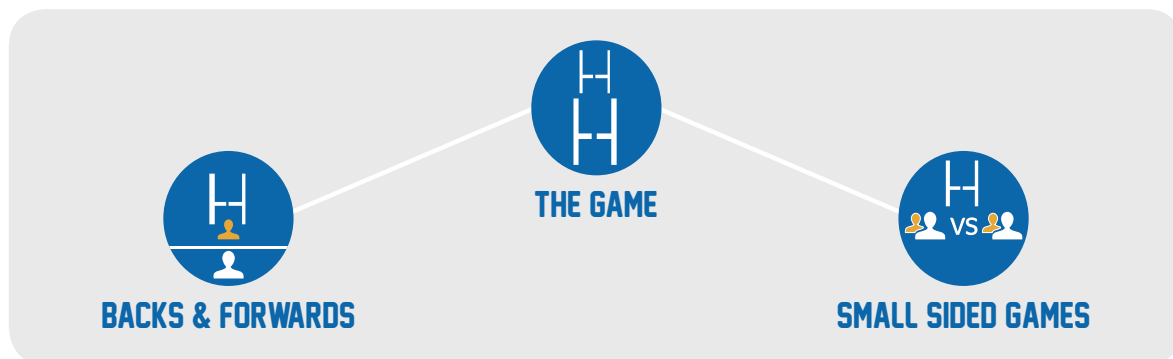
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INTRODUCTION TO OUR GAMES



PART INVASION GAMES



FULL INVASION GAMES



Goal



Active Learning



Motivation



Enjoyment



Scores

O'Connor, G (2019) Give us a Game Second Edition

STEPR PRINCIPLE There are different ways you can change the game played to make it more challenging for every player.

Space - Where the activity is happening. E.g. increasing or decreasing the area in which the task is performed.



Time - How long are players working for? Challenge the intensity by reducing the time.



Equipment - What is being used? E.g. Modify the equipment changing the size, level and height of equipment.



Players - Who's involved? E.g. Modify the players in pairs, small or bigger teams.



Rules - Adapt the rules of the game to assist with achieving a certain outcome. E.g. Hand pass only, 3 points for a point, two touch hurling etc...)



WHAT ARE GO GAMES?

Go Games are Camogie, Hurling and Gaelic Football for children up to and including 12 years of age, where every child gets to play (a Go) in every game, for the full game.

Children participate in Gaelic games for a number of reasons – to have fun, to play with friends, parental encouragement, etc. Lack of fun, lack of perceived competence and an over-emphasis on competitive outcomes (which usually come from coaches and parents) are major reasons for dropout.



Players can generally learn the basic skills of Camogie, Hurling and Gaelic Football with relative ease. The better players who practise more often, come on faster than those who only participate in collective coaching sessions. However, players find it more difficult to develop the ability to make the right decisions – when to pass, whom to pass to, where to run, etc. – in full-sided games. Through small-sided games the aim is to optimise their decision-making and at the same time enhance their technical development.

For too long the practice in sport has been to identify and cultivate talented players and elite teams at younger and younger ages. There is a tendency to nurture the perceived best and neglect the rest.

This has contributed to adult training and playing conditions being imposed on young players. Training and competition are geared for outcome and not for the process of development. For children's games, coaches must reassess the balance between the need to win games and cups versus the need to develop players and recognise the importance of fair play; i.e., provide full participation within an environment where participants are encouraged to achieve their full potential.



WHY GO GAMES?

The support the participation and development of the Under-12 player, the following principles underpin Go Games:

- All participants play in the full game.
- Participant needs are catered for at U7, U8, U9, U10, U11, U12.
- Activities are structured in a manner which optimises the level of fun, friendship, fair play and achievement derived by participants.
- Participants train and play in a safe, supportive and stimulating environment where they are encouraged to risk error, to learn and to derive maximum enjoyment from their involvement.
- Players master the basic skills of Camogie, Hurling and Gaelic Football and experience the sense of accomplishment, which derives from acquiring playing proficiency on the left and right hand side of the body.
- Everybody involved in Go Games, whether as players, parents/guardians, spectators, mentors, teachers, officials etc., should adhere to the key underpinning principles and give expression to the **GAA 'Give Respect, Get Respect'** and the **LGFA's 'Take a second'** initiative.

Go Games may be organised on a blitz basis. Go Games may be organised by a Club or Primary School on an internal (i.e. single unit) or external (i.e. multiple unit) basis.

GO GAMES PLAYING RULES

The Playing Rules for Go Games Camogie, Hurling and Gaelic Football are provided on Go Games Resource. These are provided by way of best practice and can be adapted to meet localised needs. Where units from different counties play a game, these Playing Rules will be used.

GO GAMES REGULATIONS

Go Games are subject to general rules of the Association.

- To maximise playing opportunities teams shall endeavour to play the minimum numbers recommended; U7 - 4 v 4, U8 – 5 v 5, U9 - 5 v 5, U10 - 6 v 6, U11 – 6 v 6.
- Participants may play up one age grade; i.e., Under-7 may play at Under-9 level; Under-9 may play at Under-11 level; Under-11 may play at Under-12 & Under-13 age levels.
- No provision is made to publish scores, to play on a knock-out basis nor to include semi-finals, finals, etc.
- No provision is made to present trophies, cups etc. in any code and competition/league from U12 and below. Where certificates/medals are presented in lieu of participation, the same certificate/medal must be presented to every participant.

There is a Go Games online workshop available at <https://learning.gaa.ie/GoGamesWorkshop> which aims to assist participants in applying the Go Games model effectively in coaching sessions and in running blitzes in line with national policy.

LEARNING & REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Complete the following self-reflection.

MODULE 7 - Introduction to Our games

What aspects of this module will you apply in your next coaching session?

What aspects of this module should your club apply in their coaching environment?

What was the one 'stand out' or 'Ah' moment for you as a coach from this module?

MODULE 8 PREPARATION AND PLANNING



Variety is one method of keeping sessions enjoyable. Adequate planning is the most important factor in ensuring variety in coaching sessions.

It is possible to incorporate variety in coaching sessions in a number of different ways:

- Vary the training time
- Vary the training venue
- Vary the training area
- Ensure teams are picked for games in different ways
- Allow players to design activities to take place

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



TIPS AND HINTS FOR BETTER COACHING SESSIONS

ORGANISATIONAL HINTS

- Gather players in a semi-circle
- Separate 'giddy' players
- Gather in all the sliotars/footballs
- Face players away from distractions and the sun
- Speak with the breeze
- On the whistle – activity stops and players jog to the coach

POINTERS FOR POSITIVITY

Here are a number of tips to help you ensure that all players enjoy themselves while playing:

- Vary activities regularly - make sessions fun by constantly keeping the players active, not spending too long on any one activity to prevent boredom and quickly changing over between activities.
- Activities should be challenging but doable, so that they maintain the players interest. If a player feels that they cannot perform a task they will not enjoy themselves. However, if a player experiences success they will develop a perception of competence, self-esteem and enjoy participation.
- Sessions should be set up to allow the player to learn and develop their skills. Try to establish a positive environment where children are not afraid to make mistakes.
- Young players see participation as an opportunity to socialise with their friends. Organise events within the club or school that allow the players to get to know each other.
- Make the session exciting – use games that apply the skills that players are learning but challenge them in a new way, e.g. fun games to challenge striking or kicking accuracy.
- All players want to play games. Use conditioned games appropriate to the players' abilities. Set the tone by defining winning as playing well, not just beating others. Praise effort and use 'because' to be more specific with your feedback.

COACHING SESSION PLAN

<p>Group:</p> <p>Age:</p> <p>Session:</p> <p>Theme/Topic:</p>	<p>Learning Outcomes:</p> <p>Equipment:</p>
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TIME	SESSION CONTENT	COACHING POINTS & ORGANISATION
5-8 Minutes	Warm Up and Introduction	
45 Minutes	Activity 1	
	Activity 2	
	Activity 3	
8 minutes	Warm Down & Reflection	

* Reinforce a playing rule of the game in each session



See activity planner to help you plan your sessions

PREPARATION AND PLANNING



WHAT MAKES A GOOD SESSION?



 The session is organised	 The session has clear objectives	 The coach praises the players	 The coach is a positive role model
 The session challenges players	 The session is fun	 Activities are age appropriate	 Logical progression of activities

IMPORTANT GET TO KNOW YOUR PLAYERS. BE AWARE OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES WHEN COACHING.



WHAT CAN I DO AS A COACH?


Develops players physical, social, emotional, cognitive and psychological skills



Coaches create a positive environment for learning 

Players of all abilities are included in the session 



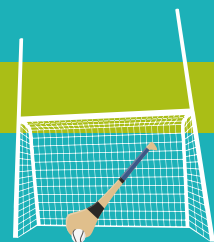
 Coaches have a good understanding what they are teaching

 Coaches use a wide range of equipment to engage players



HOW CAN I ENGAGE PLAYERS?

Coaches plan sessions that increase players' knowledge and understanding and enable them to develop a range of skills



 There is an emphasis on players learning

 The lesson incorporates thinking time

 The coach is enthusiastic and motivates players

 The coach asks open ended questions

 The coach creates an environment which engages players

 The coach creates opportunities for players to experience success

 Players know and understand what they are trying to achieve

 The coach allows players to make decisions for themselves

LEARNING & REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Complete the following self-reflection.

MODULE 8 - Preparation and Planning

What aspects of this module will you apply in your next coaching session?

What aspects of this module should your club apply in their coaching environment?

What was the one 'stand out' or 'Ah' moment for you as a coach from this module?

PREPARING FOR AND RECOVERING FROM TRAINING AND GAMES

WARMING UP

It is important to always warm up prior to training and games. Warm up activities incorporate brief, mild exercise which is performed in preparation for more vigorous activity.

Warming-up typically involves:

- Pulse Raising – e.g. Walking, jogging, hopping, skipping, jumping
- Mobilisation – Bring the joints through their range of movement e.g. arm rotations, hip rotations etc.
- Stretching – Light, short stretches of the major muscle groups

It is good practice to warm up dynamically; that is to incorporate the mobilisation and stretching activities into the overall pulse raising activity. Remember, incorporate the ball into warm-up activities where possible.

As part of your warm up do your players get the opportunity to:

- Shoot at goal without pressure
- Shoot at goal under pressure
- Block down an opponent
- Evade/Avoid a tackle
- Change direction
- Accelerate/Decelerate quickly

Remember, the warm up should prepare players to play the game.

Go to Tobar website for more information on GAA15 warm up <https://learning.gaa.ie/GAA15>

COOLING DOWN

Cooling Down helps ease the body from activity back to normal. Cooling down should incorporate a gradual reduction in activity from intense (i.e. running etc) to moderate (i.e. jogging and walking).

Stretching exercises should be conducted in a more static manner and on the ground where possible. Stretches should be held for 10-15 seconds.

Always ensure that water or sports drinks are available during the cool down.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

WELCOMING NEW CITIZENS

Many GAA people have direct personal or family experience of emigration. They know what it's like to have to go abroad for work, simply because the opportunities don't exist at home. That experience should leave us well-placed to appreciate the plight of the many migrants who now live in our communities. Many of our emigrants were bolstered by the GAA when they arrived in their new countries. The GAA act as a constant community resource with many relationships with migrants support groups. Being proactive in welcoming new citizens to the Association, this will contribute to a global transcultural exchange with many benefits to the community in which we all belong. Each year, the GAA benefits greatly from the many volunteers that help make our games as accessible as possible to the diverse populations that make up our communities.

Identify some simple steps that a club or a coach can take to welcome the new citizens to our clubs:

- Find out how many migrants live and/or work in the local community
- Get an idea of where they're from
- _____
- _____
- _____

GAA FOR ALL

A club which is inclusive of people with disabilities is one which has: 'Proactively planned the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of the club and has taken practical steps to bring about positive change'. All people with special needs and/or a disability should have an equal opportunity to partake in Gaelic games to reach their full potential. GAA for All programmes and initiatives: Wheelchair hurling/ Camogie, Football for All, All Stars Programme, Cúl Camps and Healthy Clubs Initiatives- Lá na Clubanna.

These programmes aim to make Gaelic Games fun, accessible, and meaningful for participants of all abilities.

Identify how you could adapt a game to include a child with a physical, sensory, learning or neurodiverse need?

How would you communicate instructions clearly and positively with a child who has additional needs?

What steps can you take to help a child with additional needs feel safe, confident, and included within your session?

FIRST AID

Participation in sport carries with it a risk of injury. Gaelic games being contact sports, have an inherent risk of injury attached. The aim must be for all involved to take all reasonable action to make our sports as safe as possible, not only for players, but also for referees, other officials, coaches, voluntary workers and spectators.

Preventing injuries in Gaelic games is the ultimate goal, but as injuries will continue to occur despite the most thorough of prevention strategies, attention must also be given to the response to and the treatment of injuries.

This guide will assist you to deal with many common sports injuries, however it is not intended to be a substitute for First Aid training. In all cases if you are unsure as to what has happened or how to treat an injury call a medical professional.

COMPONENTS OF A FIRST AID KIT



There are many commercially available First Aid kits which can be purchased. It is important to regularly check the contents of a First Aid kit, as even kits that are purchased whole - with a collection of items bundled together in a convenient package - change over time through use. Always ensure that any items taken from a First Aid kit are replaced as soon as possible. Items should not be used after the expiry date shown on packets.

The following are recommended as being the minimum requirement which should be in place at every training session or match. It is advisable to contact a medical professional to ensure that your First Aid kit contains relevant equipment and information:

- Card giving the general first-aid guidance
- Individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressing
- Individually wrapped moist cleansing wipes
- Adhesive and butterfly bandages
- Self-adhesive elastic bandages
- Safety pins
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Liquid antiseptic to clean wounds
- Latex gloves
- Large plastic bag

Do not keep any form of heat agent or any similar product in the first aid kit as there is no incidence in the first aid treatment of sports injury where heat agents should be used. In the vast majority of cases heat treatment will cause more damage and pain to the player. An ice pack should be included in the first aid kit.

Smelling salts should also be removed from all first aid kits. If a player has received a head injury/ concussion and is either unconscious or drowsy, placing smelling salts under their nose will cause them to pull their head away from the salts and risks damaging their neck.

THE GAA GIVE RESPECT - GET RESPECT INITIATIVE

The GAA Give Respect - Get Respect initiative has been developed in order to ensure that Gaelic games are promoted in a positive manner and within an environment which is conducive to ensuring that all participants achieve their full potential. This initiative applies to all regardless of age, competition or ability. The GAA Give Respect - Get Respect initiative seeks to ensure that Gaelic Games are promoted and played in a positive, fair and enjoyable manner where players, parents, coaches, spectators and referees Give Respect - Get Respect from each other.

The respect initiative forms part of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

WHAT DOES THE GAA RESPECT INITIATIVE INVOLVE?

- Implementing the Code of Behaviour (Underage)
- Club information evenings for parents/guardians and mentors on respect related issues
- Coach & Referee Education Programmes
- Promoting diversity & inclusion in our clubs
- Designated spectator areas
- Implementing Go Games Policy
- Strong club leadership
- Recognition and merit awards
- Accept and respect all players regardless of race, creed, colour, gender or ability

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- ✓ Players and coaches line up with their coaches before and after the game to shake hands with the referee and the opposing players and coaches
- ✓ Clubs should highlight the respect that all players, coaches, parents, and supporters should show towards referees
- ✓ Present a merit award- based on sporting endeavour and fair play to a players/teams at the end of each season/blitz
- ✓ Arrange designated spectators area two metres from the playing area
- ✓ Supporters remain in designated areas at the side of the pitch for the full duration of each game.
- ✓ Clubs should display RESPECT signage in prominent positions on club grounds, in club houses and where applicable on club playing gear
- ✓ Each unit must strive to achieve maximum participation for all players
- ✓ Referees and match officials should be welcomed to the club



For more information on Respect initiatives see

<https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/rules-regulations/respect>

<https://ladiesgaelic.ie/lgfa-hub/clubs/take-a-second/>

GAELIC GAMES CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

All coaches who work with children and young people are bound by the joint Child Safeguarding Policy, previously named Code of Behaviour (Underage) and known as the 'Code', as agreed by the GAA, LGFA, Camogie, Rounders and Handball Associations. The Child Safeguarding Policy acts both as a backdrop in promoting good safeguarding practice and while also outlining the legislative requirements for those who work with players under 18 yrs. of age in our Associations.

It is important to note that the Child Safeguarding Policy outlines the minimum levels of good practice expected of our coaches, players, parents/guardians, supporters, referees and others who on our behalf work with under 18 yr. olds.

Young people will spend some of the most enjoyable days of their lives playing our games and socialising with their friends in each of our Associations. Whether attending or playing GAA matches, playing Ladies Football or Camogie, or participating in Rounders or Handball activities, they will do so during some of the most important developmental years of their lives.

Our role and our responsibility is to ensure that young people benefit from and participate in our Gaelic Games in a safe and enjoyable environment. Our Games should take place in a spirit of fair play where respect, equality, safety and non-discrimination is to the fore in all aspects of our activities with children and young people.

Each member of our Associations has a responsibility to accept and implement the joint Child Safeguarding Policy and to also uphold our Safeguarding practices.

The Child Safeguarding Policy contains policy and guidance documents relevant for those working with children and young people in our Associations. In the interest of clarity and accuracy, any amendments to the Child Safeguarding Policy shall be in accordance with the Policy that is available on each Associations website.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY CRITERIA TO COACH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

As we abide by child related legislation, and by the rules of our Associations, it should be noted that any person wishing to coach children must fulfil the following criteria prior to commencing their role:

- **Coaches must be at least 18 years of age.**
- **Coaches must be in membership of one of the Gaelic Games Associations.**
- **Coaches must have achieved a minimum coaching qualification.**
- **All coaches must adhere to the established rules and standards of behaviour and practice as outlined in the joint Child Safeguarding Policy.**
- **All coaches must be vetted by An Garda Siochana/Access NI (Gaelic Games Associations) in accordance with legislation and be in receipt of a valid Gaelic Games Associations vetting acceptance letter prior to commencing their role.**
- **Coaches must hold a valid relevant safeguarding workshop certificate (3-hour workshop), if not, they must attend a Gaelic Games Associations 3-hour Child Safeguarding Training workshop, prior to commencing their role.**

THE GAELIC GAMES ADULT - CHILD SUPERVISION RATIOS

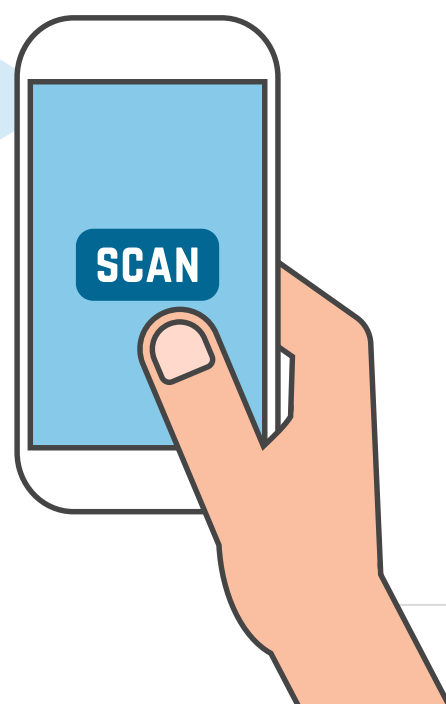
The Child Safeguarding Policy for Gaelic Games stipulates that agreed adult to child ratios must be in place to ensure the safety and protection of both adults and children who play our games and participate in our activities. Our agreed ratios apply to all Club activities up to and including the minor level grade and to Cumann na mBunscol Gaelic Games activities. The number of coaches and or responsible adults required, will depend on the number of children attending a training session or a game, with consideration also given to the nature of the activity as required and the needs of the children.

- Playing and training activities must abide by a minimum ratio of 2 adults to 10 children, (2:10). This ratio level requires at least one qualified coach and at least one other responsible adult to be present at all times.
- Ratios of 2:10 apply to each group of ten children or up to ten children in a group.
- Groups of 10-20 children must have a minimum of 3 adults present at all times with Groups that exceed 20 in number must abide by the minimum ratios as per above but may where deemed appropriate use a Supervisor/Responsible Adult to supervise in a non-coaching capacity with one or more groups.
- The responsible adult, i.e. a person over 18 yrs. of age, if not a qualified coach, shall be deemed a Supervisor of Children. He/she must also be satisfactorily vetted and must have attended relevant Child Safeguarding Training. The responsible adult could for example be a parent or another club member. If the responsible adult does not have a coaching qualification they are not permitted to coach.
- Where a team or training group consists of both boys and girls, the supervision and coaching personnel, must also comprise of both male and female personnel
- In the case of an all-female team, at least one of the adults (coach/supervisor) must be female and similarly in the case of an all-boys team, at least one of the two adults (coach/supervisor) must be male

RESOURCES

RESOURCE	LINK
Player Pathway	https://learning.gaa.ie/GaelicGamesPlayerPathway
Coach Pathway	https://learning.gaa.ie/coachpathway
Go Games Resources	https://learning.gaa.ie/GoGames
Gaelic Games Sports Science Guide	https://learning.gaa.ie/sites/default/files/2024-11/Sports%20Science%20Guide%20%2B%20Pathway%20Cards.pdf
Go Games Online Workshop	https://learning.gaa.ie/GoGamesWorkshop
Nursery Programme	https://learning.gaa.ie/NurseryProgramme
All Star Programme	https://learning.gaa.ie/AllStarsProgramme
Tobar	https://learning.gaa.ie/
Skill Cards	https://learning.gaa.ie/SkillCards
Activity Planner	https://learning.gaa.ie/planner

Please complete this feedback form to share your experience of the Introduction to Coaching Gaelic Games.



CONTINUE YOUR COACHING JOURNEY

Every coaching journey begins with a first step. By completing this introductory course, you have taken an important step towards becoming a Gaelic Games coach. The next step is to continue learning, developing and growing in your role so that you can provide the best possible experience for the players you coach.

Great coaches are lifelong learners. They are curious, reflective and always looking for ways to improve their coaching and support their players. Gaelic Games provides a range of opportunities to help you continue your development.

Across the Gaelic Games associations, a number of formal coaching courses are available to support coaches as they progress along the pathway:



In addition to these formal qualifications, coaches are encouraged to engage in the many **informal learning opportunities** that take place throughout the year. Workshops, coaching webinars, club and county coaching events, coach mentoring and shared learning with other coaches all provide valuable chances to pick up new ideas and reflect on your own coaching practice.

Coaching is about more than drills and tactics. It is about creating positive experiences, helping players develop their skills and confidence, and fostering a lifelong love of Gaelic Games. Every session you deliver can make a difference.

**Continue to learn.
Continue to develop.
Continue to inspire.**

YOUR COACHING JOURNEY IS ONLY BEGINNING

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