



**THE
CAMOGIE
ASSOCIATION**
An Cumann Camógaíochta

Camogie Coaching Corner

By Peter Casey

www.camogie.ie

Scoring is the name of the game

"I'm sure we're not going to get everything our own way in certain games and we may not hit 30 points on any given day, but that's our target every day."

Darragh Egan, Tipperary hurling coach.

There was a time in the mid 2000's when the Cork senior hurling team scored an average of 20 points in every big game. They won the All Irelands in 2004 and 2005 and they were pretty satisfied that 20 points would be enough to win them games. When Clare won the 1995 All Ireland final the final score was 1-13 to 2-8. Today in championship hurling that could easily be a half time score. In the recent Leinster final, Kilkenny led Wexford 0-15 to 0-14 at the half way mark. Wexford had 9 scorers in the game and Kilkenny had 8. In the Munster final

between Limerick and Tipperary, Limerick hit 1-11 in the first half and 1-15 in the second period. They had 8 scorers in total while the defeated Tipperary had 9. On any given day a team who wins a championship game will likely need at least two players to score 4 points from play while their free takers will have to have a 90% success rate from inside their range. The score required to win a match is constantly increasing.

In Camogie we're seeing similar trends. In recent championship matches, Waterford scored 2-14 against Tipperary but still lost the game. In a 60 minute game that would seem a very good total to hit and up to very recently should be enough to win most games. However the climate is changing as in the hurling championship and scoring is a big currency. Limerick hit 1-18 in their victory against Wexford while Kilkenny scored 2-17 against Offaly. Cork have scored 3-19 and 2-20 in their victories over Clare and Tipperary.



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So what does this mean for Camogie coaches and coach developers?

There are a whole range of facets required to be a high scoring team. A really high degree of technical proficiency in a range of skills is a must. Brian Cody always said that a good first touch buys you time. Most players need a certain amount of time and space to score and if possession can be gained directly by a catch or after a good first touch, the player has a better chance of having that time and space. Some players are good strikers from their favourite side which is a great start but players who are able to score from right or left have more options available to them. Habits that cause slowness are always punished by the good teams and all players need to have days when they learn that their habits need to change in order to be a more effective player. Being able to swing inside the body and to shorten the grip when space is reduced is vital to being a high scorer like Beth Carton, Niamh Mulcahy, Cait Devane, Ann Dalton and Denise Gaule.

Team play and decision making are two other essential elements to scoring. Very often when players are in possession there is a very low possibility of scoring and a player needs to get the ball to a team mate in a better position. Kilkenny's mantra under Brian Cody is always that the player in the best position gets the ball. This requires players to get to scoring positions before they gain possession and an awareness of team mates by the player in possession. Cian Lynch is the most consummate team players. In 2018 he assisted in so many of Limericks scores.

One of the biggest challenges facing coaches is to overcome the psychological barriers to scoring. Frequently we see players practicing shooting from outside their range and they end up in a constant pattern of missing scores. Coaches are often tempted to do the same thing. They set up scoring drills and activities in locations on their pitch where many players are unable to score from. The biggest negative factor about this type of set up is that players become accustomed to missing scores with no consequences and if this is allowed to go unnoticed or uncorrected, players will freely miss scoring opportunities in matches and believe it is ok. A far better outcome would be where coaches set up scoring challenges from a range where players should score from and where a winner is rewarded and players strive to be good scorers.

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Some players will still miss due to the pressure of the challenge and that is where coaches can intervene.

Golf psychologists tell us that players should experience successes in every practice. A lot of top golfers spend hours practicing putting from inside 3 feet. Hurlers and camogie players would gain a lot more confidence scoring from inside 25 metres than missing from 65. Dave Alred who was Johnny Wilkinsons kicking coach and is now coach to 2018 Open Champion Francesco Molinari as well as the Queensland Rugby team has a number of really interesting online videos and podcasts about how he coaches kicking and putting. There is probably a real need for teams at the highest level to engage a striking coach and at lower levels a need for our coaches to develop their coaching of striking as well as all the other roles they have to carry out.

Players can make huge strides when they are given the right instruction and coaching or allowed to be free in themselves. Graeme Mulcahy from Limerick is one player who has transformed his game to now be a consistent high scorer for his team. It would be very interesting to learn what changes he has made to his training and practice in recent years. One thing is for certain. It is better to practice scoring than to practice shooting.



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