



# Camán

## Get a grip

*Camogie Foundation  
Coaching Course*



**THE  
IRISH SPORTS  
COUNCIL**



AN CHOMHAIRLE SPÓIRT



COACHING IRELAND  
OILIÚINT ÉIREANN

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael

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# *A message from the President*

I am delighted to introduce the Camogie Foundation Course, “Camán get a Grip” to all coaches, players and club administrators. Quality coaching supports our game and gives every child the opportunity to play to her potential. A specifically tailored coaching programme, delivered by a trained coach charts a pathway to developing individual and team skills. This Foundation Level Coaching Course, “Caman get A Grip” is specifically geared for children aged seven to ten. This publication is part of our Strategic Plan “to enhance the skills of players and the overall standard of coaching”. It is important that “Camán get a Grip” becomes the recognized coaching manual for all camogie coaches. The Code of Ethics and Best Practice for Children has to be assimilated into every aspect of coaching.

The coach who introduces camogie to children has a responsibility to ensure that they enjoy the activity, instill in them a love of sport and an ethos of fair play. Camogie is a wonderful game, a positive and healthy pastime and it also contributes to the personal development of the child. A good coach is a treasure. I’m sure all readers will readily identify someone who fits into that category. For me the late Nell Mc Carthy from Cork was such a person, way ahead of her time in all aspects of coaching.

We were fortunate that Eamon Ryan, former Cork footballer, made himself available to develop “Camán get a Grip”. He has considerable experience in coaching and is one of the GAA Coach Education Tutors. I acknowledge his great work and thank him for producing such an excellent foundation level course. My thanks also to the pupils and teachers at Watergrasshill National School and Scoil Barra Naofa Ballincollig.

Our Coaching Committee has been very productive during my three years as Uachtarán. The Committee is chaired by Fiona O’Driscoll, former Cork star and trainer and a Camogie Coach Education Tutor. The other members are Sarah Russell, Damien Young, Director of Camogie Development Mary O’Connor, Connaught Regional Coordinator Caroline Murray and the most efficient secretary Collette Coady. I thank them for their commitment to excellence. They worked closely with Eamon and Catherine Bird, Coach Education Development Officer, Coaching Ireland. Thanks to Catherine Bird and Michael McGeehin Director Coaching Ireland.

Bernard Dowd from Tipperary, now living in Clare, did the illustrations. He did a wonderful job in record time. Young players from the Douglas Camogie Club star Claire Shine and Shannon Dempsey features demonstrating some skills. Thanks to all who helped with the proof reading. Ray O' Sullivan from Genprint was professional and great to work with in producing the final result.

The Irish Sports Council provided funding for the development and printing of "Camán get a Grip", John Treacy CEO and Ossie Kilkenny, Chairman of ISC have been most supportive and I appreciate their support and wisdom. The GAA has also been very supportive and I thank them in particular for the use of the Go Games concept.

I know that "Camán get a Grip" will be a success. To quote Dr. Niall Moyna Head of Sport Science and Health at DCU "For juveniles, coaches must reassess the balance between the need to win games and cups versus the need to develop players and recognize the importance of fair play and provide full participation within an environment where participants are encouraged to achieve their full potential".



**Liz Howard**

*Uachtarán, Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael*

## *Director of Camogie Development*

Welcome to Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael's Coach Education Programme, The Camán "Get a Grip" and Camán "Get Hooked" courses have been developed to encourage people to become involved in our game as coaches, while also enhancing the standard of coaches in our wonderful game.

Camogie is one of the fastest and most skilful games in the world for girls; it teaches young players the value of skill, team work, decision making and fast reactions.

Our courses have been developed so that coaches will be provided with the theoretical and practical knowledge to enable them to place maximum emphasis on involvement and enjoyment for our young players.

It is important that all children are given the opportunity to play our national game. It is even more important that this opportunity is provided by our coaches in a structured coaching environment, where skill development, decision making and team play through participation and enjoyment is a priority a priority and so allow our players to develop to their full potential.

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael would like to thank all the women and men who through their enthusiasm hard work and commitment, coach Camogie to our players. Your contribution to our Association and to your local communities and clubs is greatly valued. The Camogie coach is a vital link in; instilling in our players a love and involvement in our game that will last them a life time.

I hope you enjoy this publication and wish you success in all your endeavours and remember, "success is not the same as winning but getting the maximum out of the potential at your disposal"

**Mary O'Connor**

*Director of Camogie Development*



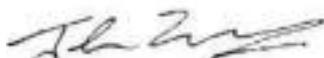
## *A Message from the Irish Sports Council*

I am delighted that Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael has developed in conjunction with Coaching Ireland this Foundation Coaching Course.

Whether children are being introduced to sport in schools or clubs; are being encouraged to stay involved in sport; or being assisted to reach his/her sporting potential, inevitably a coach has a key role to play. Most of our coaches are volunteers who give freely of their time, energy and enthusiasm. Our coaches provide a vital service on which the sports system is built and can be developed.

The production of this booklet is a very welcome development for camogie. The development of this course has taken a number of years and is the accumulation of hard work for Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael's Coaching Committee and Coaching Ireland. I would like to congratulate and thank the all the members of the Coaching Committee and particularly the dedication and drive of Director of Camogie Development Mary O'Connor and great support and leadership of An Uachtarán Liz Howard.

I would like to take the opportunity to wish all those involved in the production of this booklet all the best for the future and I have no doubt that it will not only help the level of performances of camogie players but will also help to increase the numbers of people participating in the sport which are the two lynchpins of the Irish Sports Council strategy over the years to come.



**John Treacy**

*Chief Executive, Irish Sports Council*



## *A Message from Coaching Ireland*

The Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael Coach Education Programme has been developed as part of the Coach Development Programme for Ireland as outlined in the recently published Coaching Ireland "Coaching Strategy for Ireland".

The development of the Player or Athlete is at the centre of all Coach Education Courses. Coaching philosophies and strategies used at underage level and senior level are quite different. Coaches must therefore be aware of the significance of the physical, social, psychological and skill learning characteristics which differentiate children not only from each other, but from adolescents and adults in sports settings.

The new Foundation and Level 1 Coach Education courses will lead coaches to see what they should be doing and the ways of going successfully about their job. This awareness will protect children from upset and injury, and will clarify in the mind of the coach the most effective way to help each child learn, enjoy sport and maintain their involvement.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Liz Howard, President, Fiona O'Driscoll, Chairperson Coaching Committee, Mary O'Connor, Director of Camogie, Eamonn Ryan, Cork, and Catherine Bird, Coaching Ireland for their time, effort and expertise in developing these new Coaching courses.

Coaching Ireland looks forward to working with Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael in the further development of its Coach Education programme.

**Michael McGeehin**



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# CHAPTER 1

## *Participation in Sport*

### **Why children play games**

It is vital that the coach understands why children play sport so that this knowledge can be factored into the coach's approach to coaching young players. Over 100 primary school boys and girls in Cork were surveyed as to why they participated in sporting activities, with particular reference to Gaelic Games. Some excerpts from their written responses are reproduced here:

#### **“Why I play games”**

- “I play games because it’s fun”
- *“Sport is fun”*
- “I play games because it’s great fun”
- *“Because I enjoy playing camogie”*
- “I play because I can meet new people and get fresh air outside”
- *“It’s great fun”*
- “I play games to get fitter”
- *“It gives me a great feeling”*
- “Because it’s great fun and keeps me active and healthy”
- *“It makes you fit and healthy”*
- I play games because it keeps me fit and healthy and because it’s fun and entertaining”
- *“Makes me feel good”*
- “I play games to get fit and make new friends”
- *“I play games to have fun and try new stuff”*

- “Because it’s great fun and quite challenging”
- *“I play soccer because I love playing it and it’s fun”*
- “To have fun and to improve”
- *“I play hurling because it always has you thinking and keeps you fit”*
- “I play games because it is fun and it can get you fit”
- *“I play games to keep myself fit and I enjoy playing games and me and my Dad love going to games”*
- “To get fit and be involved for the fun of it”
- *“I play games because I think it’s a lot of fun and I enjoy it. Also I can hang around with my friends while I play it”*
- “I play soccer because it is really fun and enjoyable”
- *“Because it’s fun to have something to do in my spare time and because I like to keep fit and healthy. I also like it because sports are fun and I enjoy them and I make new friends too”*
- “I play games because I am with my friends and to build up my skills so when I’m older I’d like to play for Cork”
- *“Camogie is fun and also a challenge”*
- “Because it is fun and enjoyable”
- *“To be with my friends”*
- “Games help me get along with people”
- *“To keep fit and stay healthy”*
- “I play games to be with my friends and to make new friends”
- *“Because sport gives me energy and strength”*
- “I play games to keep fit and healthy and to stay active”
- *“I want to be really good at it”*
- “Because I am a sports person”
- *“I love training with my friends”*
- “Because playing games is good for your body and you get to know new people”
- *“I like learning the skills”*
- “I play soccer because I love it and I want to be a professional player”
- *“Because I’m good at it”*
- “I play games as a hobby and because I like playing games”
- *“I love scoring”*
- “I play games because it is fun and good exercise”
- *“I get great satisfaction when I play well”*
- “It gets me fit and active and so I won’t get in trouble with the guards or take drugs”
- *“I love when people are cheering me and my team”*
- “I play hockey to make new friends. I also play to get fit and healthy”
- *“It takes my mind off school work for a while”*
- “To have fun and make new friends”
- *“I want to play with my local team and with the Cork ladies team when I am older”*
- “I play camogie because I enjoy camogie and I would like to get better. It’s fun learning new drills and stuff and I make new friends”

- *“I might get on the Cork team”*
- *“I play rugby because there’s a thrill in it. I play soccer because I enjoy it”*
- *“I love it and enjoy it and want to make my family proud”*
- *“I like having fun with players from other teams”*
- *“I like to play with my Dad”*
- *“I might win an All-Ireland medal”*

In one particular class 24 out of 25 respondents specified fun and enjoyment as one of the main reasons for participation in sport.

While a small percentage aspired to representing club or county in the future only four respondents mentioned winning medals and trophies as being a factor in their participation.

To summarise: the chief reasons why children take part in sport seemed to be:

1. To have fun and to enjoy themselves
2. To be with their friends in a happy and safe environment
3. To feel good about themselves
4. To become proficient at the skills of the game
5. To become fit and healthy
6. To make **new** friends
7. Children find games challenging and exciting

## Why parents encourage participation

The main reasons seem to be:

1. To accommodate their child’s desire to play and have fun with other children
2. To help the child benefit from a healthy lifestyle
3. To enable the child to become more confident and build self esteem
4. To help the child develop social, interpersonal and team skills
5. A strong family tradition in Gaelic games
6. The absence of opportunities for children nowadays to indulge in street games or incidental/spontaneous games with their friends due to a myriad of social factors
7. To encourage the child to become proficient at the game, progress at the game and possibly, ultimately, to become a star at the game







## CHAPTER 2

# *Ensuring that young players enjoy the sporting experience*

The underage coach has a vital role to play in ensuring that young Camogie players enjoy the early sporting experience.

Reflection on the following may help the coach to bring the above aspiration to fruition.

### **1. Players are not mini-adults**

Young Camogie players are not mini-adults. Consequently cognisance has to be taken of the differing rates of development of young girls, in the technical, tactical, physical, social and psychological areas compared to adult players.

### **2. Needs of young players**

At adult level great emphasis is placed on competition and winning. For young players, however, enjoyment, having fun, being with friends, making new friends, being fit and healthy and perceiving themselves to be proficient in the skills of the game seem to be the key elements in ensuring that players keep returning to training.

### **3. Performance**

It is very important that underage coaches put major emphasis on performance and strive at all times to praise and reward effort. Encouraging the young player to reach her own potential and be as good as she can be is the challenge for the coach.

#### 4. Competition

Young players will ultimately graduate to competitive games. Hopefully, as a result of positive experiences on the training ground with conscientious, thinking coaches, the young Camogie players will embrace and enjoy competition rather than find it a stressful or negative experience.

#### 5. Safe Environment

Coaches must work at all times to put the young players at the centre of the coaching process by catering for their real needs in a safe, positive non-threatening learning environment. At times this may involve the underage coach withstanding pressure from sources such as club officials, fellow mentors and parents.

#### 6. Variety

Boredom can set in easily with young players so it is very important that the coach is well-prepared for the session. Keep players active – change activities regularly – do not talk too much or have players waiting around during a session. Always ensure that there is variety in the session.

#### 7. Trial and Error

Much of the underage players learning of skills is done through trial and error. It is incumbent on the coach therefore to cultivate an environment wherein the young player is not inhibited and is not afraid to make mistakes.

#### 8. Challenging Activities

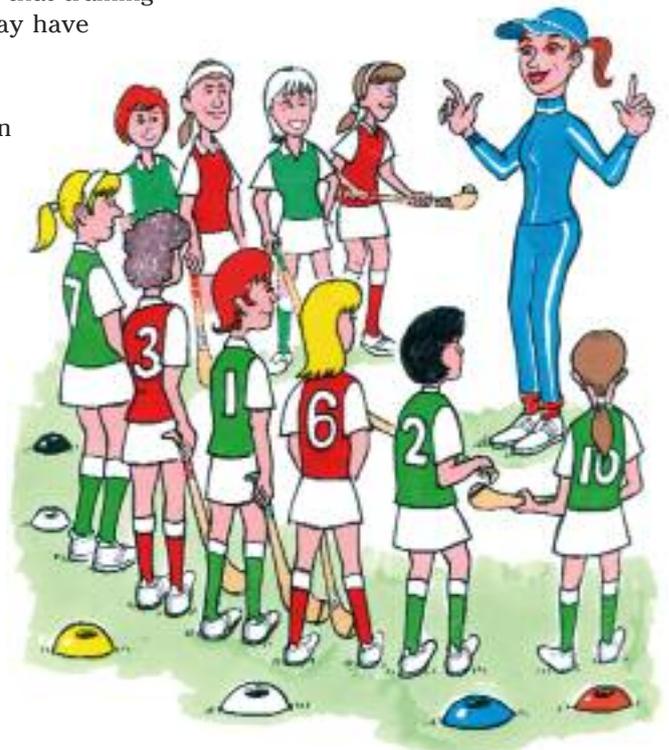
Activities for underage Camogie players must be challenging exciting and age appropriate. Players should be taken out of their comfort zone but not out of their depth. Targets for young players must be achievable.

#### 9. Games

Young players in all codes often complain that training was “no good” even though the coach may have worked diligently during the session.

The reason may often be that the coach in her/his enthusiasm has simply overlooked the fact that kids want and love to play games. Generally they appreciate the coach’s efforts to help with their skills but unless they play little games regularly they can become disenchanted with training.

While skill work is vitally important in the development of Camogie players the coach must recognize the importance that young players place on playing games and try to achieve a balance in this area.



## 10. Fair Play

The coach must inculcate in the young player respect for all other players irrespective of ability, personality, physique, background etc.

It is vital also that respect for match officials and club officials is emphasised by coaches from the beginning.

All players, whatever their ability, must be catered for and assured of full participation.

The coach has to manage the difficult balancing act of ensuring that strong, talented players do not dominate activities unduly while at the same time making sure that they are not penalised either because of their natural strength or talent.

## 11. Individual Players

Young players progress at different rates and it is absolutely vital that feedback which compares one player to another is avoided.

Give the players plenty of opportunities to “experience success” and allow them to reach their potential through challenging but “doable” tasks.

## 12. How children learn

### “Tell me and I forget”

- We remember approx 10-15% of what we hear

### “Show me and I remember”

- We remember 45-55% of what we see

### “Involve me and I understand”

- We remember 85-90% of what we do.



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*The challenge therefore for the underage coach is to let the young players “do it” as much as possible while giving them positive, accurate and relevant feedback at appropriate times. (See chapter on “Developing a Coaching Eye”)*

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# CHAPTER 3

## *Role of the Coach*

As well as teaching Camogie skills to her/his charges the introductory coach will, inevitably, fill many other roles during the course of her/his tenure.

Some of the **roles** which a coach may have to fill include:

- Friend to all her players
- Teacher of new skills, drills and games
- Adviser on Camogie, hydration, nutrition, gear, First Aid
- Organiser and planner of training sessions and games
- Facilitator of learning by creating positive, enjoyable playing environment.
- Trainer who attends to players' physical fitness needs almost exclusively through the medium of ball work
- Leader who has a vision of what she/he wants for the team
- Assessor who analyses performance and then helps player through relevant, accurate and positive feedback
- Motivator who understands needs of young players
- Communicator who gains and retains credibility

### **Responsibilities**

- To provide a safe, enjoyable learning environment where the young player can develop physically, technically, psychologically, socially and morally
- To have a clear coaching philosophy on why you are coaching, whom you are coaching, how you are coaching and what you are coaching
- To acquire as much knowledge as possible of the skills of Camogie
- To develop a love of Camogie in the young players
- To develop individual players skill level
- To encourage personal private practice by players
- To encourage pride in performance rather than the concept of necessity to win always
- To eliminate inhibition and fear through positivity
- To promote loyalty to the game, colleagues and to own club
- To communicate effectively with players, other mentors, club officials and parents
- To decide on goals and plan to achieve them.
- Above all put the young player and her general well-being at the centre of the process

## Desirable Qualities for Introductory Coach

- Enthusiastic, confident
- Kind, considerate, fair and impartial
- Firm, fair and friendly
- Good communication skills – good listener
- Patient, sensitive, even tempered
- Respectful of, and empathetic with, players and their aspirations
- Adaptable, flexible and innovative
- Approachable
- Humorous
- Leadership
- Openness to new ideas
- Well organised
- Reliable, punctual, trustworthy

Coaches have a crucial leadership role to play in sport. The trust implicit in coach-child relationships in sport places a duty of care on all coaches to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the child while taking part in Camogie activities. However, given the important and responsible roles which coaches play at many different levels in sport, it is essential that their competence and ability to deal with children in a fair, empathic and ethical way is supported, guided and maintained. Coaches should operate to the agreed Code of Behaviour, which emphasises enjoyment, equality, fair play and the general well being of young people.

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael has agreed a single Code of Behaviour for all gaelic games. This Code of Behaviour complements our own Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and addresses the appropriate levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from our young players, officials, team mentors, supporters, parents/guardians and clubs. This code is promoted by us so as to enable and assist those who promote and deliver our games to comply with the highest possible standards in our work with children and young people. This model of good practice should help children to demonstrate an awareness of equality, fair play and respect for all.

It is recommended to use this Code in tandem with our own Code of Ethics and Best Practice for Children. Coaches should also undertake relevant training in order to be well prepared to operate in a safe sporting environment with a knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities.

Coaches should also make themselves aware of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael's Social Inclusion Strategy which is an essential part of our ethos of equality, fair play and respect for all.

## Coaching Style

Coaches can vary greatly in their approach to dealing with players. At one end of the spectrum is the Authoritarian coach while at the other end is the coach who adapts a Laissez Faire approach.

### The Authoritarian Coach

The coach has all the knowledge and experience, makes all decisions, brooks no interference, tells players what to do. The player is expected to be passive, listen, absorb and (above all) obey.

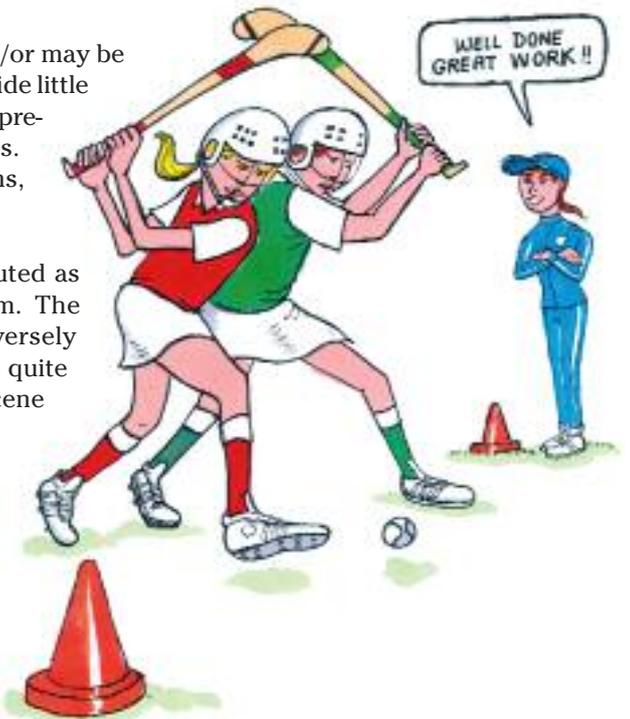
The authoritarian coach can sometimes be far too strict with young players who may become inhibited and fearful of making mistakes. This can lead to a diluting of the enjoyment factor and players may even come to dislike both the coach and the training environment, leading to a consequent fall-off in attendances.

### The Laissez Faire Coach

The coach may be casual in approach to responsibilities and/or may be seeking to court popularity with players. The coach may provide little leadership, instruction or guidance for the players, does little pre-training planning and is slow to resolve discipline problems. This coach's approach can often be of the 'pick two teams, throw in the ball and leave 'em at it' variety.

Inevitably the enjoyment factor for the young player is diluted as little learning goes on and discipline becomes a problem. The coach's own enthusiasm and enjoyment can also be adversely affected with the result that the coaching process becomes quite stultifying for the coach who may often depart the scene disillusioned.

Bearing in mind the above extreme approaches to coaching it is important for the introductory coach to embrace/adopt a style that is neither too strict nor lackadaisical.



### The Teaching or Co-operative Coach

This is the model aspiring coaches should strive towards. The coach provides structures and rules to create a positive environment where learning can flourish, where young players have fun and are empowered/enabled to develop physically, psychologically and socially.

The coach gives instructions and direction but also realizes that player's progress by trial and error coupled with the guidance and encouragement of positive, accurate feedback. This leads to a training atmosphere that is structured, non-threatening, safe and enjoyable and in which the young players will thrive and be inspired to work at achieving their full potential as Camogie players.

Striving to develop this coaching style can be a huge challenge for an introductory coach as her/his personality might, conceivably, incline to lean towards one of the approaches dealt with above.

However, an awareness of the pitfalls inherent in the Authoritarian and Laissez Faire approaches can enable the coach to avoid the more negative aspects of both, which might adversely affect the coaching process.

The coach will develop a teaching/co-operative style reasonably quickly if:

- (a) she/he is aware of the pitfalls outlined above
- (b) she/he examines her coaching experiences from time to time
- (c) she/he thinks about what she learns at each session and adjusts her modus operandi accordingly

### The questions the coach might ask herself/himself periodically:

1. What will I continue doing because it works well?
2. What can I do differently to become even better at my coaching?



*Coaching young players need not be a daunting task. With the proper approach by the coach it can be an enjoyable, pleasant and very fulfilling activity which can actually enrich the coach's life.*





# CHAPTER 4

## *Skill work*

One of the key requirements of the coach is to facilitate the learning and development of the skills of Camogie.

### **Skills to be developed**

1. Grip and Swing leading to Ground Strike
2. Roll Lift
3. Catch
4. Strike from Hand
5. Frontal Block
6. Blocking Ground Ball
7. Dribbling
8. Shoulder to Shoulder Clash
9. Frontal Ground Block

Skill development is the most important element to be addressed by the coach if the young players are to realise their potential.

Players need as many ball touches as possible in each session for gradual, progressive skill development.

The coach must always be thinking of ways and means of increasing the number of ball touches per player.

The coach's aim should be 200 ball contacts per person per session.

For coaching to be effective the coach must:

1. Gauge the level at which the players are currently operating.
2. Devise and implement age appropriate activities to challenge the players so that they remain interested, excited and motivated. These activities should gently move players out of their comfort zone but not out of their depth.

## Organisational Hints

- Players to gather at pre-arranged spot on field on sound of whistle.
- Coach positions herself/himself so that she can see all players.
- Players to assemble in half circle or in 2/3 rows.
- Ensure that there are no visible distractions behind coach.
- Have the sun at the players' backs.
- Make sure all sliotars are deposited in designated place while coach is speaking.
- Make sure all players can hear what is being said – coach should avoid speaking into a breeze.
- Separate disruptive players.
- Look directly at any inattentive player – proceed to addressing disruptive player by name and asking, firmly but politely for attention.

## 1. Teaching/Coaching the skills

The **IDEAL** model is used to coach/teach the skills.

- I** Introduce the skill - remember that brevity is of the essence as kids come to the field just "to do it"
- D** Demonstrate – if coach is not proficient, use a mentor or player who is.
- E** Explain – short explanation – as little talk as possible. Get the players involved.
- A** Action – Players practice the skill.
- L** Looking or observing with a view to fixing, safety, progression, task appropriateness, enjoyment.

### Introduce Skill

- (a) Name the skill.
- (b) Enthusiastically explain why coach thinks players will enjoy learning this skill.
- (c) Endeavour to get players to appreciate that this skill is a big deal and what great players they will become on mastering this skill!! (Get on county team in a few years!!)

### Demonstrate

- (a) Demonstration by coach, player or friend who is proficient in the skill.
- (b) Emphasise importance of head, hands, hurley and feet – young players react very positively to this.
- (c) Use clear age-appropriate language when working with young players.
- (d) Demonstrate the whole skill.
- (e) Break skill into key components.
- (f) Emphasise two/three most important points.

- (g) Be brief but check that players understand.
- (h) Demonstrate slowly 2-3 times.
- (i) Question for understanding.
- (j) Demonstrate whole skill again.

### Explain

- (a) Keep explanation brief – players want to be “doing” not listening.
- (b) Use simple clear language.

### Action

- (a) Players practice straight after demonstration.
- (b) Ensure players safety – players helmeted – not too close to each other.
- (c) Minimise risk of failure.
- (d) Repeat demonstration and explanation when and where necessary – to clarify some point.
- (e) Encourage players as they practice.
- (f) Introduce simple drills where the players will experience further success.

### Looking

- (a) Observing the players in action.
- (b) Pay particular attention to head, hands, hurley and feet (see notes on “Developing a Coaching Eye”).
- (c) Correct errors common to many players.
- (d) Correct just one error at a time to avoid cluttering players’ minds with too much detail.
- (e) Comment on the execution rather than on the perpetrator – the action rather than player!
- (f) Show the young players an error you used to make as kid e.g. when roll lifting demonstrate how you used to raise the ball much too high. Ask kids to act as coach and to suggest what unfortunate consequence may have resulted from your incorrect performance of the skill. Elicit risk of injuries.
- (g) Vital that coach remains positive and helpful even in cases of poor execution of skill. Might be helpful to self-reflect on own coaching or to accept limitations of players!!
- (h) Correction must be positive, simple and clear.
- (i) Patience is paramount.



## 2. Basic Drills

- (a) Stationary positions or limited movement.
- (b) Players operating in small groups.
- (c) Players work in pairs, lines, circles, triangles, squares, rectangles.
- (d) With improvement in level of technical competency and proficiency more movement is gradually introduced – walking, jogging, running.

## 3. Games

- (a) Fun Games – provide an opportunity for players to become aware of teammates and prepare players for a variety of situations and types of movement that occur during games.
- (b) Mini-Games Small Sided Games  
1v1      2v2      3v3      4v4      5v5

## 4. Advantages of Fun Games and Mini Games

- (a) More ball touches per player.
- (b) Increased enjoyment.
- (c) Greater participation.
- (d) Less chance of accidental/incidental injury.
- (e) More space per player with consequent reduction of anxiety when performing skills.
- (f) Learning happens at appropriate pace for each child.
- (g) More physical activity – increased heart rate.
- (h) More opportunities for players to express themselves.

Might be advisable initially to group players by ability so that all players achieve success to some degree in the game situation.

However, this grouping has to be done judiciously so that players are not always in the same groups and begin to feel categorised. Good practice also to mix the groups and have games of mixed ability regularly.

## 5. Go Games as per GAA Model

First Touch Game is the appropriate level for players working with introductory coaches. See worksheet on Go Games at end of chapter.

### Benefits of Go Games

1. More fun and enjoyment for all participants.
2. More touches of sliotar for each player.
3. Players more involved – greater physical activity – raised heart rate.
4. Increased perception of competence.
5. Flexible positions due to rotation of players. Avoids player being categorised “too young” and being “condemned” to one position for the remainder of her playing career!



## Length of Hurley

- Stand erect, looking straight ahead, hands by side.
- Correct length hurley should be just long enough that the player can't shake hands comfortably with top of handle, while still looking straight ahead with hand/arm extended down the side of the body.
- Grip hurley and extend dominant (strong) hand straight out in front of body from shoulder, thumb of strong hand on upper edge of handle for control and stability.
- If hurley is correct length and weight child should be able to keep hurley extended for approximately 15 seconds without too much discomfort.



## Ready Position

- Pick up hurley with dominant (strong) hand gripping top of hurley.
- Place non-dominant (weak) hand under hurley above the bas.
- Close the fingers of 'weaker' hand around the hurley with thumbs on top.



## Lock Position

- Adopt ready position.
- Slide the non-dominant (weak) hand up the handle to 'lock' with dominant (strong) hand.
- Hurley at 90 degrees, up in front of shoulder.



## Lifting Position

- Adopt Ready Position.
- Use thumb of dominant hand to turn the hurley so that the toe is facing away from the body.



## Grip and Swing

*(leading to striking of ground ball)*



- Adopt ready position.
- Ball in front of non-dominant (weak) foot.
- Slide non-dominant (weak) hand into Lock Position.
- Elbows bent.
- Knees bent.
- Swing and strike ball flat on with bas with “wristy” action.
- Follow through to shoulder height.
- Transfer weight to non-dominant leg.



Eyes on ball 'til strike completed.



Slide from Ready Position to Lock Position – follow through.



Ball in front of non-dominant (weak) leg – feet shoulder width apart – transfer weight to non-dominant leg.



Feet not too close together – stand close to ball – place bas behind ball before swinging – keep eyes on ball until swing completed. Non-dominant hand slides from Ready to Lock Position for each strike.

## Drills for Swing

### 1. Prepare for Swing

Swing on an imaginary ball. First place bas just behind “ball”. Check that non-dominant hand slides up and down handle before and after each swing.

(a) Strong side (b) Weak side

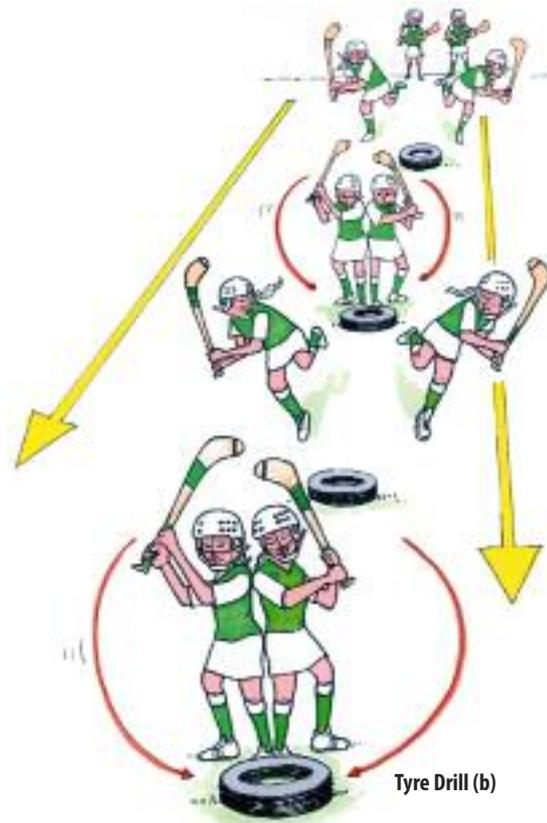
### 2. Tyre Drills

- (a) Two players – one on either side of the tyre. Players practice striking the tyre together. After set period players change sides.



- (b) Players in pairs (a) walk (b) jog along line of tyres executing the ground strike as they go. After set time players change sides to practice strike from both the left and the right sides.

- (c) Players (a) walk (b) jog while striking the tyres using strong and weak side alternately.



### 3. Ball on Rope

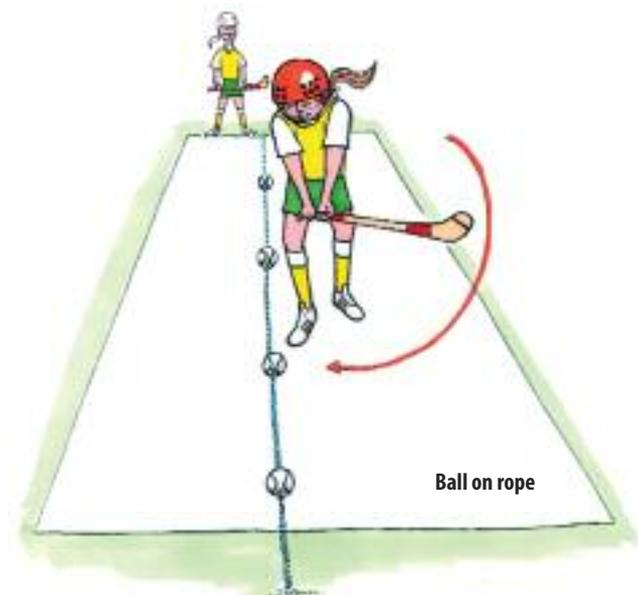
Individual players (a) walk (b) jog along either side of the rope to which 5/6 sliotars are affixed. Players swing on strong side while moving in one direction and on weak side on return trip to starting point.

### 4. Striking in pairs

Striking in pairs using (a) First Touch (b) Quick Touch Ball.

### 5. Striking for accuracy

Pairs striking for accuracy to each other through two cones.



## Games

### 1. Goal to Goal

Goal to Goal using (a) First Touch (b) Quick Touch Ball.



Goal to goal

### 2. 3v3

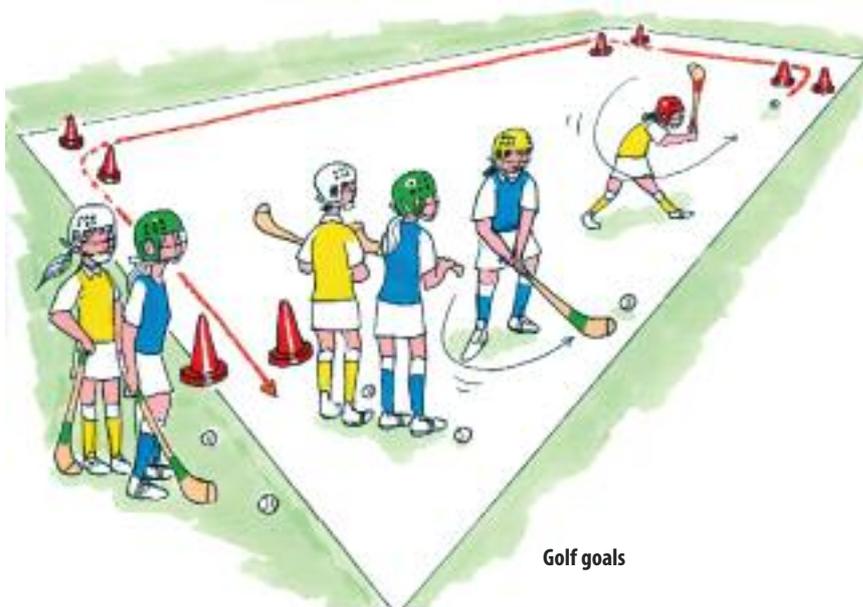
3V3 playing across centre line of cones. Three sliotars each side of cones. Teams play for two/three minutes striking ball into opponents' territory. At whistle team with fewer balls on their side of cones wins.



3V3

### 3. “Golf Tournament”

How many shots to cross field and back?  
How many shots to traverse length of field?



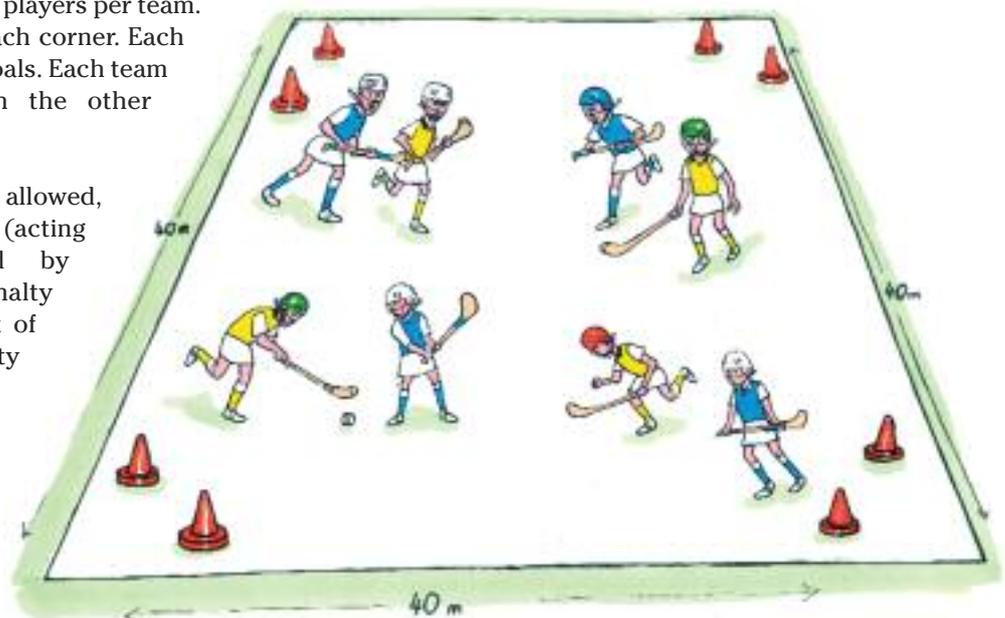
### 4. “Golf Goals”

40m x 40m grid 2m goal at each corner.  
Teams of three compete to see which team gets around in least number of shots. A shot which does not go through the goal constitutes a dropped shot and the next shot has to be taken from the place that the original shot was taken. The team with the least number of shots win.

### 5. Four Goal Game

40m x 40m grid – 4/5 players per team.  
Goals 3m wide at each corner. Each team defends two goals. Each team can score through the other teams two goals.

No guarding of goals allowed, guarding of goal (acting keeper) penalised by awarding of a penalty from the mid point of the grid into an empty goal.



Four goal game



## Roll Lift



- Adopt Ready Position.
- Change to lifting position.
- Non-dominant foot alongside ball.
- Bend knees and back.
- Eyes on ball.
- Hurley almost parallel to ground with toe pointed to dominant side – thumbs pointed towards bas.
- Place hurley on ball, roll ball backwards, slide toe of hurley under ball to rise it.
- Catch ball in cupped non-dominant (weak) hand as low as possible.



Head over ball.  
Eyes on ball.



Adopt lifting position.  
Thumbs on top side of hurley pointing towards bas.  
Hurley held almost parallel to the ground.  
Catch ball in "cupped" non-dominant (weak) hand.



Non-dominant (weak) foot alongside ball.  
Knees bent.



Toe of hurley is turned away from body.  
Hurley is almost parallel to the ground.  
Dominant hand brought down the handle for greater control and stability when executing lift.  
Ensure that players catch ball in "cupped hand rather than snatching it from above.



## Drills

### 1. Individual

Individual – Ball per player – each player performs five roll lifts, 10 roll lifts.

### 2. 1 minute

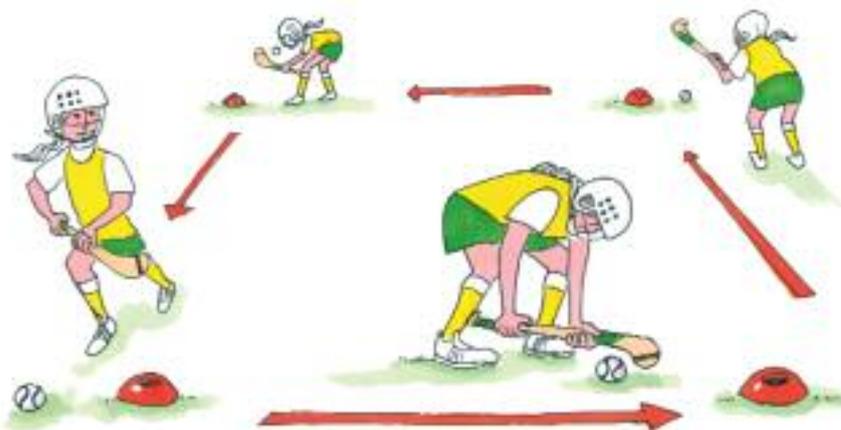
Each player counts her roll lifts for one minute.

### 3. Partners

Partners watch and count as colleague roll lifts.

### 4.

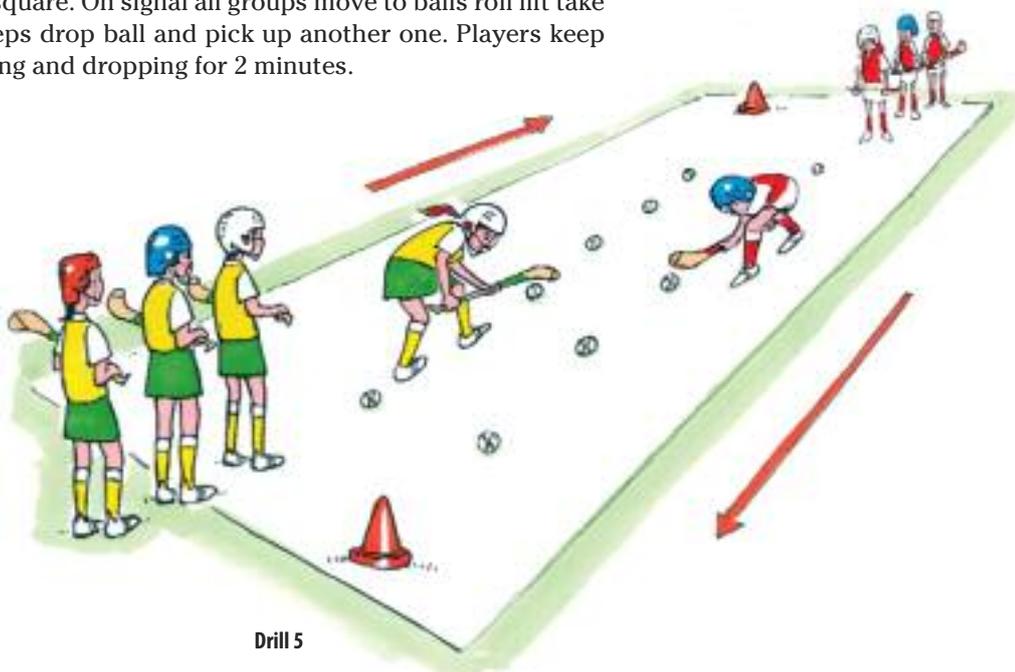
Player and ball at each cone - players walk initially and then jog from cone to cone roll lifting and dropping.



Drill 4

### 5.

Four groups of five players per square. Four sliotars in a 8m by 8m square. On signal all groups move to balls roll lift take four steps drop ball and pick up another one. Players keep roll lifting and dropping for 2 minutes.



Drill 5



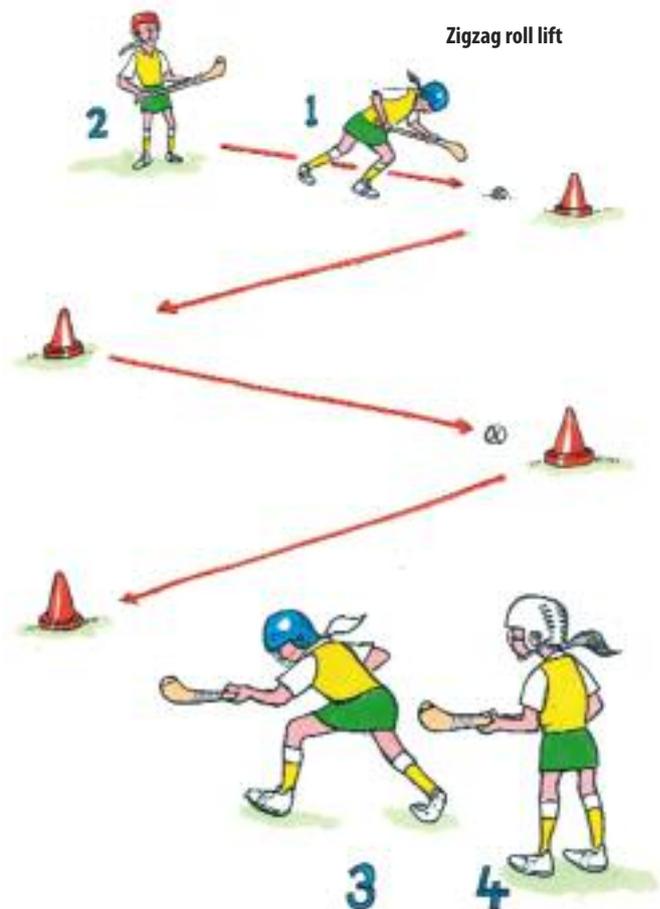
### 6. Agility Roll Lift

Five cones, 4m apart, in cross formation. A ball is placed at each cone of four cones. Players form a line at the other cone and then (a) walk (b) jog (c) run to various cones and roll lift and drop. Players return to centre cone after each roll lift. When first player finishes, next player executes the roll lifts

### 7. Zigzag Roll Lift

Same as above only (a) cones much further apart (b) cones in zigzag formation.

Balls are placed at cones 1 and 3. Player 1 picks at cone 1 and places ball at cone 2, then she picks at cone 3 and places ball at cone 4. Player 3 picks at cone 4 and drops ball at cone 3 and so on.



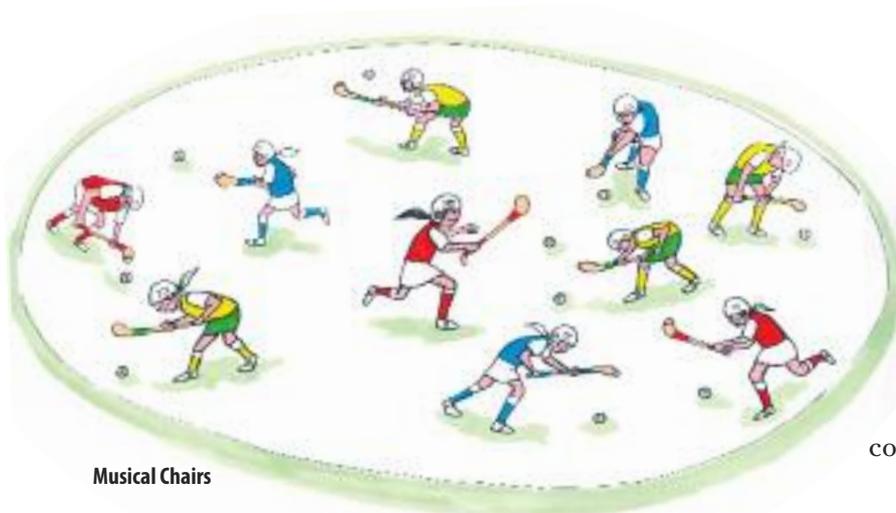
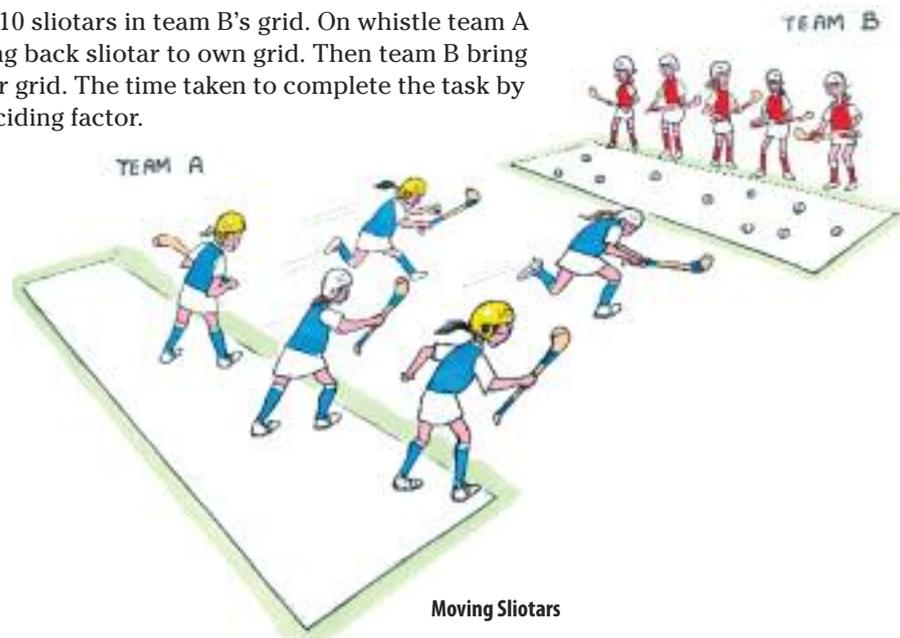
### 8. Circle

20 players operating in large circle – 15 balls thrown on ground at random within the circle. On signal from coach players move around within the circle roll lifting for a set period of time. No pushing or shoving allowed. Coach checks how many roll lifts executed by individual players.

## Games

### 1. Moving Sliotars

Two teams of five – 10 sliotars in team B's grid. On whistle team A run, roll lift and bring back sliotar to own grid. Then team B bring sliotars back to their grid. The time taken to complete the task by each team is the deciding factor.

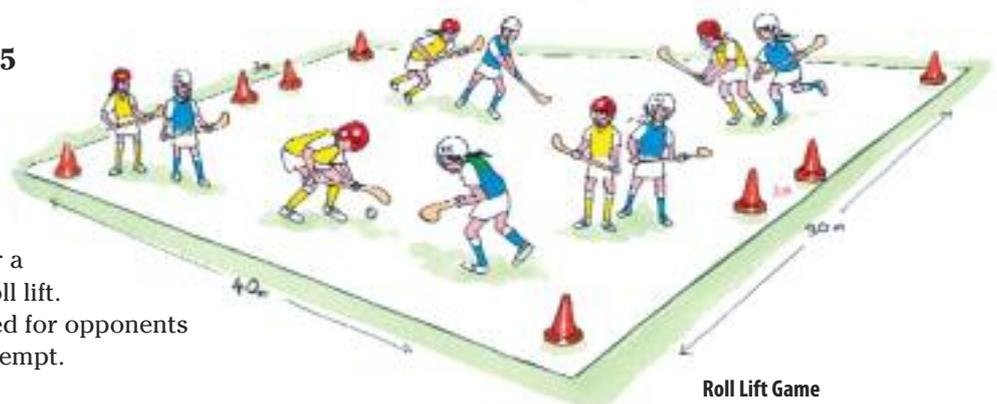


### 2. Musical Chairs

10 players and 10 sliotars spread randomly within a circle. Players jog around the circle. On signal from the coach players roll lift the ball. One ball now taken away and game continues. On next whistle player who fails to get a ball leaves the circle. The game continues until only one player is left.

### 3. Roll Lift Game 5v5

No ground hurling allowed - goals 3m wide – no goalkeepers – cannot tackle player on the ball. Score is allowed for a goal or for a successful first effort roll lift. Variation: A free awarded for opponents unsuccessful roll lift attempt.





## Front of Face Catch/Chest Catch

*(Beanbags – First Touch Quick Touch Balls)*



- Players adopt the ready position.
- Hold hurley in dominant hand across front of body. Shorten grip if necessary.
- “Cup” non-dominant hand
- Move/adjust feet to position oneself for catch.
- “Cushion” ball by relaxing chest/fingers.



Eyes on ball.



Dominant hand gripping hurley across body. Grip shortened. Non-dominant hand “cupped” to receive ball.



Move/adjust forward, sideways or backwards to receive ball.



Move so that ball caught between hand and chest or in front of face, movement may be forward sideways or backwards. “Cushion” ball on chest or in hand. Ensure hurley held shorter and across body, not trailing on the ground.



## Drills

### Beanbags – First Touch Sliotars – Quick Touch Sliotars

#### 1. Individual

- Player throws (1) beanbag (2) First Touch sliotar slightly above head height and then chest catches.
- Player throws (1) beanbag (2) Quick Touch ball slightly above head height and face catches.
- On signal from coach all players count how many (1) chest catches (2) face catches in 30 secs.

#### 2. Pairs

Players 3m apart. Player A throws and player B executes chest catch and vice versa. Likewise for the face catch.

On signal from coach pairs count how many (a) chest catches (b) face catches in 1 minute.

#### 3. Catching at cone

One partner throws while partner runs to catch at cone – then roles are reversed.



Catching at cone

#### 4. Partners

Partners throw to each other, moving in to throw and moving out to receive.



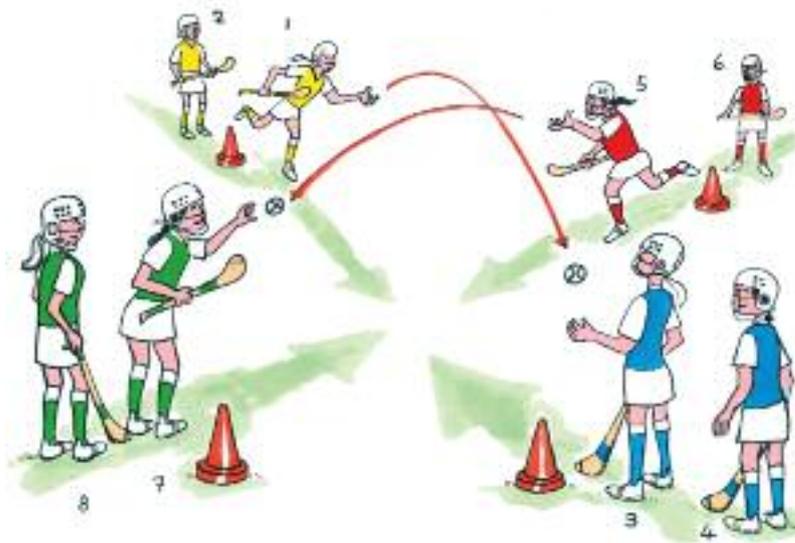
Partners

#### 5. Straight Line Drill

Player 1 throws to player 4 and moves across to wait behind player 5. Player 4 throws to player 2 and moves across behind player 3. Player 2 then throws to player 5 and so on.



Straight line drill



Diagonal Drills

## 6. Diagonal Drills

Players 1 and 7 have beanbags or sliotars depending on ability. 1 throws to 4 and runs across and takes her place behind 6. Player 4 throws to 2 and takes her place behind 3 and so on. Player 7 throws to 10 and takes her place behind 12, 10 throws to 8 and takes her place behind 9 and so on.

## Games

### *Beanbags – First Touch and Quick Touch Sliotars*

#### 1. Pairs

Five pairs in grid 20m by 20m reducing gradually to 15m by 15m. Players move around grid all the time while throwing to partner for (a) chest catch (b) face catch.

#### 2. Hunters

A beanbag or ball is taken from one of the pairs in the 20m by 20m grid as above. This pair then become “Hunters” and try to intercept the beanbag or ball by catching it or by knocking it to the ground with a hand. Any pair who lose their beanbag or ball then become the “Hunters”.

#### 3. 4v2

Same 20m by 20m grid. Team of four get possession while team of two try to intercept the ball by catching or knocking it to the ground. Important that players are rotated after 1 minute to avoid frustration on part of team with less players.

#### 4. 3v3

Same as above but the challenge is greater for the team in possession.



Beat the Circle

### 5. Beat the Circle – Teams of 5

One team passing within the circle while opponents are running around in relay style around the circle. The number of catches executed while opponents run around the circle, determine the winners.

### 6. Court Game

Two teams of three, four or five, on either side of “no mans land”. Team A throws beanbag or Quick Touch ball which team B has to catch. If ball is dropped team A get a score. If ball or beanbag ends up in “no mans land” one score is deducted from the throwing team.



Court Game



## Strike from Hand

*Because of the complexities of this skill from the coordination and timing aspects we adopt a slightly different approach.*



- To provide a stable target for striking, the coach holds own rubber based hurley between knee and thigh for player to strike.
- Hurley is held in hand at 90 degrees to forearm.



- Toss imaginary ball in air from non-dominant hand.
- Non-dominant hand then goes into lock position.
- Player strikes bas of coach's hurley.
- Ball/Balloon introduced – held in non-dominant hand. Shoulders and feet in line with the target.



- Toss ball/balloon from non-dominant hand to shoulder height.
- Non-dominant hand then goes into lock position, elbows bent.
- Swing hurley downward – strike ball between knee and hip level.
- Weight transferred to non-dominant leg.



Eyes on ball until strike is completed.



Non-dominant hand below dominant hand.  
Toss ball shoulder high.  
Shorter grip if missing ball.



Transfer weight from dominant to non-dominant leg.

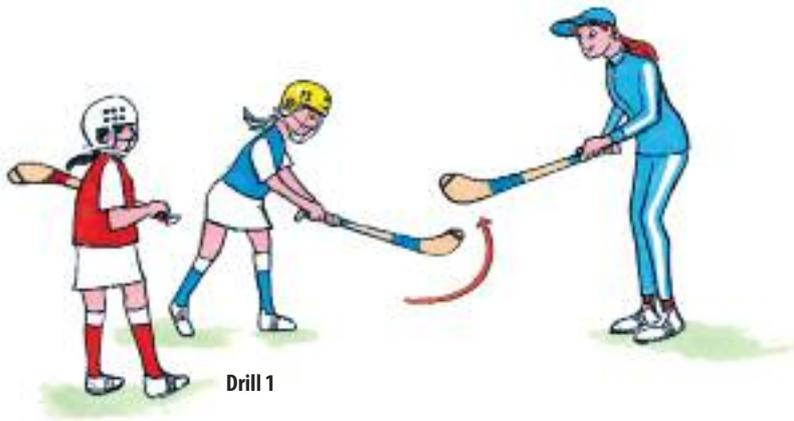


Ensure dominant hand remains above non-dominant hand especially when hurley is shortened.  
Look at ball not at the target.  
Toss ball just to shoulder height. May be necessary for some players to just practice throwing ball to shoulder height a few times and catching it, before actually attempting to strike.

## Drills

1.

Coach holding hurley between knee and hip level while players in line strike bas of hurley.



2.

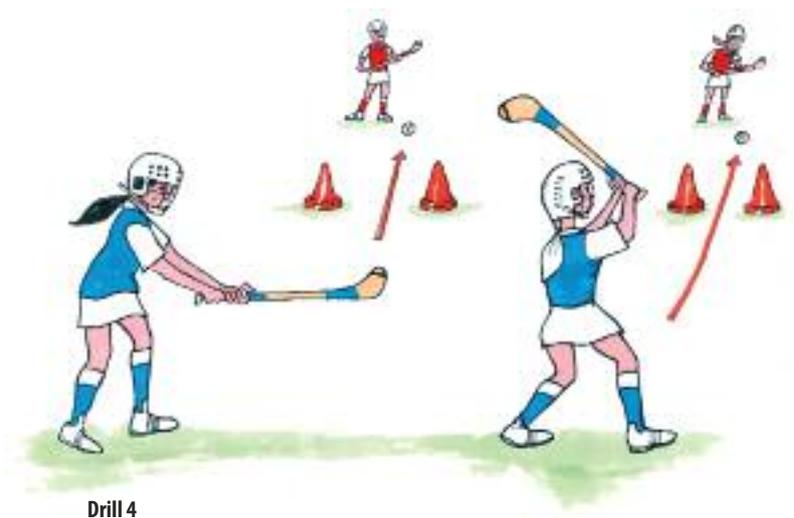
Ball/Balloon per player – players stretched out along side of pitch striking ball on whistle across field and back.

3.

Players 15m apart striking ball to each other.

4.

Players in pairs 15m apart. Two cones 3m apart. Players strike ball through cones to each other. To progress drill (a) increase the distance between the two players (b) reduce the width of the goals.



## Hitting the Target

- The players stand on edge of the small square or on the 13m line and attempt to strike the crossbar with the ball.
- Coach should encourage her/his players to practise aiming at certain targets at home in their spare time.

## Games

### 1. Goal to Goal

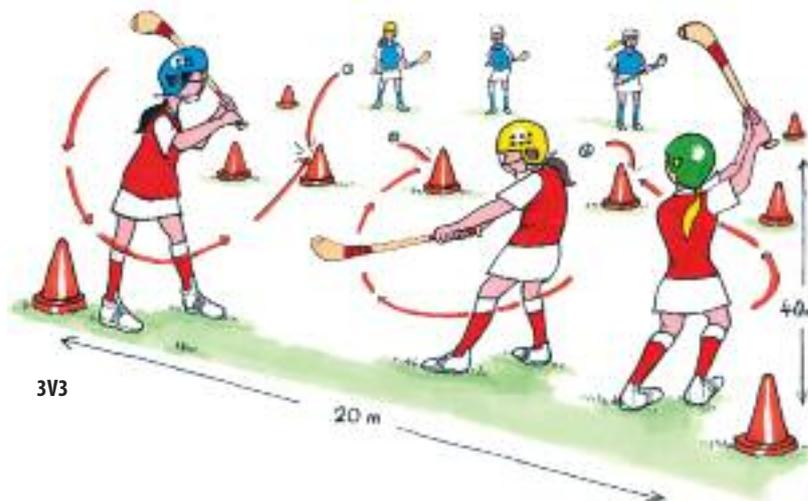
As in the ground strike.



Goal to goal

### 2. 3v3

Two teams 3V3, in grid 40m by 20m. A line of cones is placed down the centre of the grid between the two teams. Each team tries to hit as many cones as possible over a set piece of time. To start the game one team strikes three sliotars, then opponents get a chance and so on.



#### Small Sided Game 3v3 4v4

The size of the grid and width of goals is at the coach's discretion. Initially, to ensure safety, no tackling is allowed. To encourage striking from the hand no ground striking is allowed.

When a player successfully rises the ball she is allowed to strike unhindered from the hand.

### 3. Go Game 7v7

As per Go Game worksheet.



## Frontal Block



- Adopt the lifting position.
- Slide non-dominant hand back towards other hand at top of handle.
- Firm grip with thumbs on top facing towards bas.
- As opponent throws ball up “genuflect” towards opponent.
- Keep head lower than bas of own hurley.



- Eyes on ball – do not turn head away.
- Target the ball if possible or tape on tape.
- Lock hurley into block position (45°) – do not just slap down on opponents hurley



Eyes on ball – do not turn head away.  
Head lower than own bas when executing block.



Strong grip near top of handle.  
Thumbs on top facing towards bas.  
Lock into Block Position – Approx 45°



Knees bent as if to ‘genuflect’.  
Non-dominant leading leg provides balance and stability.



Hands almost together near top of handle.  
Thumbs on top for control.  
Do not turn head away – keep eyes on ball.  
Ensure that head is lower than own bas for safety.

## Drills

1.

Players on one sideline. On signal from coach players move Ready Position to Frontal Block position and back again.

2.

Players begin to advance across field (a) at walking pace (b) at jogging pace while executing the above drill.

3.

To allay fears and to get players accustomed to the reverberations of the striking hurleys the players are invited to block "imaginary" sliotars struck by the coach and mentors.

4.

The coach or mentor strikes "imaginary" ball. The player moves in, blocks and continues forward movement to pick a real ball which is on the ground 2m beyond the coach.

5.

Coach now strikes real ball gently - the players block and move on to rise the ball and win possession.



Drills 3 & 4

### 6. Blocking in Three's

Players A and B stand facing each other 4-5m apart. Player C stands halfway between them. On whistle A strikes "imaginary" ball while C blocks. C then swivels and blocks strike by B. She then swivels and blocks strike from A and so on. After 30 seconds A replaces C in the centre and subsequently B replaces A for 30 seconds.

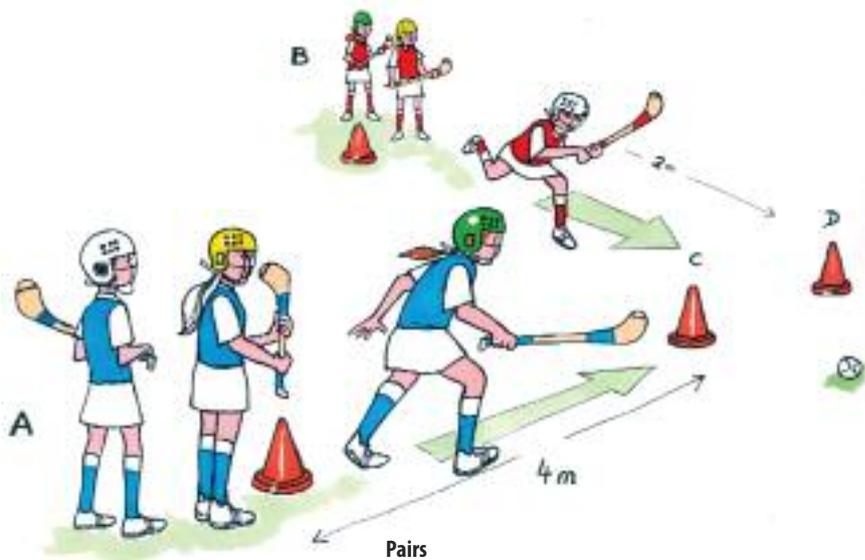


Blocking in Three's

## 7. Pairs

The drill is loaded in favour of the blocker. Each player at cone A has a partner at cone B. On whistle player A jogs 4m to strike “imaginary” ball when reaching the two cones C and D. The blocker should be well positioned to effect the Frontal Block as she has only 2m to cover before blocking. The player who blocks then moves to pick sliotar which has been placed on ground behind the striker.

To progress the drill introduce actual striking of the ball into the drill .

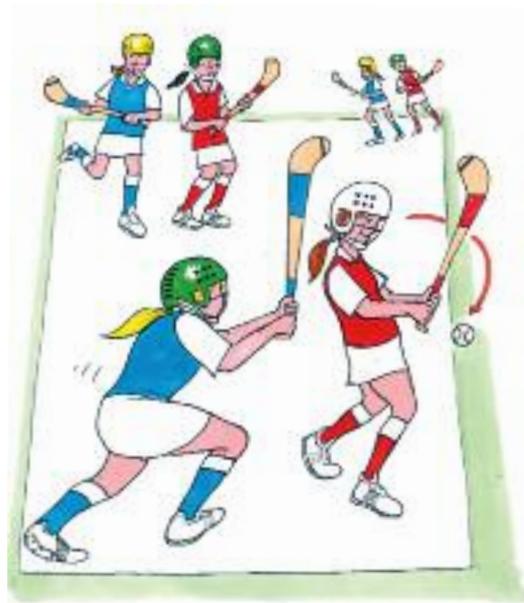


The coach should be extra vigilant and ensure that (a) players are helmeted (b) that proper hand positions are adopted (c) that players strike the ball reasonably gently (d) that other mentors involve themselves so that the drill runs smoothly.

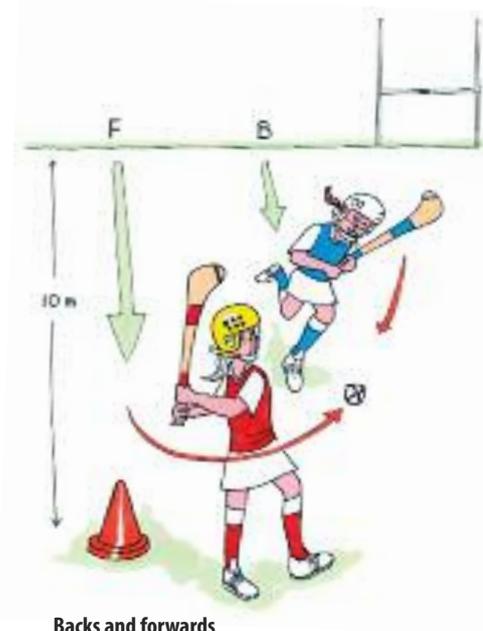
## Games

### 1. Backs and forwards 1v1

Forward runs to pick ball at cone 10m from end line. The back runs on coach's signal and attempts to effect a frontal block. Roles are then reversed. Score is awarded for a successful block.



3v3



Backs and forwards

### 2. Grid Game 3v3

Two teams in grid 30m by 30m. Players can only strike from the hand. A clear block is counted as a score. To encourage controlled striking two consecutive hurley passes are also rewarded with a score. Play for a defined period of time or a set number of goals.

### Mini Game 5v5 – Goals 4-5m wide

Game played on pitch 50m by 30m. Players allowed lift and strike, catch and strike or play the ball on the ground. Normal scores apply but a goal is also awarded for a successful frontal block.



## Blocking Ground Ball



- Adopt Ready Position.
- Bend knees slightly.
- Slide non-dominant hand down handle of hurley.
- Heel of hurley rests on ground to block ball at side of body.
- Change from Ready to Lifting Position to block ball between legs.
- Bend knees slightly but keep legs together.
- Lower heel of hurley to ground.



Eyes on ball.  
Head over ball at point of contact.



Adopt ready position.  
Move non-dominant hand down handle.



Heel of hurley on the ground.



Move feet to get closer to ball travelling past side of body.  
Keep feet together to prevent ball going through legs.



Non-dominant hand moved down hurley.  
Bas of hurley lowered to ground.  
Avoid resorting to blocking ball with feet.

## Drills

### Individual

If hurling wall or other suitable wall is available individual player practises skill by throwing ball underarm and blocking rebound with hurley at a distance of 4/5m.

### Pairs

Players pair off 3/4m apart. Ball per pair. Each player in turn rolls ball gently to the strong side or between legs of partner who tries to block it. Gradually increase distance between players. To progress the drill partners strike ground ball to each other as above.

### Move to ball

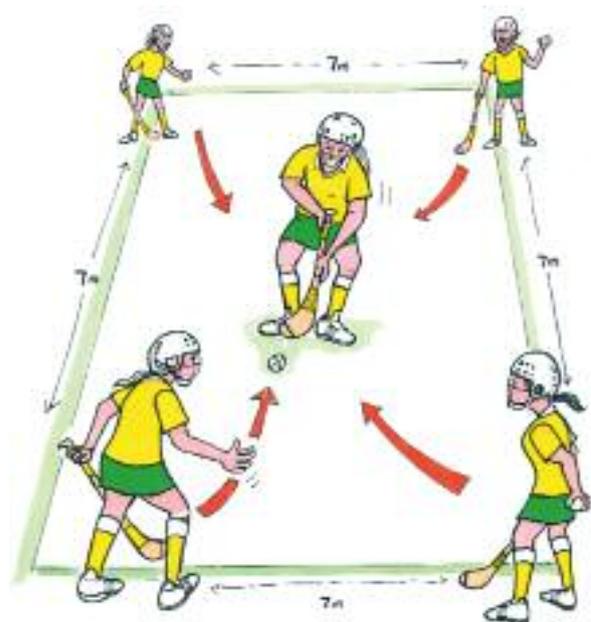
Players in pairs facing each other 10/12m apart. Player A rolls ball along the ground towards her partner who, instead of waiting for the ball runs to block it while the ball is still moving. Player B, having blocked the ball, returns to starting point before rolling ball back to her partner.

This drill can be progressed by moving the players 20/25m apart and having them strike the ball to each other rather than rolling it.

### Grid work

Five players working in a grid 7m by 7m. One player stands at each corner with the fifth player in the centre of the grid. Each corner player rolls the ball in turn to the player in the middle who effects a ground block and then flicks the ball back before receiving the ball from the next corner player. The player in the centre flicks the ball back without raising the heel of the hurley above shin level.

To progress this drill the coach calls the name of different corner players causing the player in the centre to adjust her feet regularly depending on the direction from which the sliotar is coming.



Grid work

## Games

### 1. Goal to Goal

Players in pairs 5m apart. Ball per pair. Each player has to guard her own goal which is 3m wide. Each player then tries to score a goal by rolling the ball underarm along the ground and past her partner.

The first player to score a set number of goals or whoever scores the most goals in the time allotted is the winner.

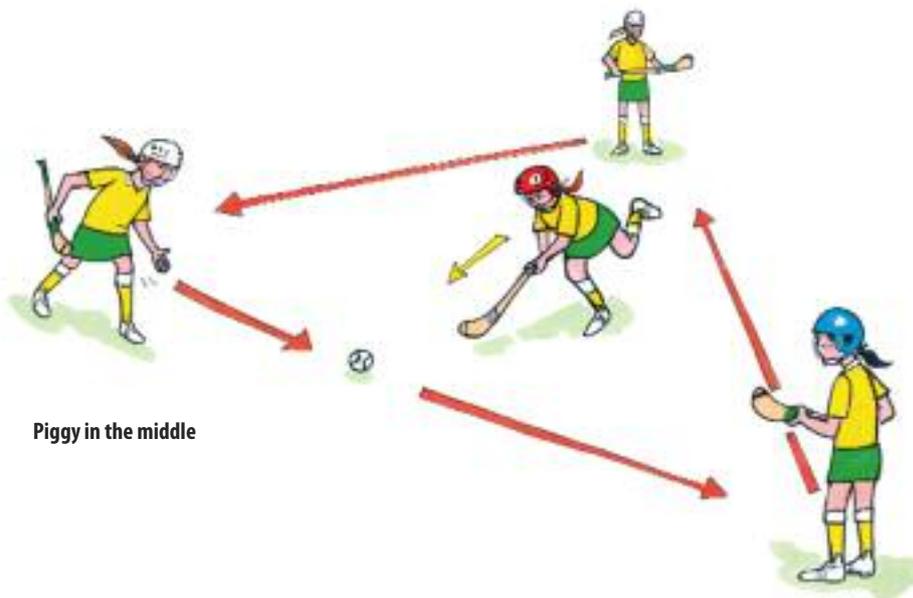


Goal to goal

### 2. Goal to Goal

The above game can be progressed by making the goals wider and increasing the distance between the goals.

The distance between the goals and the width of the goals will be at the discretion of the coach, based on the ability of the players. The drill can be further progressed by allowing the players to strike ground shots.



Piggy in the middle

### 3. Piggy in the Middle – 3v1

Three players stand at each corner of the triangle. The fourth player takes up a position in the centre of the triangle.

The players at the corners roll the ball along the ground to each other while the player in the centre attempts to ground block. If a player's throw is stopped, that player then becomes Piggy in the Middle.

The size of the triangle and the distance between the players is at the discretion of the coach and will largely be determined through trial and error.



## Dribbling



- Adopt Ready Position.
- As in blocking ground ball, slide non-dominant hand down handle for better control when dribbling.
- Use both sides of bas, every second strike where possible, when dribbling.
- Have heel of hurley on ground at beginning of dribble.
- Heel of hurley not to be raised above shin level when dribbling.



Eyes on ball.  
Head over ball.



Adopt Ready position.  
Slide non-dominant hand down handle for control.  
Use alternate sides of bas.  
Keep heel of hurley below shin level.



Adjust feet constantly so as not to overstretch.  
Avoid temptation to use feet to control ball.



Keep ball within hurley length of body at all times.  
Emphasise close control.  
Encourage use both sides of bas.  
Avoid resorting to using feet to move ball on.

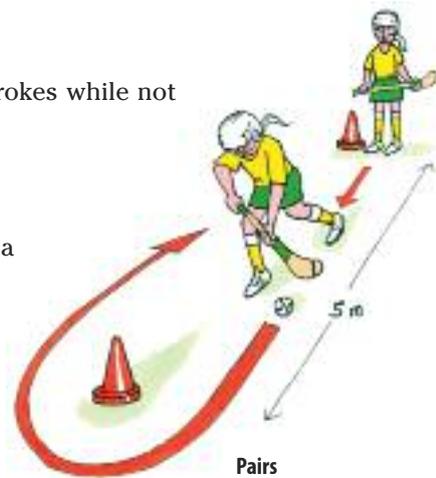
## Drills

### Individual

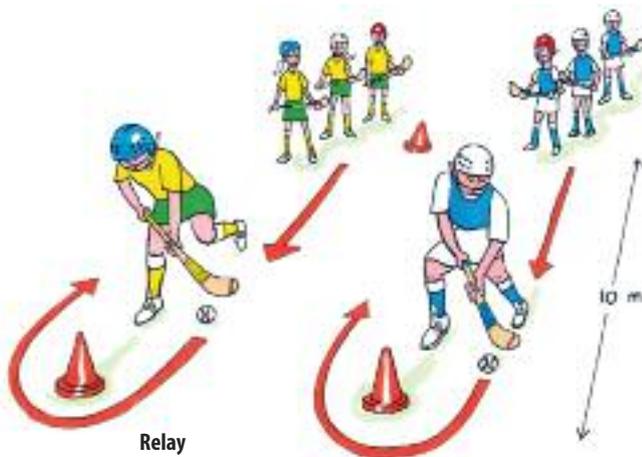
Players practise dribbling imaginary ball using short back strokes while not lifting the hurley above shin level.

### Pairs

Ball per pair. Players in turn dribble the ball out and around a marker 5m away and back.



Pairs



Relay

### Relay

Teams of four line up behind cone and face a second cone 10m away. Each player in turn dribbles out, around the cone and back before leaving ball for the next player. The drill can be progressed into a relay race when the coach considers her/his players are sufficiently proficient in the skill.

### Changing Direction

The players line up in two groups on the end line. Cones are placed on 13m line opposite each player. On whistle, the players begin to dribble the ball towards their respective cones. On second whistle the players change direction and dribble back to the end line.

The second group then start dribbling on the first whistle and changing direction on the second whistle. To progress the drill the coach introduces three or four changes of direction before players return to the end line.

The drill can be further progressed by putting groups of players in different grids and asking them to (a) dribble towards dressing rooms (b) dribble towards the stand (c) dribble towards the bottom goals (d) dribble towards the dug-out etc.



Changing Direction

### Guarding/Tussling

Three pairs of players in grid 8m by 8m. Player A of each pair dribbles the ball, shields the ball with her body and tries to retain possession for 30 seconds. Player B tries to dispossess her partner within the agreed time limit by flicking or pushing the ball away but may not pull on the ball or push or shove opponent.

### Cone Drill

Players in groups of four. Place six cones in a line in front of each group, with a distance of 3m between each cone. On whistle the first player in each group dribbles the sliotar in and out among the markers and back to the start where the next player takes over. The drill can be progressed to a relay race at the coach's discretion.



### Obstacle Drill

Coach constructs an obstacle course using flags, cones, tyres, water bottles etc through which the players attempt to dribble the ball without touching an object. The player has to start again if any obstacle is touched by either the ball or the players hurley.

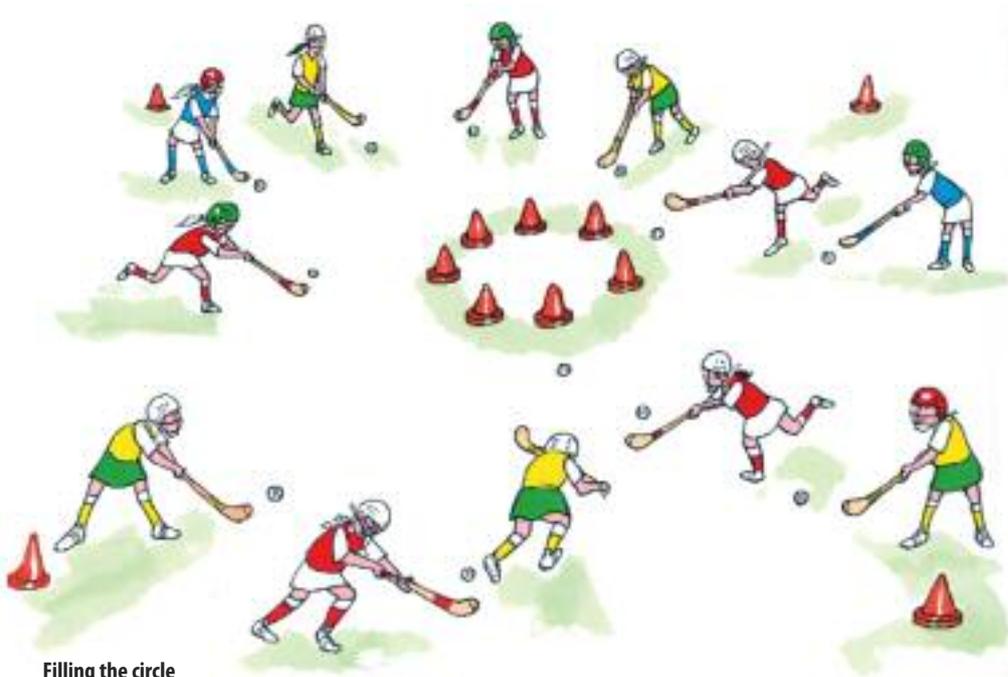


*Players should be encouraged to change the direction of the ball by using alternate sides of the bas*

## Games

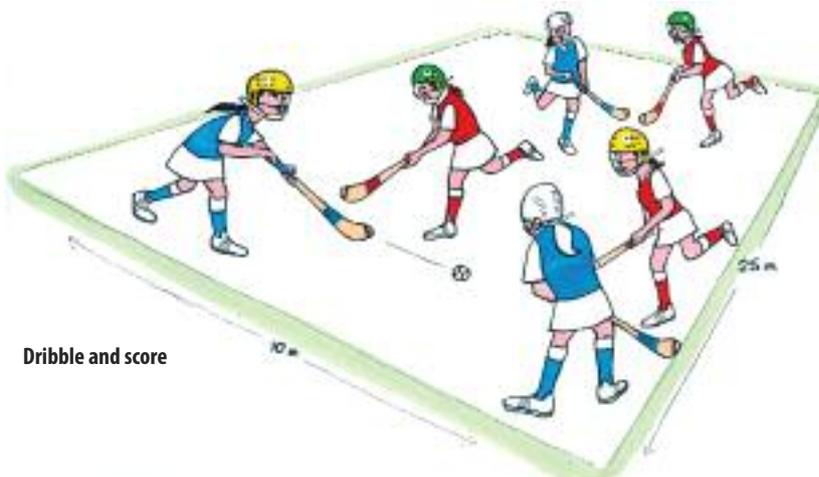
### Filling the circle

Divide the players into two groups in grids 20m by 20m. Make a circle in the centre of the grid. The players stand on the perimeter of the grid with a ball at each player's feet. On whistle the players dribble the balls as quickly as possible into the circle. Alternatively the players may start inside and on whistle players run to their sliotars on the perimeter and dribble back to the circle. The first team to get all their sliotars into the circle wins.



### Drizzle and Score – 3v3 in grid 25m by 10m

Team A tries to keep possession by dribbling and passing only, with heel of the hurley below knee level at all times. To score team A or B must dribble ball over their opposite end line. Play for a set period of time.





## Shoulder to Shoulder Clash - Ground Clash



- Adopt Ready Position.
- Be close to opponent.
- Move non-dominant hand up handle into Lock position.
- Bend elbows to raise hurley.
- Make shoulder to shoulder and hip to hip contact.
- Swing hurley to strike ball.



Eyes on ball.



Hands go from Ready to Lock position.  
Elbows bent to raise Hurley for "pull".  
Two hands on hurley.



Keep both feet on ground if possible but at least one foot at all times.



Player must be in close contact with opponent, otherwise risk of injury.  
Lock hands before completion of swing to avoid injury to non-dominant hand.  
Swing with quick "wristy" action.

## Drills

### Pairs

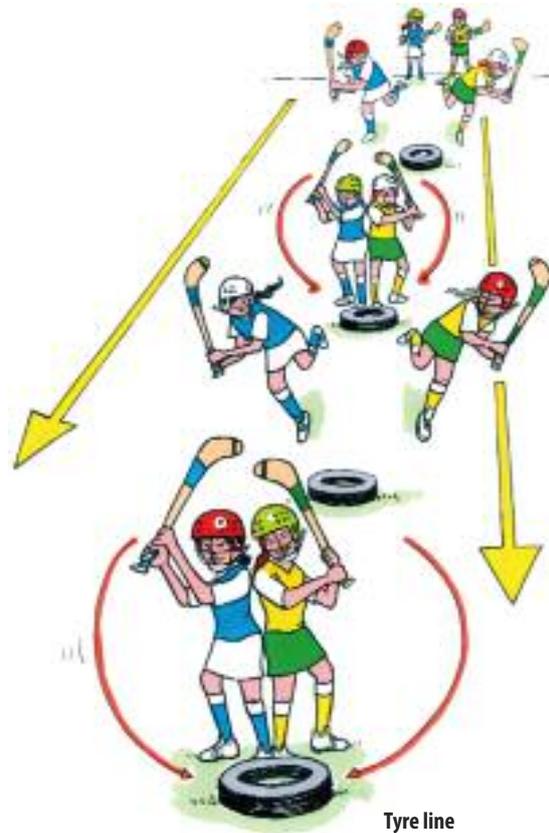
Players stand in pairs at tyres and strike tyres. Players alternate so that striking performed on left and right side.



Pairs

### Tyre line

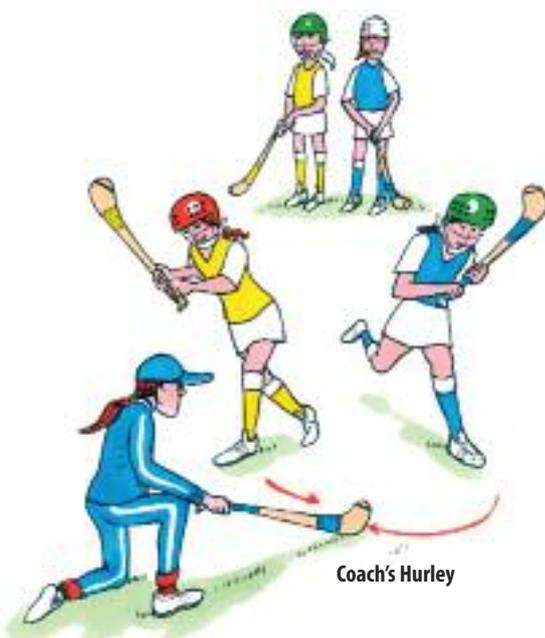
Players work in pairs (a) walking (b) jogging as they strike tyres together. Ensure players practise striking on weak as well as strong side.



Tyre line

### Smaller Tyres

Introduce a line of smaller tyres so that players get used to being close together when they strike.



Coach's Hurley

### Coach's Hurley

Players face off in two lines facing the coach. The coach crouches and holds an old hurley with the heel on the ground. Each pair advances (a) walking (b) jogging towards the coach before swinging on the coach's hurley bas together.

### Sliotars on Rope

Players in pairs (a) walk (b) jog along either side of rope to which five/six sliotars are affixed. Both players swing together on each ball before returning to starting point. Next time players alternate sides.



Sliotars on rope

### Ground Clash

Players pair off on end line. The coach places five sliotars in line out to 20m line. Sliotars are 4m apart. Each pair (a) walk (b) jog forward to clash on each ball.



*The more mentors and sliotars available the more opportunities for players to practise.*

### Rolling Ball I

Players in pairs facing the coach and mentors. Coach and mentors gently roll First Touch sliotar between the two players who clash. Players return sliotar to mentor and return to their line.

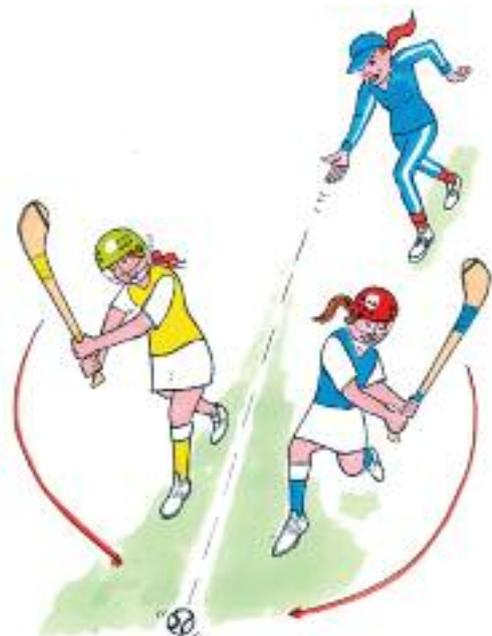
### Rolling Ball II

Players in pairs. Coach and mentors stand behind the players and gently roll the sliotar in front of each pair who then run after ball and perform the ground clash.



*Important to enlist the help of other mentors for this skill*

- to minimise the risk of injury*
- to ensure players are reasonably matched and suited to each other from the physical and ability aspects.*
- to ensure that players get as many “goes” as possible and are not left standing around.*



Rolling ball II



## Frontal Ground Block



- Adopt the Ready Position.
- As player steps in to tackle, release weak hand from hurley.
- Crouch into the tackle leading with dominant foot.
- Extend the dominant hand to place heel of the hurley on the ground either in front or behind the ball (preferably in front of the ball).
- The hurley should be at almost 90 degrees to the ground but slightly tilted towards the opponent's hurley.



Eyes on the ball.



Dominant hand at the top of the handle.  
The dominant hand thumb should be pointing towards the bas.



Heel of the bas on the ground.  
The hurley should be almost perpendicular but still tilted slightly towards the tackler.



The dominant foot leads into the tackle.



Dominant hand at the top of the hurley.  
Step in with dominant foot leading.  
Hurley is preferably placed in front of sliotar.  
Extend dominant arm in the tackle to avoid injury.



## Drills

### – Quick Touch and First Touch sliotars

#### Individual

Players standing 2m apart on one sideline. Players adopt Ready position and on signal from coach move to Frontal Ground Block position. On further signal, players revert to ready position.

#### Individual 2

Same as above only players assume the Ready and Frontal Ground Block positions while (a) walking (b) jogging across the field.

#### Coach & Mentors

3/4 players line up facing coach and each mentor. Players in turn run forward and practise ground block while coach swings on imaginary ball.

Coach and mentors pull on First Touch sliotars while players effect Frontal Ground Block



Coach & Mentors

#### Pairs

Players A and B 2m apart. Player A gently strikes an imaginary ball towards B who steps in and executes the Frontal Ground Block. Roles are then reversed.



*Coach and mentors have to monitor this drill extremely carefully to avoid injury, to improve timing and to boost confidence of the players.*



Zigzag drill

#### Zigzag Drill

Two sets of cones 3m apart. Place four sliotars in the centre of the channel as shown. A and B jog around the cones towards the ball where A pulls and B uses the Frontal Ground Block. At the next ball B pulls while A executes the Frontal Ground Block and so on.



*The coach and mentors have to be very vigilant during this drill for obvious reasons*

## Game

### 3v3 – 4v4 – Small sided game

Depending on the ability of the players a mini-pitch is marked out, possibly 40m by 30m with goals 3m wide at each end. The ball may not be roll lifted. Ball can only be hit, dribbled or blocked on the ground. Scores are awarded for each goal and for each Frontal Ground Block. It may even be advisable to award a bonus goal as well for each Frontal Ground Block to encourage greater effort.

Coach and mentors must, again, monitor this game very carefully so that players do not have an experience that may cause them to fear this skill which will result in consequent abandonment of any effort to conquer the skill



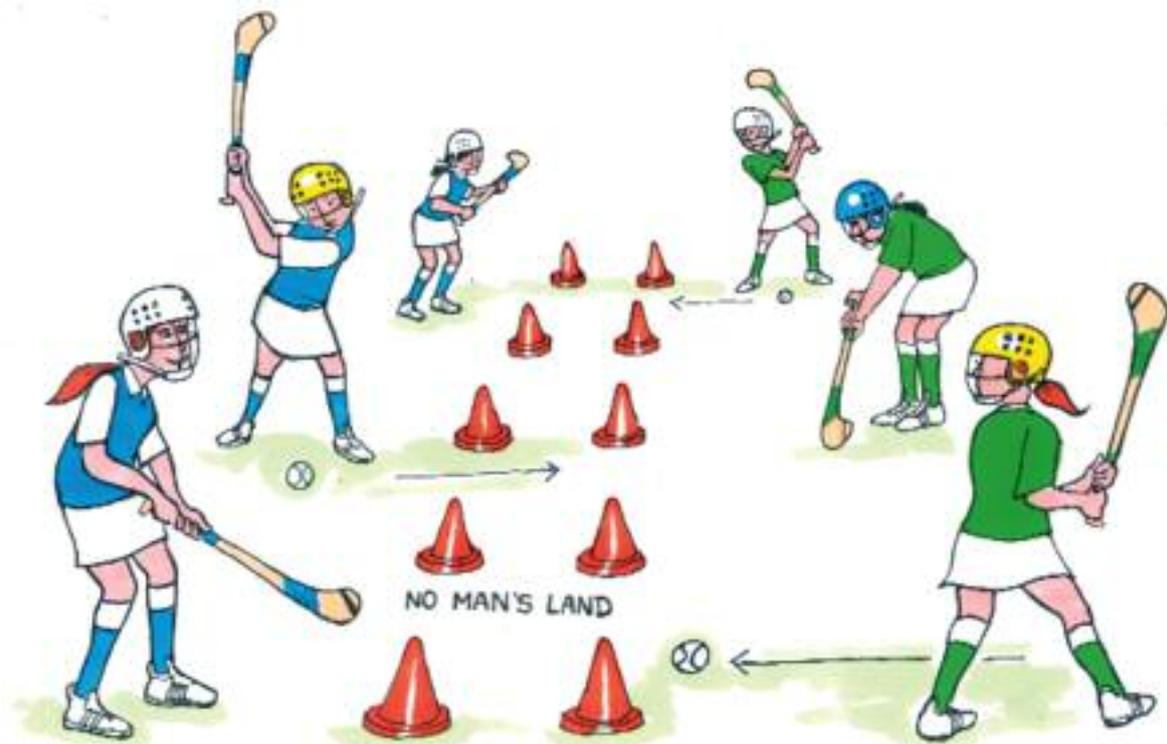
## 10 Mini Games

### Game 1. **Ground Camogie**



3v3, 4v4,

First Touch/Quick Touch Ball



No man's land between two teams defined by cones.  
Three players on each team P1, P2, P3 and P4, P5, P6.  
Three sliotars on each side of no man's land.

On whistle each team begin to strike sliotars to other side of no mans land. As sliotars are driven over no mans land each team attempts to return them to the oppositions side as quickly as possible.

After 4/5 minutes whistle signals end of game. Team with least number of sliotars on its side of no mans land wins game.

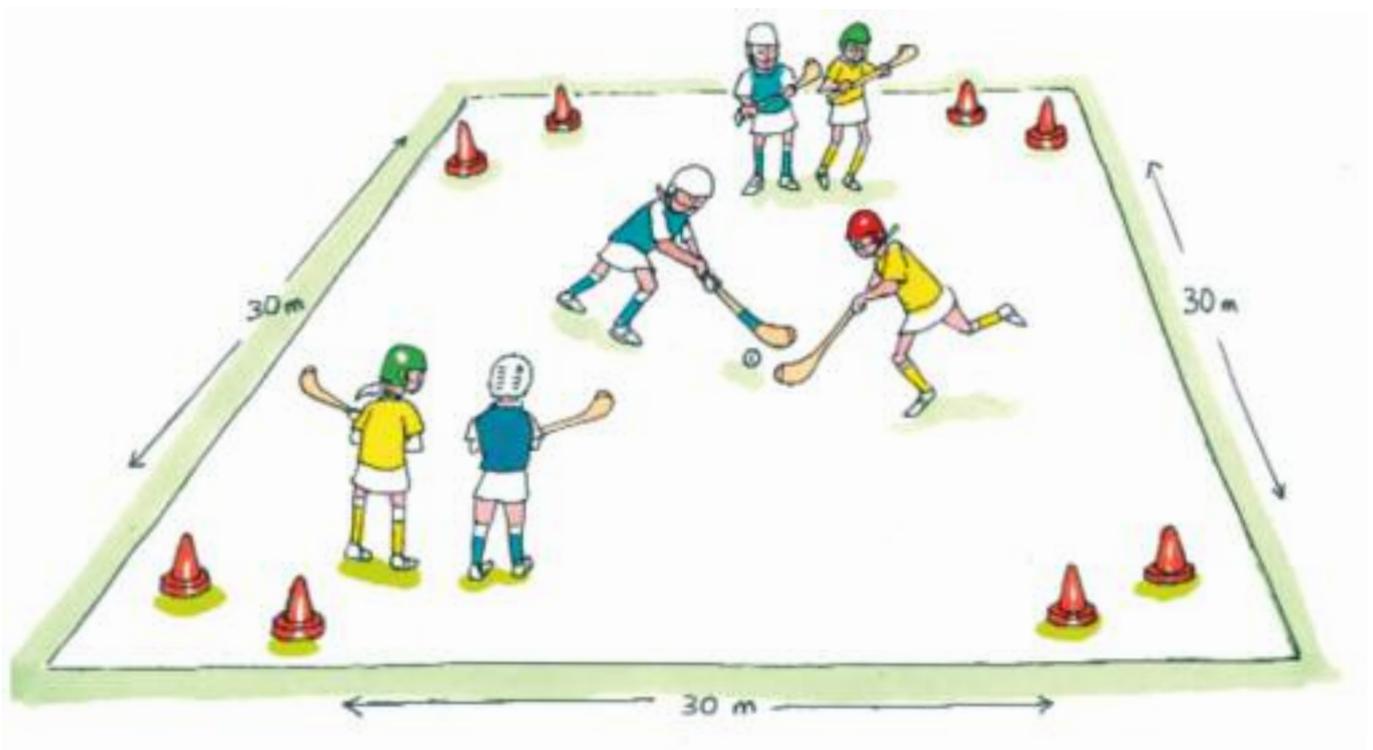
If sliotar goes into no mans land during game offending player must bring it back to own side on ground with hurley before driving over to the opposition's side.

## Game 2. Four Goal Game for Ground Camogie



3v3

First Touch/Quick Touch ball



Game played in 30m by 30m grid.

Goals 3m wide at each corner.  
Each team has to defend two goals.  
No Goalkeepers allowed.

Each team can score through either of the other teams goals.

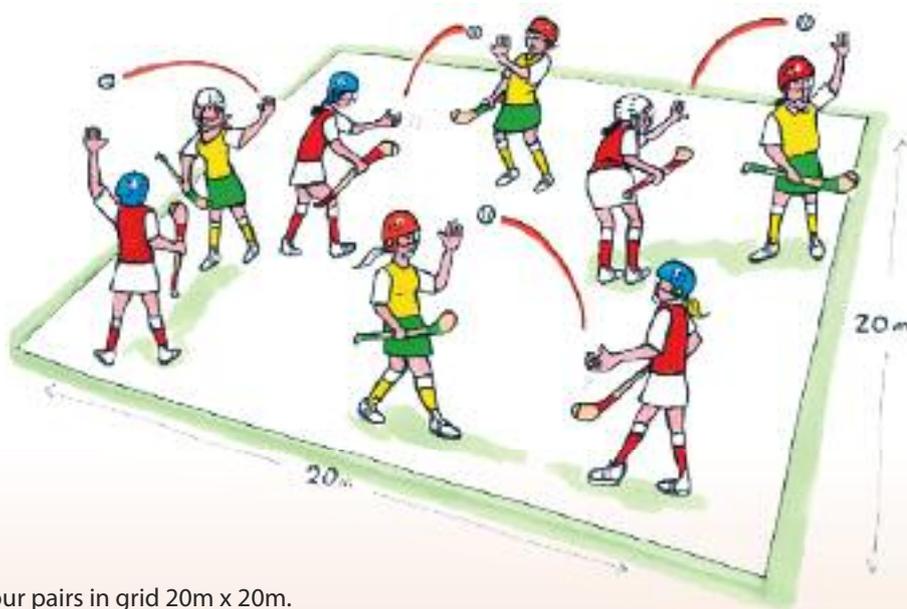


*Guarding of goals (acting as goalkeeper) penalised by awarding of penalty into empty goal from midpoint of grid.*



### Game 3. Catching Game

**Bean bag / Tennis ball/ First Touch ball/ Quick Touch ball**



Four pairs in grid 20m x 20m.

Players hold hurley in dominant hand (strong) with shortened grip.

- Pairs begin moving around inside of grid while throwing beanbag/ball to partner. Emphasis on careful throwing and catching.
- Bean bag/ball then taken from one pair who now become the 'hunters'.
- 'Hunters' now try to intercept beanbag/ball by either catching or knocking it to the ground with hand. Hurley cannot be used for this purpose.
- Any pair who loses the beanbag/ball then become the new 'hunters'.



### Game 4. Catching Game

**4v2**

**Beanbags/tennis balls/First Touch ball/Quick Touch ball**

Players hold hurleys in dominant hand with shortened grip.

Game loaded in favour of catchers.

Four players in possession of beanbag/ball.

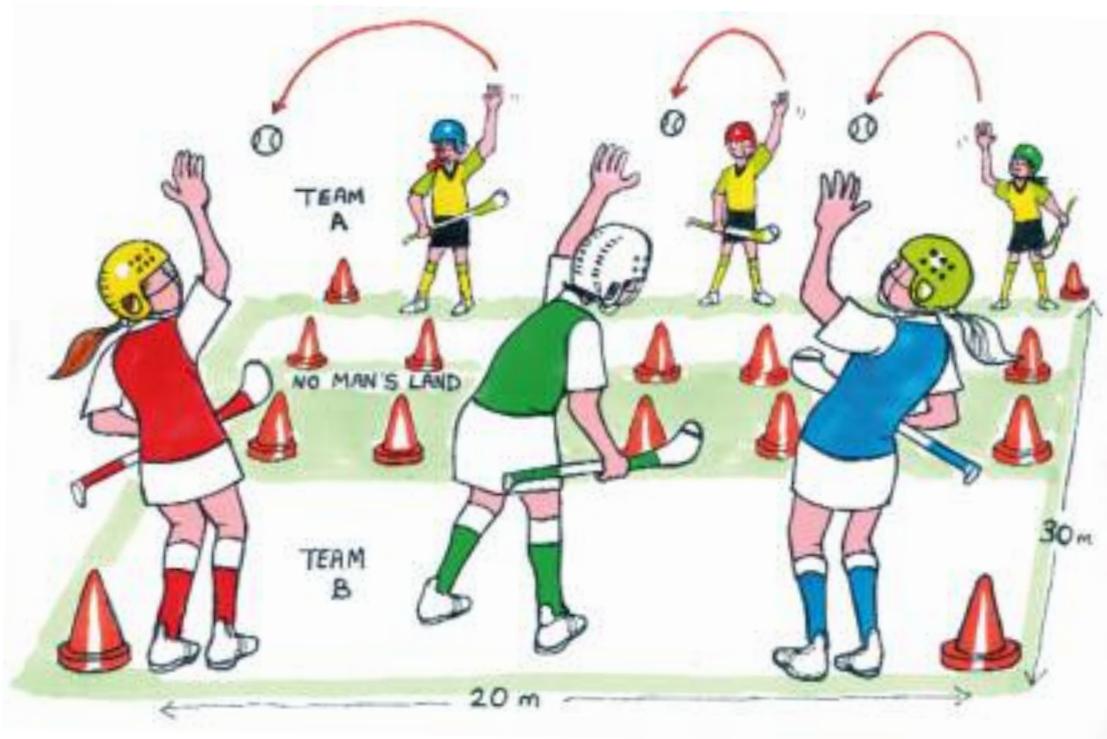
Two players try to intercept by either catching or knocking beanbag/ball to ground with hand. Hurleys cannot be used for this purpose.

Rotate players in pairs every 60 seconds.

## Game 5. Catching Game across No Man's Land



3v3



No man's land – 5m wide.  
Grid- 30m x 20m.

Players hold hurley in dominant hand with shortened grip.

Team A begins with 2 beanbags/balls.  
Underarm throws only at beginning.  
If Beanbag or ball not caught, goal for team A.  
If ball in No mans Land, or out of bounds, minus goal.

Team B then throw and so on.



## Game 6. Roll Lift Game – 3v3, 4v4

### Tennis ball/Quick Touch Ball



Grid 40m x 30m.  
Goal 3 m wide at each end.

No goalkeepers.  
No ground camogie.  
Player who reaches ball first cannot be tackled.

Two goals for ball successfully struck through goals from hand.  
One goal for successful first effort roll lift.

If ball struck out of grid, opposing team get free roll lift and strike from where ball went out.

## Game 7. Moving Sliotars – Roll Lift Game



4v4 – Tennis ball/ Quick Touch ball



Two grids each 4m wide with 10m distance between each grid.

Each team is assigned a grid.

8/12 sliotars in one grid.

On signal from coach P5, P6, P7, P8 run to opponents grid, roll lift one sliotar each and bring back to own grid. They continue until all sliotars have been moved to their own grid.

P1 – P4 then repeat the process by running to other team's grid, roll lifting sliotars and transferring them back to their own grid.

The team, which complete the transfer in the quickest time, wins.



## Game 8. Midway Goal

1v1

First Touch ball/Quick Touch ball



One player at each cone 15-20 m apart.

Goal 2m/3m wide halfway between the two players.

Players attempt to strike ball on ground through the goals to partner.

Whether player scores or fails to score, opponent collects ball to have next shot.

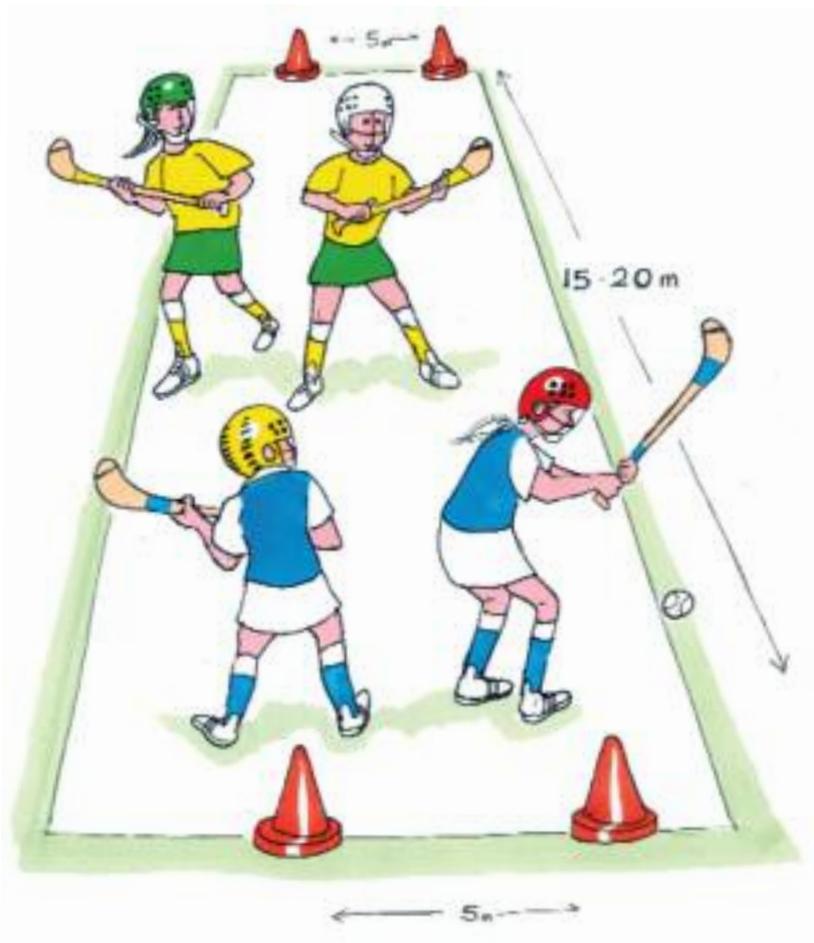
Winner is player who scores most goals in set period of time.

## Game 9. Goal to Goal



2v2

First Touch/Quick Touch ball



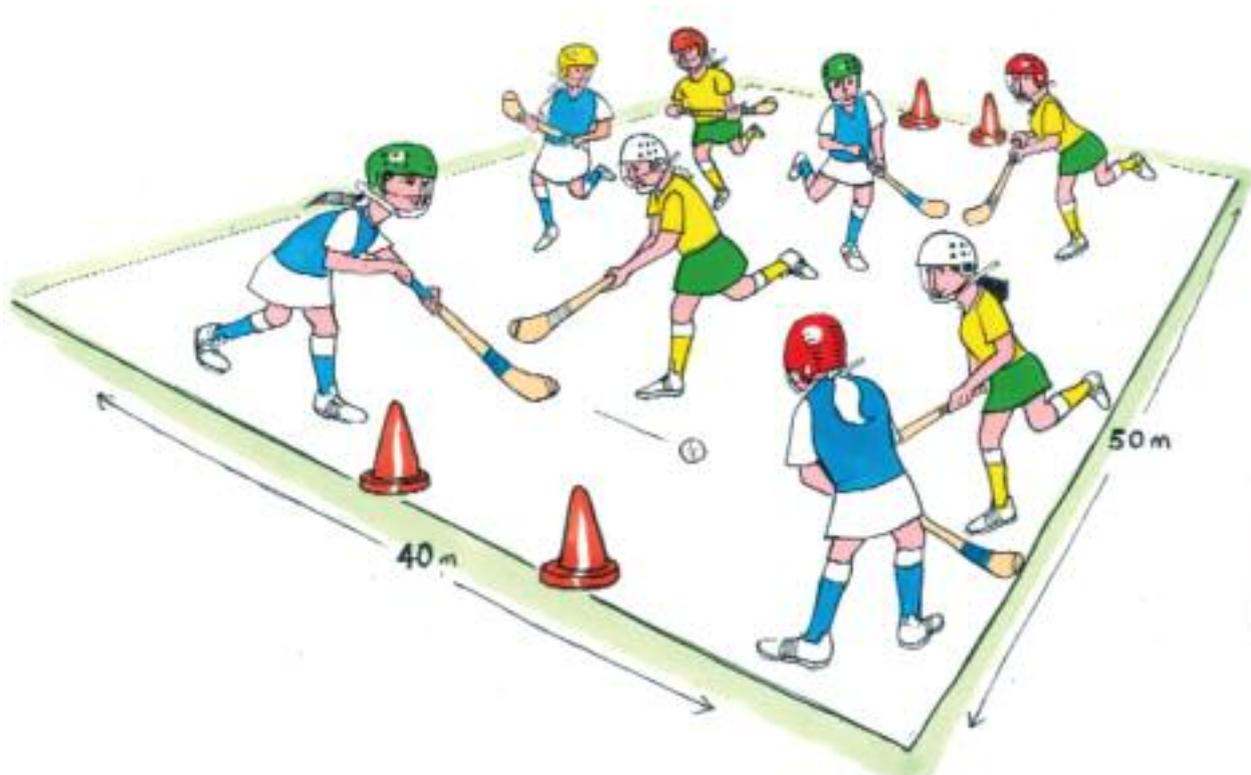
Two goals 5m wide and 15-20m apart.  
 Two players guarding each goal.  
 Players take turns shooting for goals.  
 Either opponent can block shot.  
 Winners are pair who scores most goals in set period of time.



## Game 10. Mini Hurling/Camogie

4v4

Quick Touch/Juvenile sliotar



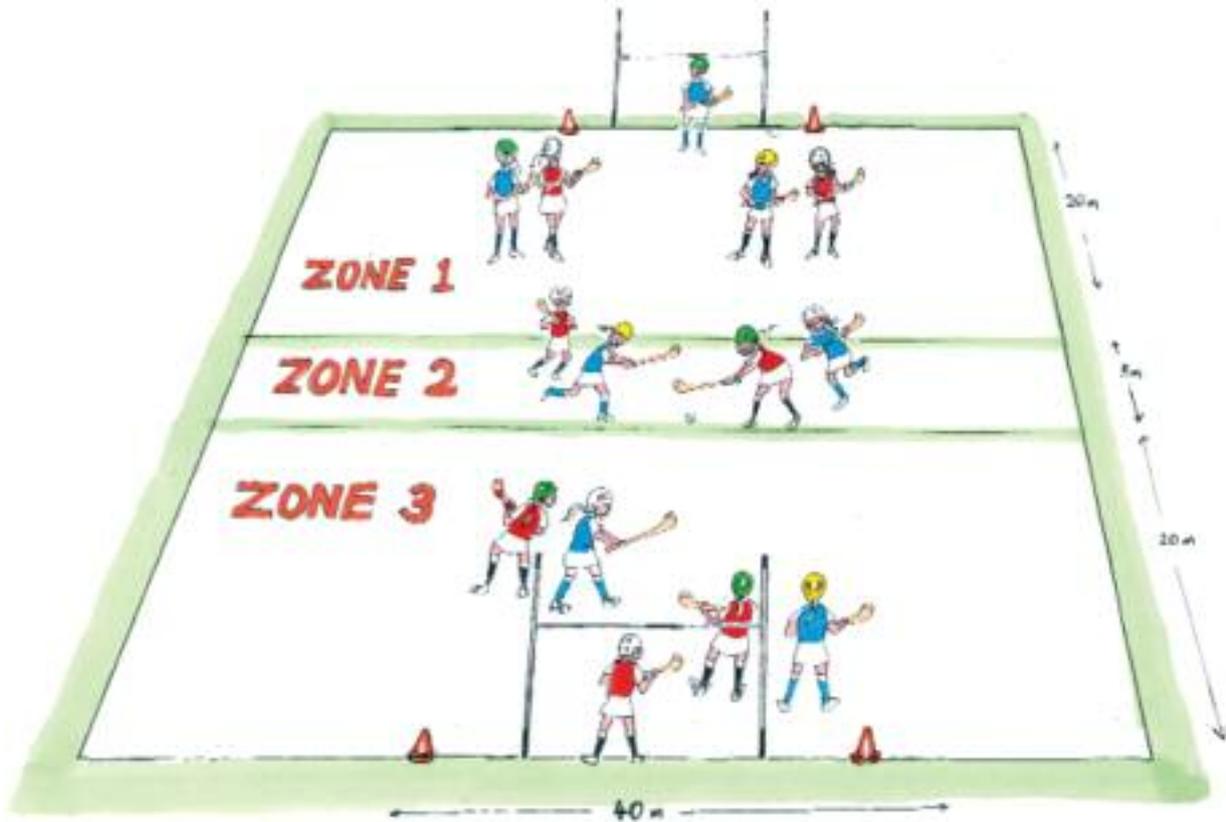
Grid 50m long x 40 m wide.  
Goals at each end 2/3 m wide.  
Four players maximum per team.

Ordinary Camogie rules apply but no solo allowed.  
Player may tap ball once on hurley to evade opponent attempting to block.  
No wides as play continues behind goal as well as in front.  
Play only stops if goal scored or when ball goes over sideline.  
Players can score from in front or behind goals.  
No goalkeepers.  
No guarding of goals allowed – penalty for guarding is a free shot from hand from the halfway spot.  
Game restarts with puck from hand.  
First team to specified number of goals or team ahead after certain period of time wins.

## Go Games Worksheet



### First Touch Camogie 7v7



Game of 4 quarters – ground hurling.

Grid 45m long by 40m wide.

Cones 2m either side of goalposts.

Two defenders in zone near own goal.

Two midfielders in zone 2.

Two forwards in zone near opponents goals.

Play commences with puck out from hand.

Players must remain in assigned zones except midfielders who can enter other zones but must return to zone 2 for frees, sideline pucks and puck outs.

Players rotate positions after each quarter.

All frees from the ground – free taken by player fouled or nearest to the ball.

Goalkeeper may catch or lift sliotar into hand but may not solo with the ball.

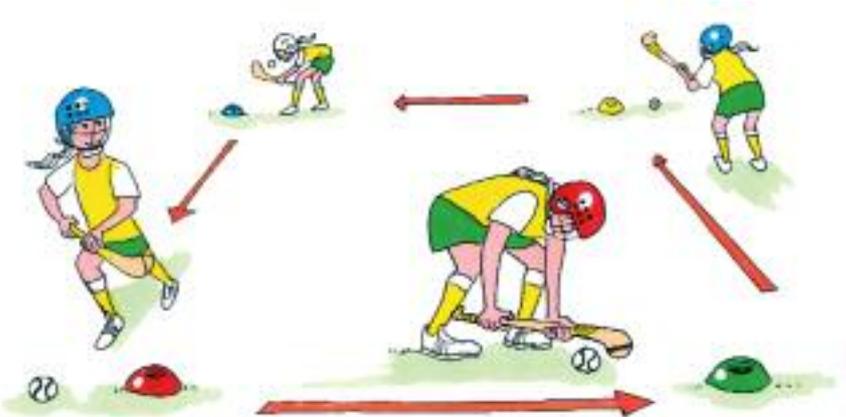
#### Scoring system

1 point when ball played between goalpost and cones.

2 points when ball played over the bar.

3 points when ball under the bar.

## Roll-Lift Drill 1



### Lift and move

Mark out a 3m by 3m square – cone at each corner.

One player and one sliotar at each cone.

On coaches signal each player executes five consecutive roll lifts.

On coaches signal again, players jog to next cone and perform another 5 roll lifts.

Players continue until each player has performed 5 roll lifts at each cone.



(a) While players are executing their roll lifts, coach endeavours to develop 'coaching eye' by carefully observing: **Head – Hands – Hurley – Feet**

(b) Coach attempts to give very basic feedback to players

## Roll-Lift Drill 2



### Circle

Circle of eight cones – Sliotar at six cones.

Group of two players at each end cone.

On signal from coach both groups of players move to line of balls on left hand side and roll lift.

Players then drop ball and go to next cone.

Players keep roll lifting and dropping for 1 ½ minutes.

## Roll-Lift Drill 3



### Roll Lift Shuttle

Six cones in line – two players at each end.

Sliotars at cone 2 and cone 4.

Player 1 roll lifts at cone 2 and places ball at cone 3.

Then roll lifts at cone 4 and places ball at cone 5 and goes behind the second player in the other group (player 4).

Player 3 then picks ball at cone 5, places it at cone 4, picks ball at cone 3 and places it at cone 2 and goes to end of other group.

Drill continues for 1 ½ - 2 minutes.



(a) While players are executing their roll lifts, coach endeavours to develop 'coaching eye' by carefully observing: **Head – Hands – Hurley – Feet**

(b) Coach attempts to give very basic feedback to players

## Roll-Lift Drill 4

### Zigzag Lift

Four cones 5-6m apart in zigzag formation.

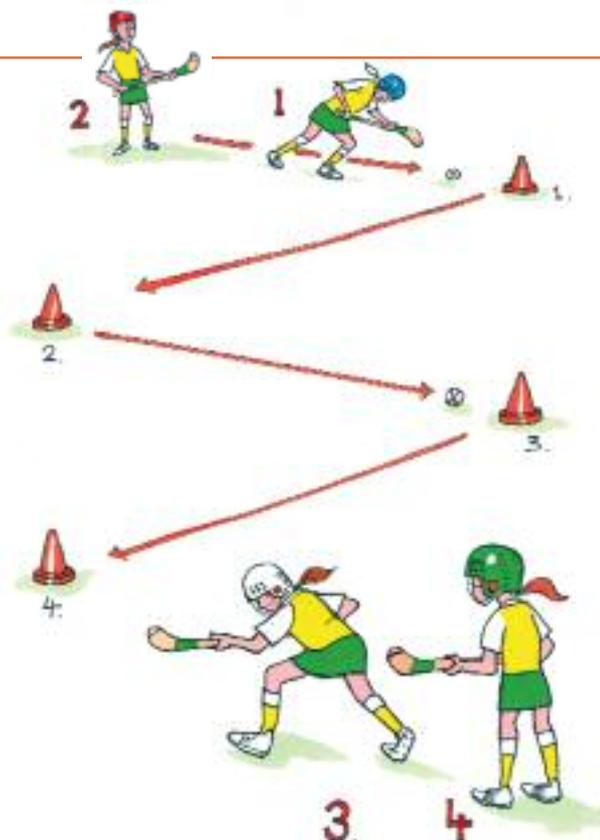
Two players at each end.

Player 1 jogs to roll lift sliotar at first cone, places sliotar at second cone, jogs to third cone, roll lifts and places the sliotar at cone 4.

Goes behind last player in other group (player 4).

Player 3 roll lifts at cone 4 and drops at cone 3, then roll lifts at cone 2 and drops at cone 1 and goes to the end of other group.

Drill continues for 1 ½ - 2 minutes.



## Roll-Lift Drill 5

### Roll Lift in a circle

Four players and six/seven sliotars in a circle  
 On signal players jog, roll lift sliotar and drop  
 Players then move on and repeat process as often as possible.  
 Coach gradually reduces number of sliotars.  
 Players count how many roll lifts in 1 minute/1 ½ minutes etc



- (a) While players are executing their roll lifts, coach endeavours to develop 'coaching eye' by carefully observing: Head – Hands – Hurley – Feet  
 (b) Coach attempts to give very basic feedback to players

## Roll-Lift Drill 6

### Zigzag Roll Lift

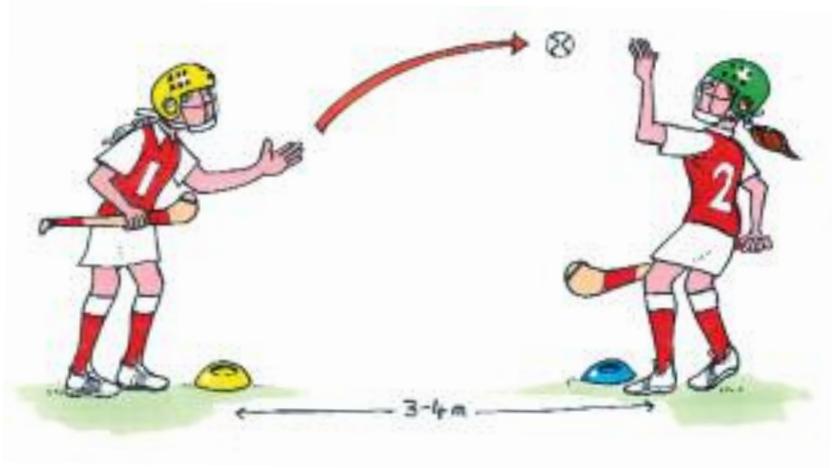
Five cones in zigzag formation – cones 2-3m apart.  
 Sliotar at each cone.  
 On whistle, player 1 walks/jogs to cone 1, roll lifts and drops ball and moves to cone 2.  
 Player 1 continues until the 5 sliotars are roll lifted.  
 Player 2 begins as soon as player 1 reaches second cone. When all players have completed their task, players repeat the process on return journey. Drill continues for 1 ½ -2 minutes.



## Catching Drill 1

Players in pairs 3-4m apart – hurley in dominant hand. Player 1 throws underarm for player 2 to catch at face level or slightly higher. Player 2 then throws for player 1 to catch.

Competition between pairs to see which pair executes the highest number of catches in 1 minute (catches made with non-dominant hand).



- (a) While players are executing their catches, coach endeavours to develop 'coaching eye' by carefully observing: Head – Hands – Hurley – Feet
- (b) Coach attempts to give very basic feedback to players

## Catching Drill 2

### Straight Line Drill – 'Drive on the Left'

Two players facing two others at cones 3-4m apart. Hurley in dominant hand – shortened grip.

Player 1 throws ball to player 2 and runs to take up position behind player 3. Player 2 then throws ball to player 4 and so on. Ball to be thrown at face level or slightly higher. Ball to be caught with non-dominant hand.



## Catching Drill 3

### Triangular Drill

Three cones 3-4m apart in shape of triangle.

One player at each of the first two cones and two players at the 3rd cone.

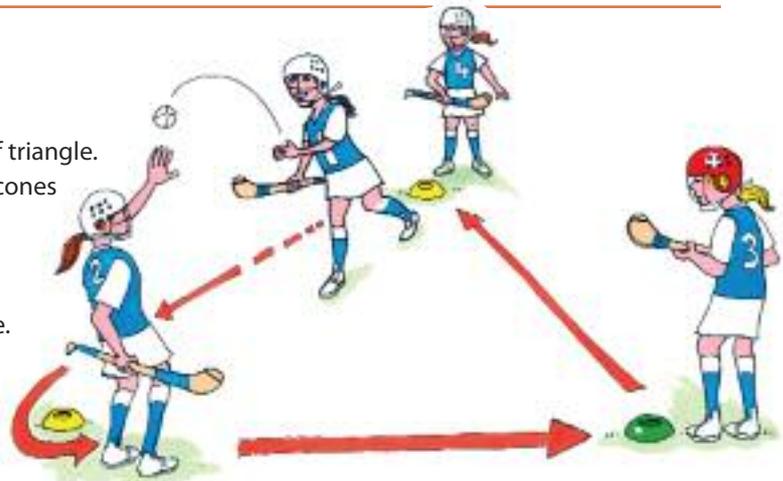
Player 1 throws ball underarm to player 2 at face level or slightly higher and follows ball to that cone.

Player 2 throws ball to player 3 and follows ball to that cone. Player 3 throws ball to player 4 and follows ball to that cone.

Slightly shortened hurley in dominant hand.

Catches made with non-dominant hand.

After 1 minute drill executed in opposite direction.



(a) While players are executing their catches, coach endeavours to develop 'coaching eye' by carefully observing: Head – Hands – Hurley – Feet

(b) Coach attempts to give very basic feedback to players

## Catching Drill 4

### Diagonal Drill

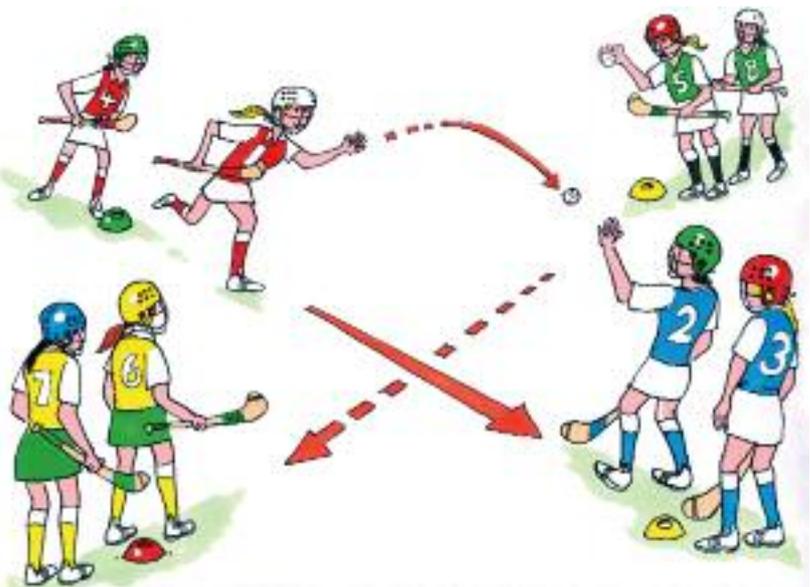
Mark out a 4m by 4m square – cone at each corner.

Equal number of players at each cone.

Player 1 throws diagonally to player 2 and goes behind player 3.

Player 3 throws diagonally to player 4 and goes behind that cone. Same formula for other diagonal. Variations of this drill include:

- One diagonal works alone
- Second diagonal works alone
- Both diagonals work simultaneously
- Slightly shortened hurley in dominant hand
- Catches made with non-dominant hand



## Catching Drill 5

### Three to one Drill

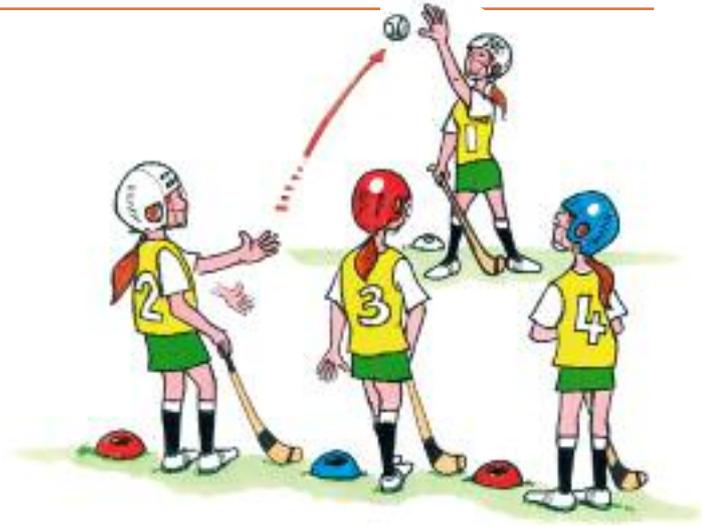
Player 2 throws ball underarm for player 1, who catches and throws it back to player 2. Player 3 does likewise. Then player 4 does likewise before player 1 resumes again.

Players 2, 3, 4 work player 1 intensely for 30/45 secs

Players 2, 3 and 4 then get turns to be the receiver.

Slightly shortened hurleys in dominant hands.

Ball thrown at face level or slightly higher.



- (a) *While players are executing their catches, coach endeavours to develop 'coaching eye' by carefully observing: Head – Hands – Hurley – Feet*
- (b) *Coach attempts to give very basic feedback to players*

## Catching Drill 6

### Square Drill

Four cones 3-4m apart in shape of square.

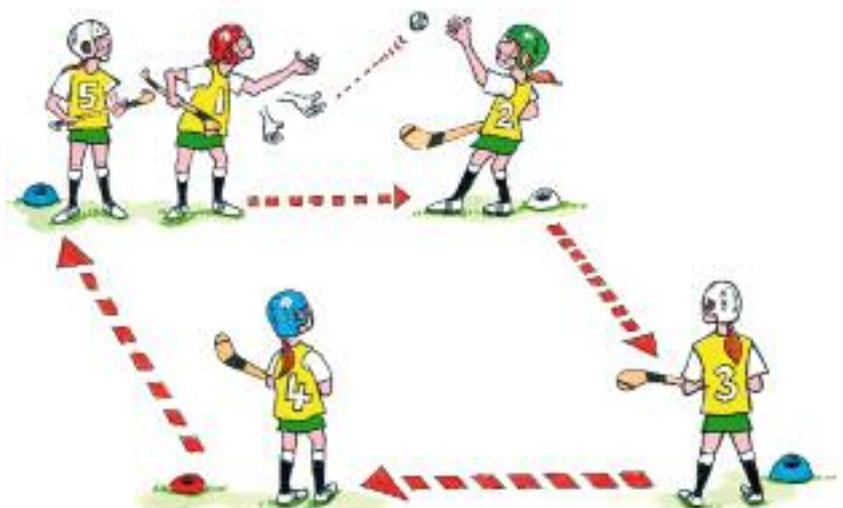
One player at each of three cones and two players at the fourth cone. Player 1 throws ball underarm to player 2 at face level or slightly higher and follows ball to that cone.

Player 2 throws ball to player 3 and follows ball to that cone. Player 3 throws ball to player 4 and follows ball to that cone. Player 4 then throws ball to player 5 and follows ball to that cone.

Slightly shortened hurley in dominant hand.

Catches made with non-dominant hand.

After 1 minute drill executed in opposite direction.



## Warm Up Activities

### 1. Ball per person

- Ten roll Lifts.
- Sliotar in non-dominant (weak) hand – hurley in dominant (strong) hand – place ball on hurley and keep it there to count of 5-10. Repeat five times.
- Gently throw ball up from non-dominant hand and ‘kill’ on hurley by ‘cushioning’ ball with hurley. Then ‘toss’ ball from hurley back to hand. Repeat five times.
- Place ball on bas – ‘toss’ ball head high with hurley and ‘kill’ ball on hurley by ‘cushioning’ ball with hurley. Repeat five times.
- Place ball on bas and gently solo the ball on one side of bas = 30 seconds/45 seconds.
- Solo on both sides of hurley – 30/45 seconds.
- Ball on bas – ‘Toss’ ball overhead – ‘cushion’ ball overhead with other side of bas and then ‘kill’ ball on hurley back in starting position.
- Four-sided solo – hop once on one side of bas, once on heel of bas, once on other side of bas and once on inside curve of bas (above the toe).



*(g) and (h) very difficult but young players enjoy trying to conquer these two activities and get a great ‘feel’ for their hurleys while practicing these two activities. Concentration levels benefit also.*

### 2. Number Rumble

- Grid 25m x 40m approx
- Divide players into teams of six to eight. Players move around designated grid responding to coaches instructions e.g. jog, run, change direction, skip, shuffle to the left or right, hop on one leg, hop on two legs etc.
- Coach calls a number between one and ten. Players on each team quickly form that number (a) in standing position (b) lying on the ground.
- Moving again within area.
- Coach calls more numbers.
- Moving again within area.
- Coach gives different number to each group.



### 3. Ribbon Runners

**Grid 25m x 40m approx**

- One coloured ribbon about nine inches long per each player. In pairs: Ribbon tucked into shorts as tail.
- Face Partner: On signal from coach each player tries to steal each others tail. One point awarded for each steal.
- After three steals each, coach signals players to change partners.
- All players chase around area stealing as many ribbons as possible.



### 4. Clusters Game

**Grid 25m x 40m approx**

- Players jog, run, change directions, hop on one leg, hop on two legs, skip, shuffle to the left or right on coach's instructions.
- Coach calls number and players must get into groups of that number.
- Players moving again within that area.
- Coach calls another number and players form into groups of that number.

### 5. Dodgeball

**Grid 25m x 40 m approx**

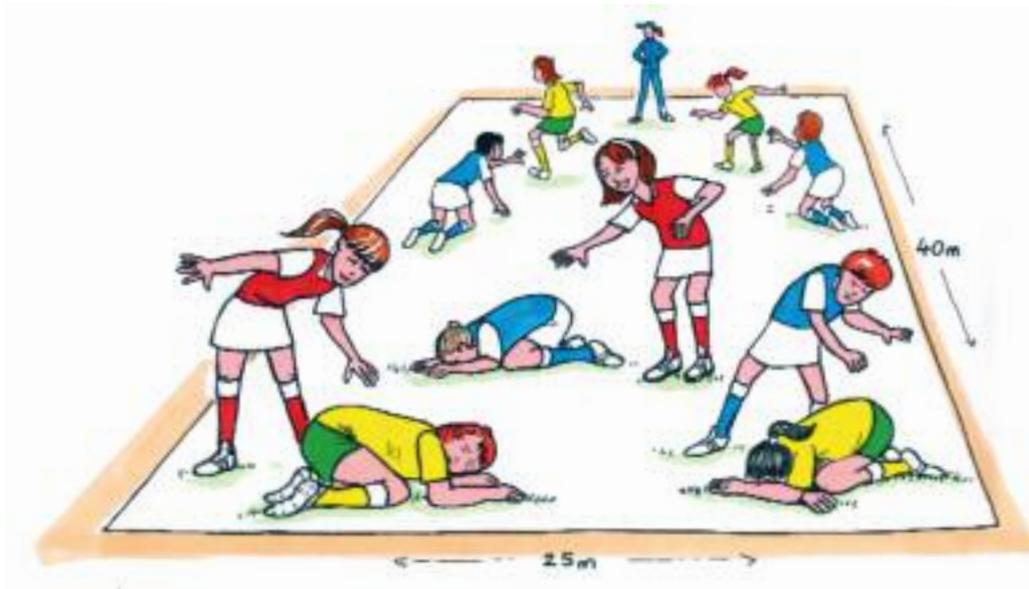
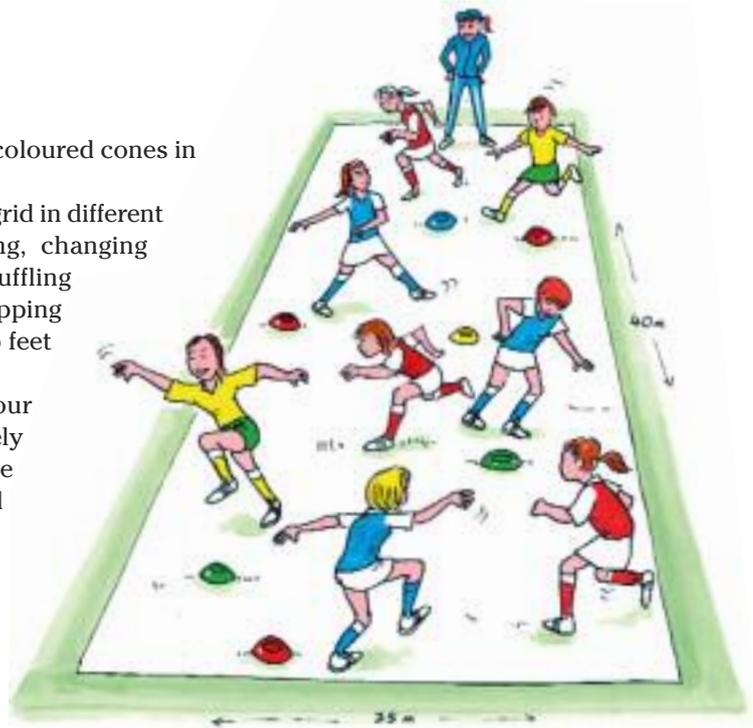
- Players running in different directions inside the grid.
- Three players given a softball or beanbag.
- To score a point these 'chasers' must throw ball/beanbag and **hit legs** of targeted players.
- Players hit by ball/beanbag must freeze but can be freed by a player crawling through their legs.
- After one minute player who makes most hits is winner.
- Three different players then become the 'chasers'.



## 6. Find the Cone

Grid 25m x 40m approx

- The coach scatters various coloured cones in the grid.
- Players move around in the grid in different ways (e.g.) jogging, running, changing directions, skipping, shuffling sideways to left or right, hopping on one foot, hopping on two feet etc.
- Coach suddenly calls a colour and players must immediately seek out appropriate coloured cone and stand there until game resumes.



## 7. Cat and Mouse

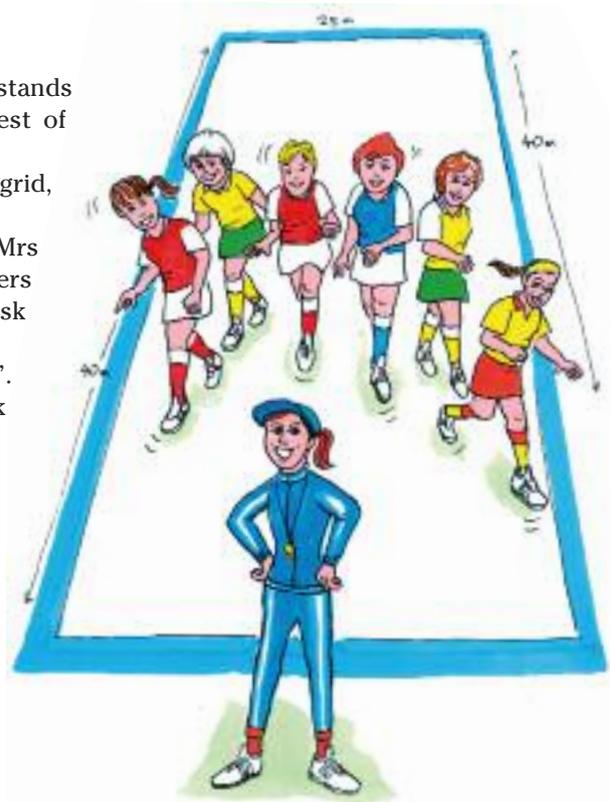
Grid 25m x 40m approx

- Players in pairs – one is the cat, partner is the mouse.
- Each cat curls up on the ground with eyes closed.
- The mice, meanwhile are in their 'dens' which are the four corners of the grid.
- On signal from coach mice scurry from their dens and tip any cat they choose.
- Cat must then jump up and chase that mouse to try and catch her before she reaches her den.
- If mouse caught change roles.
- After two minutes mice become cats and cats become mice.

## 8. What's the time Mrs Wolf?

Grid 25m x 40m approx

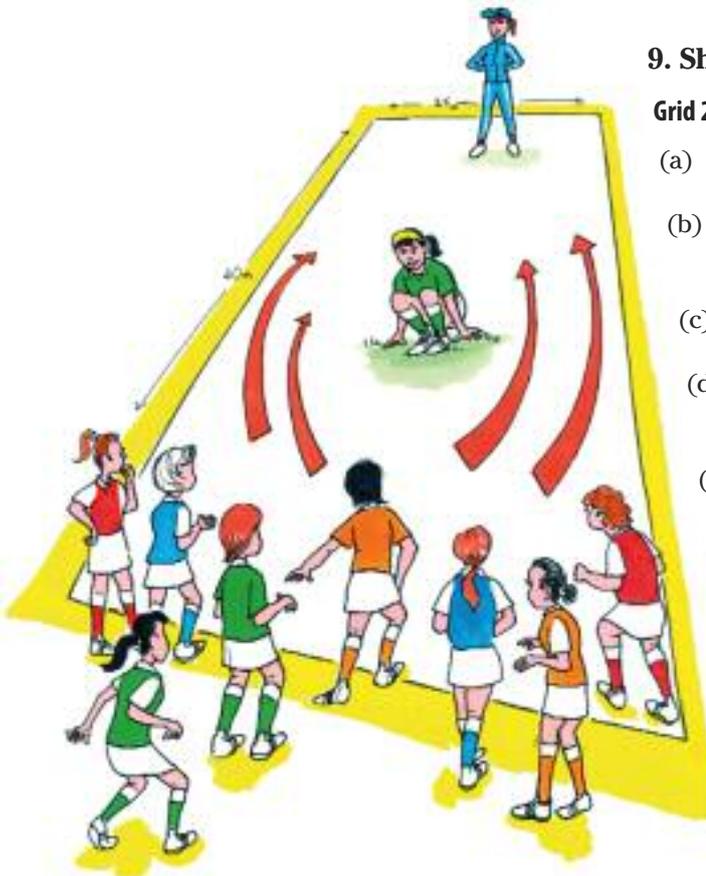
- One player chosen as Mrs Wolf. Mrs Wolf stands at one end of grid facing away from rest of players.
- Rest of players stand at the other end of grid, which is home.
- Players chant 'What time is it Mrs Wolf?' Mrs Wolf says '8 o'clock' for example. All players then take eight steps forward, stop and ask 'What time is it Mrs Wolf?'.
- Mrs Wolf says for example 'It's 5 o'clock'. Players then take 5 steps forward and ask 'What time is it Mrs Wolf?'.
- This continues until Mrs Wolf says 'Dinnertime!' Mrs Wolf then turns and chases everyone home while trying to catch one of them.
- If child caught, she becomes Mrs Wolf. If nobody caught, same player remains as Mrs Wolf.
- If a player reaches Mrs Wolf before 'dinnertime' she taps Mrs Wolf on the shoulder and runs for home chased by Mrs Wolf.



## 9. Sheep Sheep Come Home

Grid 25m x 40m approx

- One player is the fox, one is the farmer, the rest are sheep.
- All the sheep stand at one end of grid. The farmer stands at the other end. The fox crouches in centre of grid.
- Farmer says 'Sheep sheep, come home'. Sheep say 'we're frightened of the fox'.
- Farmer says 'the fox is gone to Wicklow/Kerry and won't be back for a month'.
- The sheep now run to the farmer but the fox tries to catch one.
- Any player caught either swaps places with the fox or helps the fox as a 'catcher'.
- If the sheep that are caught join the fox, the game ends when all the sheep have been caught.

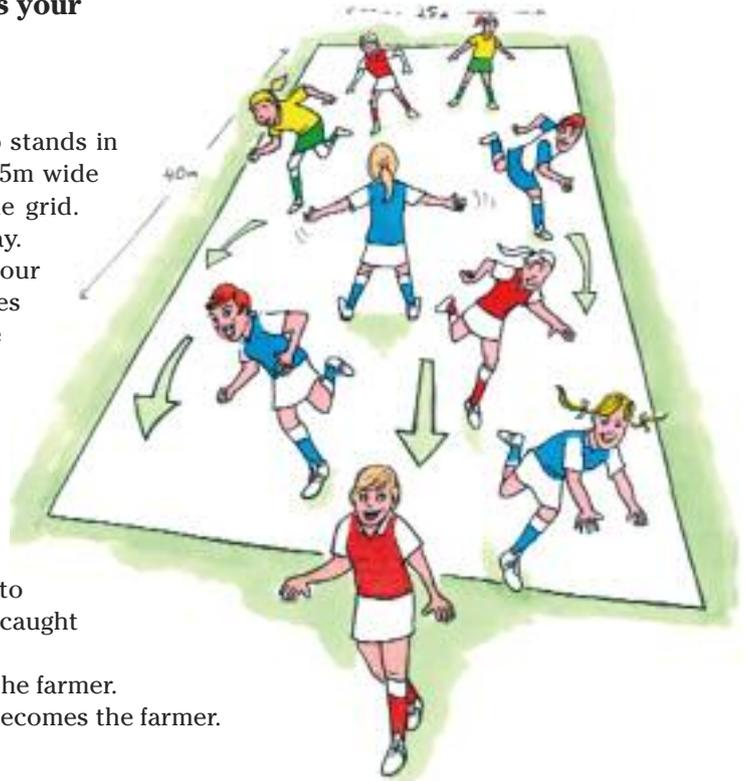


*Coach acting as farmer would ensure even greater participation of all players.*

## 10. Farmer Farmer, may we cross your golden river?

Grid 25m x 40m approx

- One player is the farmer who stands in the centre of the designated 5m wide area across the middle of the grid. Rest of players stand 15m away.
- Players ask 'May we cross your golden river?' Farmer replies 'You may not unless you are wearing blue/ red/ white.'
- Player wearing named colour, even if it is only part of a garment, may cross the river in safety.
- Players not wearing the appropriate colour now try to cross the river without being caught by the farmer.
- Players caught can now help the farmer.
- The last person caught then becomes the farmer.

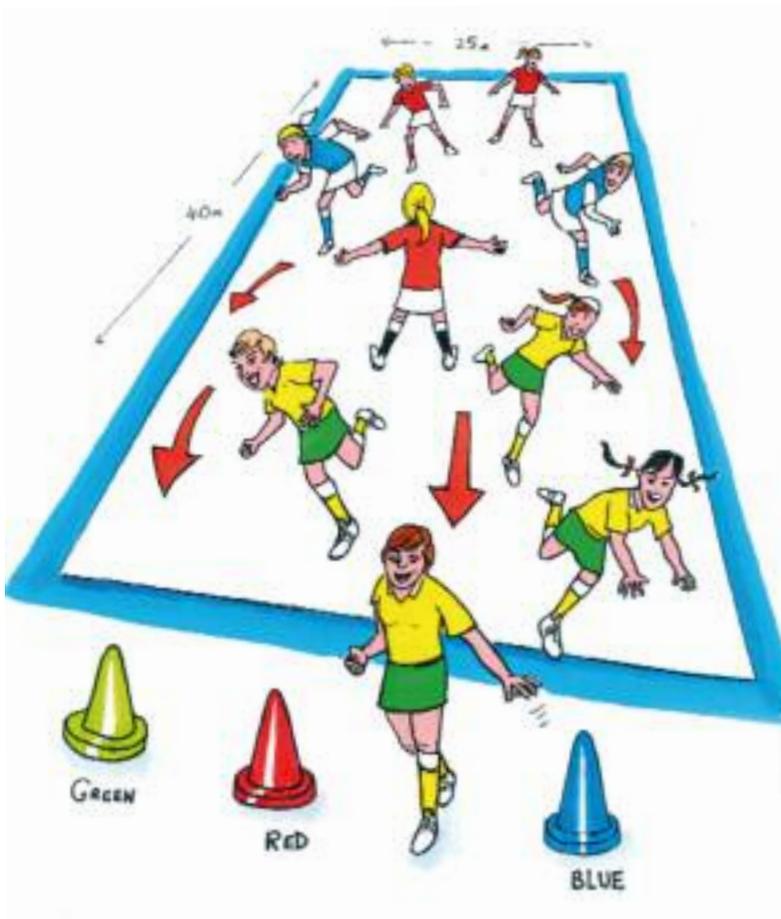


## 11. Cups and Saucers

Grid 25m x 40m approx

- Players divided into two equal teams. Each player is given a cone.
- First team move around the grid placing their cones upside down – the 'cups'.
- Second team move around the grid but place their cones as they normally would – the 'saucers'.
- On the whistle the first team run around and turn as many cones as possible into 'cups' while the second team must try to turn as many as possible into 'saucers'.
- On second whistle players must 'freeze' instantly.
- Team with most cups or saucers win.





## 12. Sheepdog and sheep

### Grid 25m x 40m approx

- One player is a sheepdog who stands in centre of grid. The rest are sheep – they line up at one end of grid.
- Three cones at each end of grid:
  - Orange cone = carrots
  - Green cone = cabbages
  - Blue cone = turnips
- Sheepdog calls the name of vegetable and sheep must run to that vegetable (on opposite side) and tip it with hand.
- Sheep who are caught become sheepdogs.
- Game ends when only one sheep remains.





# CHAPTER 5

## *Hurley Length Survey – February 2008*

Personal observation, anecdotal evidence and feedback from various coaches indicate strongly that many young camogie players and hurlers believe that the longer the hurley the more likely they are to become proficient at the skills of the game.

It is quite usual to see young players in clubs and at camps using hurleys that are far too long for them. How often have we seen a 32 inch hurley being used rather than a 30 inch one or a 34 inch rather than a 32 inch etc. One particular player in the summer of 2007 was observed playing quite well with a hurley which, on inspection, turned out to be 33 inches long. Luckily that particular girl was very amenable to suggestion and ultimately settled for a 28 inch hurley. The upshot was that her dexterity, speed of stroke and general hurling skill level were greatly enhanced and she openly admitted that she now found the game more enjoyable and satisfying than before.

Longer hurleys are often purchased on the basis that the player will, over time, “grow into it”. Boots, gear, tracksuits etc. are quite often chosen with much greater attention even though the actual hurley is the single most important item for a camogie player or hurler.

Paradoxically, present day inter-county hurlers seem to be gradually opting for shorter hurleys than previous generations of players. The evolution of hurling into a “pick and strike game” has influenced this trend. Some modern day players have even changed the length of their hurleys at the height of their careers and the change is almost always in favour of a shorter hurley.

In an attempt to put this issue in some perspective a mini-survey was carried out in which 21 intercounty camogie players and 21 Kilkenny and Cork senior hurlers were asked for (a) their heights (b) their hurley lengths.

This survey was not very broad-based or representative enough to extrapolate from with certitude. The results, however, are very interesting and provide plenty of food for thought for coaches of players of all ages but particularly for coaches of underage camogie players and hurlers.

## Survey Results

Average Height of 21 Intercounty Camogie players	5ft 6"
Average Length of Hurley for above players	34.2"

Average Height of 21 Cork & Kilkenny Hurlers	5ft 11 ¼"
Average Length of hurley for above players	34.9"

## Individual Comparisons

Hurling Defender (Height)	6ft 1"	Hurley Length	34"
Camogie Defender (Height)	5ft 4"	Hurley Length	35"
Hurling Wing Forward	6ft 3"	Hurley Length	35"
Camogie Wing Forward	5ft 6"	Hurley Length	35"
Hurling Wing Back	5ft 9"	Hurley Length	34"
Camogie Wing Back	5ft 4"	Hurley Length	34"
Free scoring hurling corner forward	5ft 10 ½"	Hurley Length	34.5"
Free scoring camogie corner forward	5ft 5"	Hurley Length	33"

When a 5ft 9" All-Star wing back was asked why he used a 34 inch hurley he immediately specified three main reasons:

1. "To get the sliotar into my hand faster".
2. "I wouldn't get hooked as easily or as often as I would with a longer hurley".
3. "I can swing the hurley more efficiently".

## Relevance of Survey Data for the Underage Coach

1. Choosing the correct length hurley for the young player increases the likelihood of the player using the correct grip i.e. with the dominant hand at the top of the handle.
2. Having embraced the proper grip from the outset there is every chance that the young player will have successful experiences using the hurley and will persevere with that grip.
3. Just like the All-Star hurler quoted earlier, the young player will:
  - (a) swing the hurley more efficiently.
  - (b) will pick, and get the sliotar into her hand more quickly.
  - (c) will not get hooked as easily or as often as she would with a longer hurley.



## The Hurley Length Test

1. Ask the player to stand erect, looking straight ahead, with hands by her side.
2. The correct length hurley should be just long enough that the player can “shake hands” comfortably with the top of the handle, while still looking straight ahead and with hands and arms extended down the side of the body.
3. Ask the player to grip the hurley as outlined and to extend the dominant (strong) hand straight out from the shoulder. The player should keep the thumb of the dominant hand on the upper edge of the handle for control and stability.
4. If the hurley is the correct length and weight the player should be able to keep the hurley extended for approximately 20 seconds without too much discomfort.





# CHAPTER 6

## *Developing a “Coaching Eye”*

Sometimes coaches find it difficult to pinpoint exactly where the young player needs help to improve her performance of a skill.

Try the following exercise:

- (a) Ask a player to stand a few feet away from the coach. Ask the player to shut her eyes tightly/firmly.  
Now throw a rugby ball gently towards the player and ask her to catch it. The ball obviously, will fall to the ground.  
Why? Because the player's eyes are not on the ball.
- (b) Ask player to open her eyes and extend one arm over her head and to leave the other arm down by her side. Arms are to remain in this position until coach gives new instructions. Coach then throws the rugby ball gently to player. Even though eyes are on the ball it will still fall to the ground because hands not are used properly.
- (c) The player is now asked to prepare her hands to receive the ball. The ball will, invariably be caught by the player because the eyes and hands are used correctly.
- (d) Now intimate to the player that the ball will be thrown 2/3m to the left or the right. The player now has to move to catch the ball, which again is thrown gently from a few feet. The catch will be made successfully when the player moves left or right to effect the catch but not if the player remains static. This little exercise highlights for the coach the importance, when working with young players, of paying particular attention to:

■ **Head** ■ **Hands** ■ **Feet**

By so doing the coach will begin to appreciate their importance and consequently, should be in a better position to pinpoint areas of difficulty for the young player and to offer accurate, relevant guidance.

Now try the following exercise either with self or with a young player.

### Kicking a football

- (a) Hold football in two hands slightly below navel and approximately 9-12 inches out from body. Keep elbows tucked in close to the body.
- (b) The ball is now transferred to the dominant hand while the non-dominant leg is moved ever so slightly forward for extra stability.
- (c) Drop ball from dominant hand to “swinging” dominant leg and follow through.
- (d) Keep eyes on ball at all times.

If all of the above instructions are carefully followed a reasonably accurate kick will ensue.

However, if (a) eyes are taken off ball, (b) ball thrown with two hands or (c) non-dominant leg is not moved forward then the quality of the kick will be affected adversely.

Once again the importance of paying particular attention to the head, hands and feet in coaching is highlighted.

Head Hands Feet are crucial in the coaching of most sports.

### Camogie

As well as the head, hands and feet, the hurley itself is obviously a key element in the execution of skills.

#### Example – The Roll Lift

While the sliotar can be roll lifted in a number of ways many of these are not efficient. Therefore the young player regularly needs guidance from her coach who at all times is paying particular attention to head, hands, hurley and feet.

#### Examples of a Camogie Coach paying attention to Head, Hands, Hurley, Feet

1. Player roll lifts with both hands locked together near the top of the handle.  
*Coach identifies that the hands are in the wrong position.*
2. Player roll lifts with “slanted hurley”. Ball “goes away” from player leading to player having to use “grasping” downward catch.  
*Coach identifies that (a) hurley is not parallel to ground and (b) ball is not caught in “cupped” hand.*
3. The player roll lifts the ball up to head height leading to risk of injury when catching ball.  
*Coach identifies that player may not have positioned feet properly, not crouched sufficiently or raised ball too vigorously. In addition catching hand is obviously not in the “cupped” position.*

4. The player roll lifts with two feet together some distance behind ball.  
*Coach identifies incorrect positioning of feet.*
5. Player roll lifts with toe of hurley pointed inwards.  
*Coach identifies that positioning of bás is incorrect.*
6. Player “grasps downwards” at ball rather than catching with “cupped” hand.  
*Coach identifies incorrect catch (hand).*
7. Player roll lifts but catches ball with dominant hand rather than with non-dominant hand.  
*The coach identifies incorrect “catching hand”.*
8. The player roll lifts but drops the ball.  
*Coach identifies player “taking eye off ball” or not grasping ball properly.*

By observing HEAD HURLEY HANDS and FEET the coach will gradually grow in confidence and understanding and be better able to guide, help and encourage the young player.



- 
- Give guidance, help, and feedback to players as soon as possible rather than wait until end of session.
  - Reinforce feedback – the more often the player is reminded to keep eyes on the ball, adjust feet, “shorten” the hurley etc the better.
  - Do not give player too much feedback at one time as it clutters the mind. Work on one point at a time.
  - Use simple, age appropriate language to explain what was done wrong before seeking to correct error.
  - Tell and show players how to correct faults. Try to cut the talking to a minimum.
  - Make sure your feedback is positive, accurate and specific as in the roll lift examples.
  - Keep talking to a minimum! You are there to facilitate the young players’ learning, so be:
    - Positive
    - Helpful
    - Accurate
    - Specific
  - THINK: ■ **Head** ■ **Hands** ■ **Hurley** ■ **Feet**
-





# CHAPTER 7

## *Fundamentals*

### *Learning the fundamental movement skills*

The core movement skills necessary for the young camogie players are generally classified as:

ABC's – Agility, Balance, Coordination (and Speed)

RJT's – Running, Jumping, Throwing

CPKS – Catching, Passing, (Kicking), Striking

Experts on sports science and long term player development tell us that if fundamental motor skill training is not developed before the age of 11 or 12, it may be too late after that for the child to develop the fundamental movement skills so necessary for success in sport.

Children today, in many cases lead extremely sedentary lives compared to previous generations. There are social reasons, economic reasons, safety reasons and many other reasons for this. Whatever the causes, however, the consequence is that skills which were developed on an almost incidental basis by youngsters of previous generations are generally lacking in many of today's children.

Whereas children in former times disported themselves in safety in the fields or even on the streets, the fact is that children nowadays generally spend an inordinate amount of time in front of computers and televisions or being bussed or driven to most activities. Physical work and walking and cycling long distances, which were an integral part of most young peoples lives in years gone by, are now almost unheard of activities for youngsters. This allied to dietary changes, has ensured that, in addition to a sedentary lifestyle, incipient obesity in children has become a huge concern.

Educational establishments are finding it increasingly difficult to redress this imbalance in children's lives. The huge emphasis on academic subjects is often directly at the expense of

Physical Education, Sport and Games while the spectre of litigation has ensured that the scenario of children being forbidden to run around at their breaks is beginning to become more and more commonplace.

Consequently many children nowadays lack the fundamental movement skills so vital for sporting progress.

It is imperative therefore that camogie foundation coaches:

- (a) appreciate the deficiencies in the young players' physical literacy.
- (b) make every effort to address this problem by attending to these basic motor skills during training sessions.

When players are deficient in these fundamental skills it becomes very difficult to teach sport specific skills.

One of the main aims of underage camogie coaches should be to make the young players as physically literate as possible before they reach the age of 11 or 12.

## Agility

1. The ability to keep one's balance while moving one's feet quickly
2. The ability to change direction quickly and control the movement of the whole body.




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*It is vital that players develop the ability to move in different directions and to lead off both feet.*

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## Balance

1. The ability to maintain harmony between the parts of the whole body.
2. The ability to maintain a stable orientation in relation to the immediate environment.




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*The importance of developing good balance cannot be over stressed – vital in camogie where players may ultimately have to perform skills while off balance or while on one foot.*

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## Coordination

1. The ability to integrate different parts of the body in a harmonious operation.
2. The ability to move different parts of the body simultaneously or in sequence in order to perform a specific task.




---

*Coordination is hugely important in camogie because of skills involving hand-eye, foot-eye and hand-foot coordination.*

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## Running

1. The ability to travel with quick steps on alternate feet while never having both feet on the ground at the same time.
2. Running is a basic movement skill involving the coordinated movement of the legs and arms.




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*A good running technique and style is vitally important for the young camogie player. Getting to the ball quickly or getting away quickly with the ball gives the young player a better chance of performing her skill and also, possibly, increases the chances of avoiding incidental or accidental injury.*

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## Jumping

The ability to move off the ground or other surface by sudden muscular effort of the legs. This movement is usually upwards but can also be forwards, backwards and sideways.




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*It is vital that young camogie players practice and develop this skill as jumping for the ball is a most important skill in camogie.*

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## Throwing

1. The ability to propel an object with some force through the air or in a particular direction.
2. The ability to project an object with a rapid motion of the arms.




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*Hand-eye coordination is at the core of throwing and consequently throwing skills help with the developing of other camogie skills.*

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## Catching, Passing, Striking

These skills are integral parts of camogie involving hand-eye and hand-foot coordination and should be developed by using a variety of beanbags, large balls, balloons, small balls, tennis balls, Quick Touch and First Touch sliotars.

## Coaching Aids for Fundamentals

With these notes are examples of activities to develop

**Agility – Balance – Coordination**

**Running – Jumping – Throwing**

For coaches who may quickly exhaust the limited amount of resources material contained in the above there are two sources of information in this vital area that can be highly recommended.

### A. The GAA Fun Do Learning Resource Pack

This is an extraordinary body of work made up of five manuals, three DVD's and two DVD ROM's.

Within the pack is a manual and DVD dealing specifically with ABC's, RJT's and CPKS's. These materials contain a wealth of information and guidance which should prove invaluable to the underage coach.

The foresight of the GAA in conceiving this project and their expertise in bringing the work to fruition has not, we believe, been given the recognition and acclamation it so richly deserves.

The GAA's generosity in making the material available to other Gaelic Games organisations has to be acknowledged and their willingness to allow others to use some of their materials is magnanimous in the extreme.

The Fun Do Pack is an invaluable resource and every camogie coach should ask her/his club to make the pack available to all the club's coaches.

### B. Ulster GAA Council's Fundamentals Pack

The Ulster GAA Council has produced an exceptional manual and CD ROM dealing with Fundamentals. This is a wonderful resource for underage coaches and its contributors have to be highly complimented for making their knowledge and expertise available to us all.

## Fundamentals

### Agility 1

#### Dodgems

Coach decides on size of area to be used depending on number of players present.

Players pretend to be driving bumper cars.

Players use 'caps' as steering wheels.

As well as avoiding other drivers players also have to avoid cones strewn around driving area.

Encourage players to change direction to avoid 'traffic'.




---

*Gradually reduce size of driving area to ensure greater difficulty (if necessary).*

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## Agility 2

### Bridges and Rivers

Players run, jog, skip etc around the area.

On whistle players break into pairs.

One player is a 'bridge'; the other is a 'river'.

Bridges balance on hands and feet.

Rivers crawl/shuttle under bridges on their stomachs using arms and legs to propel themselves.

Try to encourage rivers to flow ' backwards' as well.

After some time change roles.

## Agility 3

### Touch the cone

Coach decides on size of area depending on numbers. Scatter different coloured cones around area.

On command players to touch three same coloured cones with toes.

Then challenge players to touch three different coloured cones.

Coach then calls another colour for players to touch.

Cones to be touched lightly – 'must avoid moving cones'.




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*Gradually introduce holding hurley in dominant hand*

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## Agility 4

### Minefield (with hurley and bean bag)

Mark out a square 8m x 8m approx.

Place large number of cones inside the square – 'mines'.

Divide players into two groups of two.

Players must dodge the 'mines' as they travel from opposite sides of square (two players each side) 'soloing' with beanbags on hurley.

Initially one team traverses the square, then the second team.

Finally both teams traverse the square simultaneously.




---

*Players encouraged to gradually up the pace.*

*Players must make one/two/three catches of beanbag as they solo*

*No pushing or bumping allowed*

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## Balance 1

### Body Parts

Mark out a square 8m x 8m.

Players running, jogging etc within the square with hurleys held short in dominant hand.

On command from coach players asked to balance on just 1 part of the body.

Players told to move around square again – told to change direction from time to time.

On command players told to balance on two parts of body (but not two legs).

Players running and changing direction.

On command players told to balance on three parts of body.

Balance on one part of body and hurley.

## Balance 2

### Line Walk

Players walk along a line/strip of tape on the floor.

Ask players not to fall off!

Ask players to turn 360 degrees in the middle of their walk

Then challenge players to walk the line with their eyes closed.

1. Players urged to remain upright at all times.
2. Players to raise arms to help in maintaining balance.
3. Gradually introduce holding hurley in dominant hand and ball in non-dominant hand.
4. Gradually introduce soloing beanbag/sliotar and catching beanbag/sliotar.

## Balance 3

### Change the Shape

1. Players lie flat on ground face down.  
Raise arms and legs individually.  
Raise arms on one side and leg on other side.  
Then arm and leg on same side.  
Then arm and leg on other side.
2. Move into press-up position – lift body onto arms and feet.  
Rotate the feet to the side while balancing on arms.  
Raise one foot into the air.  
Then raise other foot into the air.  
Balance on arms and knees.




---

*Movement to be done slowly.*

---

## Coordination 1

### Ladder Hopscotch

Players hop in and out of every second space on the ladder.

Bring feet together when hopping into ladder.

Spread feet to hop out of the ladder.

1. Initially players execute hopscotch without hurley.
2. Players then execute hopscotch holding hurley with shortened grip in dominant hand.
3. Players finally execute hopscotch holding hurley in dominant hand and ball/beanbag in non-dominant hand.

## Coordination 2

### Sideways through Ladder

Players move sideways through ladder.  
Both feet are placed in each space.  
Lead with left foot and follow with right foot.  
Then lead with right foot and follow with left foot.  
Stay upright as much as possible.  
Synchronise left arm with right leg and right arm with left leg.

Start at walking pace.  
Gradually up the pace.  
Gradually introduce holding hurley in dominant hand while executing sideways movement through ladder.

## Jumping 1

### Bunny Hop

Hop through ladder placing both feet in every space.  
Progress to hopping two spaces forward and one space back until reaching top of ladder.

1. Initially bunny hop is done without hurley.
2. Players then execute bunny hops holding hurley with shortened grip in dominant hand.
3. Players finally perform bunny hops with hurley in dominant hand and ball/beanbag in non-dominant hand.

## Jumping 2

### Log Jump

Three players lie still on ground.  
Space of approximately 1m between each player.  
Fourth player jumps over each player in turn and then lies down.  
First player in line then becomes the 'jumper' and jumps over next 3 in turn and so on.

1. Players advised to proceed cautiously initially.
2. Players gradually begin to execute the log jump holding hurley with shortened grip in dominant hand.

## Running 1

### Changing Gears

Jog on the spot at slow pace.  
Keep head up and back straight.  
Jog on balls of feet.  
Lift right knee and left arm simultaneously and likewise left knee and right arm.  
On whistle begin to gradually move feet quicker and quicker – 'Go through the gears'.  
Keep feet as close to ground as possible.  
Move arms as quickly as feet.




---

*Gradually introduce holding hurley in dominant hand.*

---

## Running 2

### Straight Slalom Run

10 cones in straight line.

1m between each cone.

Players run in and out between cones without touching them.

Push/ drive off 'outside' leg to dodge around each cone.




---

*Gradually introduce holding hurley in dominant hand.*

*Gradually introduce soloing beanbag/sliotar and catching beanbag/sliotar.*

---

## Running 3

### Pyramid Run

Mark with cones finishing lines 7m, 15m, 25m and 40m from start line.

Sprint to 7m line – walk back.

Sprint to 15m line – walk back.

Sprint to 25m line – walk back.




---

*25m line for 6 year olds.*

*Stop gradually when sprinting flat out.*

*Gradually introduce holding hurley in dominant hand.*

*Gradually introduce soloing beanbag/sliotar and catching beanbag/sliotar.*

---

## Agility/ Running 4

### Zigzag Run

Place 8 cones in zigzag formation 3m apart.

Players sidestep from cone to cone.

Then drive off outside leg to dodge around each one.




---

*To challenge players further get players to go sideways and backwards through the slalom.*

*Gradually introduce holding hurley in dominant hand.*

*Gradually introduce soloing beanbag/sliotar and catching beanbag/sliotar.*

---

## Throwing 1

### Hit the target 1

Players in pairs each side of cone.

Players roll big ball with two handed underarm technique.

Try to hit the cone.

Partner then attempts to strike cone from other side.

Progress to smaller ball and one handed underarm throw.

## Throwing 2

### Hit the target 2

Dustbin/barrel/ hoop as target

Players try to throw big ball with one hand into bin.

Players try to throw big ball with two hands into bin.

Then bean bag with one hand followed by small ball with one hand.

## Throwing 3

### One handed underarm Throw

Players in pairs 3m apart.

A throws beanbag to B.

B throws beanbag to A.

After some time A throw tennis ball/small Sliotar to B and B throws back to A.

Progress to where thrower advances to throw while receiver simultaneously retreats to catch

Gradually up the pace as players become more adept.



---

*Hurley may be held in dominant hand and throwing done with non- dominant hand as players become more proficient.*

---





## CHAPTER 8

# *Discipline*

There will always be some discipline issues whenever a group of healthy young players are gathered. To expect otherwise is to ignore reality.

There are some steps, however, which the coach can take to ensure that discipline never becomes a big problem.

1. Arrange a meeting with the parents of squad members before the first training session or as soon as possible after the first session.
2. Plan the coaching sessions so that the various components run seamlessly into each other. Coaches should have key works, at least, for each section of the session jotted down on paper for easy reference in the event of 'the mind going blank'.
3. Have a pre-arranged drill for gathering the players in a group at the beginning of the session or for whenever there is a need to speak to the group en masse.
4. At the beginning of each session briefly explain the programme for the day – praise the work done in the previous session- encourage the players to attempt to surpass their excellent behaviour in previous sessions. It is very important to stress regularly that all a coach wants is that every player does her best, and that your role is just to help them become better Camogie players.
5. The coach should enlist the aid of other mentors and parents to help in various ways like filling, distributing and collecting water bottles, putting out and picking up cones and helping to run some drills and games. This approach gives a feeling of involvement to those mentors and parents while helping to maintain continuity in the sessions. Discipline is usually greatly enhanced when other committed adults become involved in the sessions.

6. Use praise and encouragement judiciously. Any little achievement deserves praise, as does honest effort. Negativity ultimately achieves very little so it is vitally important that the coach resists the temptation to criticise, blame or reproach.
7. Ensure that there is variety in the training sessions so that interest is maintained and that the chances of players becoming bored, and consequently mischievous, are avoided.
8. Set realistic targets and challenges for the players so that they can regularly experience 'success' and be motivated to improve further. Ensure that the tasks you set are at, or slightly above, the players current levels.
9. Do not be too strict. Young players are not perfect and will have a natural tendency to engage in excessive chattering and 'messaging'. However, a coach cannot afford to be too easygoing either as players may gradually begin to take advantage of too much latitude, thereby making it more difficult to maintain discipline and, causing the session to become stressful for the coach, and consequently, less enjoyable. Striking a balance in this matter is one of the big challenges for all underage coaches and it takes time, plus trial and error to achieve this balance.
10. Play games. While fun and enjoyment, learning and developing skills are obviously key elements in a coaching session, it has to be remembered that young players 'love' to play games. It is, therefore, imperative that mini games, small sided games and modified games are an integral part of training sessions for underage Camogie players.

### Meeting with parents/guardians

- Introduction of coach and some general details of coach's background and sporting experience.
- Outline why coach sees sport as an important element in young peoples lives.
- The coach explains the role of Camogie within that framework.
- The coach assures parents/guardians that the enjoyment factor is at the core of her/his coaching philosophy.
- The coach stresses the importance of skill acquisition and skill development in enhancing the young players enjoyment of Camogie and boosting confidence and self-esteem.
- The social, physical and emotional benefits of participating in Camogie are highlighted by the coach i.e mens sano in corpore sano.
- The coach and parents come to a consensus as to the number of sessions per week (e.g.) 'Are two shorter sessions per week more beneficial to the players than one long one?'
- Parents/guardians and the coach agree on details regarding the dropping of players to training and the collecting of players from training.
- The coach seeks parental encouragement of players to do some private practice with hurley and sliotar outside of formal sessions.
- Discussions on equipment and gear needed by young players and where it can be sourced (e.g.) club shop, town shop, hurley manufacturers etc.

- Distribution of and discussion on the Code of Ethics and Best Practice for Children etc.
- The coach and parents/guardians agree on broad guidelines for dealing with disruptive players.
- Any other business.

### Organisational Hints for Underage Clubs

- On whistle the players jog to the coach at a pre-arranged spot on the field.
- The coach positions herself/himself so that she/he can see all the players who are arranged in a half circle or in two or three rows in front of him/her.
- All sliotars to be placed in a designated place while the coach is speaking.
- Face the players away from other distractions in the field.
- Ensure that the players are faced away from the sun.
- Do not speak into the breeze. Make sure that all players can hear what is being said.
- Separate disruptive players.
- Look directly at inattentive players.
- Proceed to addressing disruptive players by name and asking, politely but firmly, for attention.

### Disruptive Players

- Eye contact, a change in voice intonation or a few words are often all that are required to gain the attention of a disruptive player.
- If disruptive or indisciplined behaviour continues however, the coach may have to consider some of the options which, hopefully, have been agreed on at the meeting with the parents/guardians.
  - Talk to the player one to one after training.
  - Introduce 'sinbinning' for a few minutes.
  - Have a quiet word with the players parents/guardians.
  - Any other strategy which has been agreed on at the meeting with the parent.s

Continuous disruptive or indisciplined conduct cannot be ignored and must be addressed for the general good of the panel of players.





# CHAPTER 9

## *Communication*

Good communication skills are vital tools for successful coaching. Every act of coaching involves the coach in communicating.

### **Verbal Communication**

- ▶ Speak clearly in a normal speaking voice.
- ▶ Make eye contact with the players.
- ▶ Use age appropriate language.
- ▶ Make sure every player can hear what is being said.
- ▶ Change the tone of voice occasionally for effect – speaking in a lower than usual tone sometimes can be very effective in gaining players attention.

### **Non-Verbal Communication**

- ▶ It has been estimated that over 60% of our communication is non-verbal.
- ▶ Every action of the coach has the potential to be an important non-verbal message to the players.
- ▶ The coaches facial expressions, voice intonation, gestures, body position, use of arms and hands etc can communicate a very positive or a very negative message to a player.
- ▶ It is imperative that the coach is aware of the subliminal impact of non-verbal messages on players and to remember that what is communicated non verbally to players can be as powerful as what is communicated verbally.

## Listening

- Coaches are often poor listeners.
- They can be so busy 'commanding' that they may rarely give others the opportunity to speak!
- Coaches sometimes assume that they know it all.
- They may also assume that players are there just to play and would have nothing worthwhile to say!

How coaches can improve their listening skills:

- Recognise the need to listen.
- Concentrate 100% on what the player is saying. Avoid being dismissive.
- Try to identify the core of the message while listening carefully.
- Avoid interrupting the player.
- Try not to anticipate what the player is trying to say.
- Respect the right of the player to put forward her point of view.
- Avoid an emotional response to what the player is saying.

## Effective Communication

Enthusiasm:	Be enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is contagious and the coach's enthusiastic approach can inspire the young player and enhance their enjoyment of the session.
Positivity:	The warmth, empathy and kindly demeanour of the coach allied to the regular praise and encouragement of the player, will prove invaluable in the interaction between both parties.
Consideration:	The coach's goals for the players should be demanding but reasonable and realistic. 'Take them out of their comfort zone but not out of their depth'.
Consistency:	Praise or stricture must be dispensed consistently as players get confused when the coach communicates in an inconsistent manner.
Listening Skills:	One of the most difficult, but necessary tasks for many coaches is developing listening skills. Players need to feel that they can communicate freely with the coach and not always have to be just listening passively to her/his 'words of wisdom'.
Information:	Players need information and feedback on a regular basis. Blame, criticism and negativity should be replaced by encouragement, praise for what has been achieved and, critically, by positive, accurate and relevant feedback on how to correct errors and become better at Camogie.

- Instructions:** Instructions should be given in clear, simple, age appropriate language. Avoid verbosity in instructions and demonstrations.
- Inclusivity:** Ensure that all players are treated equally. Even with the best intentions in the world, there is a temptation sometimes for the coach to communicate more regularly with the very talented and dominant players.

## Credibility

The coach's credibility is a crucial element in communicating effectively with the young players. Credibility will not usually be a problem for the new coach because of the prestige generally attached to the position of coach.

However, the coach subsequently has to maintain and develop this credibility or possibly run the risk of it becoming diminished.

### Building Credibility

- ▶ Adopt a cooperative style of coaching i.e. a style of coaching that is neither too strict nor too lackadaisical and which places the young Camogie player and her needs at the centre of the coaching process.
- ▶ Be as knowledgeable as possible about the game of Camogie in all its facets.
- ▶ Be honest enough to admit that, at times, even the coach does not have all the answers!
- ▶ Be punctual and reliable.
- ▶ Be open, impartial and consistent.
- ▶ Be warm friendly and empathetic.
- ▶ Be open, exciting, challenging and dynamic.
- ▶ Place great emphasis on praise and encouragement.
- ▶ Avoid being judgemental.

### Player Self-Confidence

Developing the self-confidence of the player is one of the key challenges for the coach. The player's self-confidence can be boosted by the coach adopting a positive approach which can be communicated both verbally and non-verbally (e.g.) pat on the back, smile, thumbs up etc. A positive approach communicates a desire to understand, an acceptance of others and an expectation of mutual respect which will have the effect of:

- ▶ Helping the players self esteem.
- ▶ Building the credibility of the coach.

Conversely a negative, critical approach by the coach can often:

- ▶ Lower the players self esteem.
- ▶ Increase the fear of failure.
- ▶ Destroy the coach's credibility.





# CHAPTER 10

## General

### 1. Gear

Players should have:

Hurley	Gearbag
Helmet	Football Boots
Shin Pads	Jersey
Gum Shield	Skorts
Water Bottle	Socks
Snack, <i>e.g. sandwich, energy bar, fruit</i>	Tracksuit

### 2. Hydration

- Each player to have own water bottle
- Players should be reminded regularly to drink before training – cite example of inter-county players, Premiership soccer players, international rugby players alighting from team bus with drinks in hand.
- Coach should have a number of breaks in the session where players hydrate even though they may not feel thirsty. Explain that thirst probably indicates that the dehydration process has already begun. This is obviously more important in warm weather.  
It is now almost universally accepted that while things are improving in this sphere, most players, young and old do not drink enough before and during training. The coaches guidance about hydration will stand the player in good stead in future years.
- Encourage players to wash out their bottles after training.
- Water is probably the best drink to recommend to young players. Water mixed with fruit juice or water mixed with small amounts of sports drinks can also be recommended.

Hydration has been neglected down through the years in sport so, if coaches can inculcate good habits, all players will benefit in the long term.

It is very important that the coach uses simple, age appropriate language when extolling the advantages of proper hydration to the young players.

### 3. Nutrition

This is an area of vital importance not just during the playing years but for life.

The coach can, through advice, example, encouragement and cajoling, help the young players to make sensible decisions re food intake.

Young players need:

- (a) Bread, cereals, potatoes, fruit and vegetables - regularly.
- (b) Meat, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt – regularly.
- (c) Biscuits, chocolate, sweets, crisps, chips, takeaways, fried food – should only be consumed in moderation or, better still, as an occasional treat or reward for “being good” in school or at training or just, maybe, at the weekend.

A suggestion here would be to display the Department of Health and Children’s Food Pyramid Chart on the dressing-room wall.

An occasional, almost incidental, chat and discussion on the food pyramid might then become part of the training schedule.

Car/Child Analogy might help to bring home to young players the importance (a) of good nutrition (b) the effects of poor nutrition on health and sporting performance.

Car: when parent/guardian brings gleaming new car home from showroom they treat it with great care (usually!) The car is washed and cleaned regularly but, most importantly of all, proper amounts of top grade petrol, oil, water are put into the car to produce the best possible motoring performance. No car has ever, of its own volition, gone to the garage and taken on board sub-standard or harmful fuel!

Child: When parent/guardian brings gleaming new baby home from hospital they also treat it with great care. Baby is washed and cleaned regularly and fed wholesome food. However as baby grows up it often gradually turns its back on all this care and attention and begins to introduce large amounts of “bad” fuel e.g. crisps, sweets, chocolate, chips, fizzy drinks, thereby being less careful with the care given to the body than that which parent/guardian gives to car. Too much of this sub-standard fuel can effect camogie performance and even harm the body.

Appealing to the young player’s intelligence like above can often produce better results than lecturing, “sermonizing” etc.

## 4. First Aid

Meeting with parents.

Under the AOB section of this meeting arrangements re First Aid can be put in place.

- (a) Coach obtains numbers of local doctors and local hospital.
- (b) Coach obtains contact numbers for all parents and guardians.
- (c) Coach obtains from parents and guardians any medical details of which the coach should be aware e.g. asthma.
- (d) Coach checks if any nurses, doctors, First Aid experts are among the parents and guardians and seeks to enlist them for guidance, advice etc. in case of an emergency
- (e) Coach obtains help from afore-mentioned medical people with regard to what should be included in First Aid kit.

## 5. Suggestions for Club

First Aid video to be watched by all club coaches e.g. GAA First Aid video or any other recommended video/DVD on First Aid.

Coaches to encourage club to organise First Aid Course for all coaches with the co-operation of organisations such as St. John's Ambulance, Red Cross, Knights of Malta who are most helpful when requested to share their expertise.





# CHAPTER 11

## *Successful Underage Coaching*

Successful underage coaching:

- Helps young Camogie players to have fun and enjoyment at each session.
- Provides a safe, secure, non-threatening environment for players.
- Creates a positive environment where learning can take place through trial and error.
- Ensures that mistakes are treated as a natural part of the learning process.
- Teaches young players the basic techniques and skills of Camogie.
- Prepares young players, through the medium of their sporting experiences, for the 'game of life'.
- Inculcates good health habits in young players and helps them to appreciate the value of exercise and a healthy lifestyle.
- Provides opportunities for young people to be with their friends and also to make new friends.
- Develops confidence and feelings of self-worth in the young players.
- Teaches players to have a healthy attitude to fair play and sportsmanship.
- Helps young players to control their emotions.

- Guarantees full participation, inclusivity and equal opportunities for all players, regardless of ability.
- Ensures that all players are treated with dignity.
- Provides challenging and exciting activities so that players are taken out of their comfort zone but not out of their depth.
- Encourages young players to strive for excellence and to realise their sporting potential.
- Provides players with positive, relevant and accurate feedback.
- Ensures that players play games regularly. Young Camogie players ‘love’ playing mini games, small-sided games, Go Games and full games.
- Places the young girls at the centre of the coaching process.
- Keeps players coming back for ‘more’.



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*Successful underage coaching can be summed up thus:  
‘Camogie players first – Winning and trophies second’*

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## Long Term Player Development (LTPD) - Camogie



### GET A GRIP

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*PHASE 1*

6-8 YEARS

### CLASH OF THE ASH

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*PHASE 3*

9-11 YEARS

### GET HOOKED

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*PHASE 3*

12-14 YEARS

### SOLO TO SUCCESS

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*PHASE 4*

15-17 YEARS

### STRIKE FOR GLORY

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*PHASE 5*

17+ YEARS

### POST PLAYING CAREER

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*PHASE 6*



## Long Term Player Development (LTPD) - Camogie

The Technical Advisory Group of Coaching Ireland has developed a model for Long-Term Player/Athlete Development outlining the various capacities that a player/athlete should develop during the different phases of their sporting development under six headings; Technical, Tactical, Physical, Mental, Lifestyle and Personal. Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael has adapted this model for Camogie. The phases of this model applicable to the “Camán Get A Grip” Foundational Level Coach Education Course are explained below. Not all players will smoothly assimilate to all phases in a perfect manner. Many will develop different capacities at different rates.

The “Camán Get a Grip” Coach Education course covers Phase 1 and elements of Phase 2 of the Camogie Long Tem Player Development model.

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### Phase 1 – Get a Grip

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#### **(6-8 yrs approx)**

The main objective of this phase is to learn all the fundamental *movement skills* of Camogie such as correct running, jumping and throwing techniques

These movement skills should be taught in a positive manner using an organised and fun approach. Speed, power, strength and endurance are also developed in this phase in accordance with the level and ability of the physical development of the Camogie player. It is important that the Camogie player participates in as many sports as possible during this phase to further develop the fundamental movement skills.

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### Phase 2 – Clash of the Ash

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#### **(9-11 yrs approx)**

The Camogie player is learning how to play and practice the fundamental skills of the game of Camogie during this phase. Continued development of the Fundamental movement skills from the ‘Get a Grip Phase’ should be encouraged. This is important because the ability of a Camogie Player to reach her full potential will be compromised if fundamental movement skill training is not developed between the ages of eight to eleven.

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## Phase 1 – Get a Grip

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### Technical Capacities

#### Get a Grip Phase *During this phase, the player will...*

- Develop fundamental movement skills – run, jump, throw, catch, strike and kick appropriate to levels of development
- Develop passing technique appropriate to level of development
- Identify dominant hand
- Identify Lock Grip/position
- Identify Ready Grip/position
- Identify Lift Grip/position
- Swing on dominant side using correct technique
- Strike on the ground on dominant side
- Block on the ground
- Tackle on the ground
- Clash on ground
- Dribble ball along ground
- Use correct equipment appropriate to age and level
- Use appropriate clothing and footwear
- Know the correct body position when executing a skill
- Hook a player who is striking ball on ground

### Tactical Capacities

#### Get a Grip Phase *During this phase, the player will...*

- Adhere to basic rules and ethics
- Play Go-Games to learn basic attack and defence skills

### Physical Capacities

#### Get a Grip Phase *During this phase, the player will...*

- Develop endurance through fun activities (e.g.) Bib tag
- Develop wrist strength through fun activities (e.g.) squeeze ball
- Display agility through fun games/activities (e.g.) bull dog
- Develop balance through fun games (e.g.) Zig zag relay
- Develop hand/eye co-ordination through fun games (e.g.) skittles, piggy in the middle
- Develop arm/leg co-ordination through fun games (e.g.) ball to cone
- Develop linear, lateral and multi-directional speed through fun games (e.g.) Here there and everywhere
- Develop arm strength through fun activities (e.g.) bunny jumps, tug of war
- Develop movement skills in limited space through fun games

## Mental Capacities

### **Get a Grip Phase** *During this phase, the player will...*

- Experience enjoyment/ fun from Camogie
- Show enthusiasm for Camogie as an activity
- Develop confidence in executing basic skills
- Exhibit a feeling of accomplishment when playing Camogie
- Imagine themselves as their role model to improve skills

## Lifestyle Capacities

### **Get a Grip Phase** *During this phase, the player will...*

- Play a range of sports/activities
- Learn safe use of equipment (e.g.) wearing of a helmet and shin guards
- Learn safety in game/ training scenario (e.g.) when clashing/tackling
- Play at home

## Personal Capacities

### **Get a Grip Phase** *During this phase, the player will...*

- Experience enjoyment/fun
- Demonstrate fair play/respect
- Demonstrate sportsmanship
- Develop self-confidence
- Develop social skills through interaction with others
- Be part of a team atmosphere
- Make friends through Camogie

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## Phase 2 – Clash of the Ash

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### Technical Capacities

#### Clash of the Ash Phase *During this phase, the player will...*

- Develop basic skill of: Strike ball on the ground
  - ❖ Demonstrate the skill of striking the ball on the ground in a fluid way
- Develop basic skill of: Strike ball on both left and right sides
  - ❖ Demonstrate the skill of striking the ball on both the left and right sides in a fluid way
- Develop basic skill of: Lifting sliotar while stationary
  - ❖ Demonstrate the skill of lifting the sliotar while stationary in a fluid way
- Develop basic skill of: Lifting sliotar while on the run
- Develop basic skill of: Striking sliotar in the air on dominant side
  - ❖ Demonstrate the skill of striking in the air on dominant side in a fluid way.
- Develop basic skill of: Catching sliotar at chest level
  - ❖ Demonstrate the skill of catching sliotar at chest level in a fluid way.
- Develop basic skill of: Handpassing sliotar from the hand.
  - ❖ Demonstrate the skill of handpassing sliotar from the hand in a fluid way.
- Develop basic skill of: hooking
  - ❖ Demonstrate the skill of hooking in a fluid way
- Develop basic skill of blocking
  - ❖ Demonstrate the skill of blocking in a fluid way
- Develop the skill of Clashing
- Develop the skill of batting down a high ball
- Develop 1<sup>st</sup> touch control of sliotar
- Practice technical skills outside of controlled practice- repetitive learning
  - Against a wall
- Practice technical skills outside of controlled practice- repetitive learning
  - With a friend (1)
- Practice technical skills outside of controlled practice- repetitive learning
  - With a group of friends
- Practice technical skills outside of controlled practice- repetitive learning
  - Everyday

## Tactical Capacities

### Clash of the Ash Phase *During this phase, the player will...*

- Line out in different positions on pitch
- Name the different positions on pitch (e.g.) full back
- Experience playing in different positions on pitch
- Play modified games (e.g) ground hurling/ lift and strike
- Play small-sided games (e.g.) Go Games
- Use skills of striking, tackling, lifting in small sided games
- Use skills of striking, tackling, lifting in small sided games with conditioned game rules
- Identify and adhere to rules for frees
- Identify and adhere to rules for sidelines
- Identify and adhere to rules for wides
- Identify and adhere to rules for starting a Game

## Physical Capacities

### Clash of the Ash Phase *During this phase, the player will...*

- Develop wrist and ankle stability
- Progress development of agility, balance and co ordination (abc's) to a level where movement is fluid.
- Progress development of speed with control of body/hurley
- Identify the benefits of basic warm-up-
- Identify when to warm up
- Follow instructions on how to warm up
- Identify the benefits of basic cool-down-
- Identify when to cool down
- Follow instructions on how to cool down
- Demonstrate repetitive specific actions to develop leg and arm strength (e.g.) soloing task
- Perform basic mobility exercises (e.g.) side steps, skipping, zigzag
- Move and control body in limited space
- Develop power through fun games (e.g.) bunny jumps
- Perform basic flexibility exercises

## Mental Capacities

### Clash of the Ash Phase *During this phase, the player will...*

- Develop confidence in using a variety of skills in a game situation
- Continue to show enthusiasm for Camogie through participation and commitment
- Develop concentration Skills (e.g.) keeping eye on the ball all of the time
- Learn how to control anxiety
- Develop decision making skills in small sided games (e.g.) when to pick up the ball or pull on the ground

## Lifestyle Capacities

### Clash of the Ash Phase *During this phase, the player will...*

- Continue to play multiple sports and activities
- Incorporate regular Camogie training into everyday life
- Develop good practice habits to develop independence
- Develop commitment to regular training schedule
- Apply safe practices
- Play with peers at home

## Personal Capacities

### Clash of the Ash Phase *During this phase, the player will...*

- Experience enjoyment/fun
- Develop social interaction with peers and mentors
- Develop teamwork and interaction skills
- Develop respect for officials and decisions
- Be aware that effort and time spent playing the game will result in improved and consistent performance
- Accept rules, regulations and structures





Cumann Camógáíochta na nGael

[www.camogie.ie](http://www.camogie.ie)