



# Club Manual

## Coaching and Games Development in the Club

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

GAA



## Coaching and Games Development in the Club

The most important activity in any Club is the playing of our games. All Clubs should strive to be the best that they can in terms of the standard of coaching provided to Club players and in terms of the quality of activity that each player receives. This chapter outlines some of the key aspects of Games Development in the Club and details the resources available to Club officers.



## 1: Club Coaching and Games Officer and Club/School link Co-ordinator

**The Club is the fundamental unit of the GAA. It is where members begin their involvement with the GAA, and where they continue their involvement long after playing careers have finished. The area of coaching and games development forms a large part of the activities that take place within the Club.**

Each Club should appoint a Club Coaching and Games Officer, whose role is to promote best practice in coaching and games development. Each Club should also appoint a Club/School link Co-ordinator, whose role is to liaise with the local school teachers in the promotion of the games in the schools.

These are two critical roles as these officers will help ensure that the Club has the best possible games development structures in place in the Club. These roles can be separate or can be carried out by the one individual, depending on the size of the Club. Ideally, a Coaching and Games Development Sub-committee should be appointed, of

which the Club Coaching and Games Officer will act as Chairman.

For more information on these roles, go to the 'Coaching in your Club' tab in the Coaching and Games section of the GAA website, [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie).



## 2: Go Games in the Club

**GAA Go Games are small-sided games with modified rules in both Hurling (Go Hurling) and Gaelic Football (Go Gaelic) called First Touch (under 8), Quick Touch (under 10) and Smart Touch (under 12).**

Go Games ensure that there is full participation for all players as games are organised in a non-competitive way. Playing rules are modified to suit the developmental stages of the children. The games are small-sided and the playing area is modified.

Go Games are a key element of Games Development in the Club and should be used to maximum potential.

### **Benefits of Go Games**

Experience and research has shown that small-sided games have a number of benefits from a participation and player development perspective. This is supported by a significant amount of research conducted at home and abroad in different sports where small-sided games are prevalent. This research overwhelmingly highlights the following benefits:

- Everyone gets to play for the full game
- Games are played in a fun environment with emphasis on improving skills
- Participants are not subject to the “win at all costs” approach
- More touches of the ball for all players throughout all areas of the pitch
- Players get more shots at goal, and
- Children have more perceived competence leading to increased self esteem and player retention

For more information on GAA Go Games, please email [gamesdevelopment@gaa.ie](mailto:gamesdevelopment@gaa.ie) or go to the Coaching and Games Development section of the GAA website, [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie), and click on the Go Games icon at the end of the page.

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### 3: Games Programme

It is essential that all Club players are provided with a meaningful programme of games. As well as the normal games that are organised by Divisional and County Committees, Clubs should organise blitzes within the Club and with other Clubs. These blitzes, particularly at underage level, are a great way of increasing activity for all players in the Club.

Increased activity has many benefits for a Club, including greater player retention and will underpin the ideal that people 'play and stay with the GAA'.

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## 4: Coach Education

**The coach has a central role in the development of the GAA player. Coaches assist players in developing to their potential, whatever that maybe. The challenge for the coach is to create the right conditions for learning to happen and to empower the player to develop him/herself to reach their potential.**

Coaches should be committed to creating fun, safe playing environments for all of our players, regardless of age or ability level. To safeguard our players, coaches abide by the GAA Code of Conduct, have completed the GAA/ISC Child Protection in Sport Awareness Workshop and are vetted by An Garda Síochána/Access NI. There are two GAA coaching courses available that are of particular interest to Club coaches, outlined as follows:

**The Foundation Award** is the introductory award for coaches of Gaelic Games. The course is aimed at beginner coaches and will enable participants to assist a coach in the organisation of activities to develop hurling or football. The course is seven and a half hours in duration and covers four key modules, as well as introductory and conclusion modules.

**The Award 1** Coach Education course is the second award on the coaching pathway of Gaelic Games. The course is aimed at coaches that have progressed through the Foundation Award and have experience as a coach.

The Award 1 course has been designed to take account of the different playing capacities that exist between children (up to 12 years), youths (age 13 – 18) and Adults (age 19+) and the competencies that a coach is required to display when working with each of the playing populations.

Therefore, coaches can specialise in coaching the particular players that they are involved with.

All Club coaches should have received coach education training.

For more information on these courses and where they are taking place, click on the Coaching tab in the Coaching and Games Development section of the GAA website, [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie).

**Note:** Also click on the coaching tab in the Coaching and Games Development section of the GAA website,

[www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie) for specific information on coaching child players, youth players and adult players. This section also includes information on coaching specific skills in Gaelic Football, e.g. the crouch lift, the high catch, the punt kick, the block-down etc., as well as skills in Hurling e.g. the solo run, the hook, the jab lift, the dribble etc.

“What is a Coach?  
A person who  
builds COmpetency  
by Assisting /  
CHallenging  
players to achieve  
their potential”

## 5: Coaching Resources Available for Your Club

**There are a number of education resources available for coaches in ClubS. These resources are invaluable in terms of information and the help that they provide and compliment the coach education courses already outlined. These resources are outlined as follows:**

### **1: The Fun Do Learning Resource Pack**

The Fun Do Learning Resource Pack contains a series of manuals, DVDs and DVD-ROMs that can be used by parents, coaches and teachers to organise fun filled coaching sessions for primary school aged children.

The pack is divided into separate hurling and football resources, and describes over 500 games and skill development activities that coaches can implement for players from 4 – 12 years. The Fun Do Pack is available in either hurling or football specific versions through the GAA Games Development office in Croke Park.

### **2: GAA GamePlanner**

The GAA GamePlanner resource is a DVD-ROM which allows coaches to create, save and distribute activities. The resource contains animation and video footage of activities for players aged 13 – 18 years.

The DVD-ROM is contains information on both hurling and football and is available through the GAA Games Development office in Croke Park.

### **3: GAA Coach Education Manuals**

To support the Coach Education programme, a range of manuals have been developed and are available to download.

- Award 1 Child Coaches manual
- Award 1 Youth Coaches manual
- Award 1 Adult Coaches manual
- Coach Education Game and Skill Cards

The Coach Education Manuals are available to download free of charge from the Resources and Publications section of the Coaching and Games Development section of the GAA website, [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie)



## 6: Code of Behaviour and Code of Best Practice

**The Gaelic Athletic Association is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all young people who wish to participate in our games and activities. We take all practicable steps to protect them from discernable forms of abuse, from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment and shall respect their rights, wishes and feelings.**

This Code of Best Practice and our Code of Behaviour both complement national guidelines and legislation in all jurisdictions in which the Association operates.

The purpose of this Code is to provide realistic and achievable guidance for all units of the GAA in their work with children and young people. This Code should be adopted by all members and Clubs in a positive manner to help guide us in our work with young people and ensure that we adhere to our legislative responsibilities and the standards required of GAA members.

The levels of good practice as reflected in the Code of

Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (ROI) and in Our Duty to Care (NI) are reflected throughout this document.

The GAA promotes fair play and respect in our work with children and young people while recognising the need for their safety and welfare.

This Code therefore places specific responsibilities on all sections, members and units of the Association to implement good practice when working with young people.

For detailed information, please visit the 'Child Welfare & Protection link' on the Club Zone section of the GAA website, [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie)





## 7: Cúl Camps

**Each year, close on 85,000 children attend VHI GAA Cúl Camps all around the country. These Camps provide boys and girls, between the ages of 7 and 13, with an action-packed and fun-filled week of activity during the summer holidays which revolves around maximising enjoyment and sustaining participant involvement in Gaelic Games.**

Activities are GAMES BASED where a strong emphasis is placed on skill acquisition. They are organised in an age appropriate manner with a view to optimising learning, enhancing friendships, improving physical & psychological well being and promoting school and Club links.

The camps are structured so that a different aspect of the game is worked on each day. The programme involves coaching specific skills of the game and the opportunity for children to put into practice what they have learned through small sided games. On the last day of the camp a "blitz" will be organised to provide each child with an introduction to competitive games

Every Club should participate in or hold their own Cúl Camp. Vhi Cúl Camps are run throughout the summer from Monday to Friday, 10.00am to 2.30pm, in all 32 Counties and overseas.

For more information on the location of the camps, how to book online etc., visit the official website at [www.vhiculcamps.gaa.ie](http://www.vhiculcamps.gaa.ie).



## 8: GAA Respect Initiative

The GAA Respect Initiative aims to promote positive behaviour and to ensure that an enriching environment is provided for the promotion and development of Gaelic Games. This includes respect for and from all participants on and around the field.

Each Club should ensure that the respect initiative is in place to ensure that players and spectators get the best possible experience of playing and attending our games.

### A Checklist for Behaviour

- **R**esponsible
- **E**ncouraging
- **S**upportive
- **P**ositive
- **E**nabling
- **C**onsiderate
- **T**olerant

For further information on the respect initiative, click on the 'GAA Respect Initiative' tab in the Youth Zone section of the GAA website, [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie)

**GIVE  
RESPECT  
GET  
RESPECT**  
Our games. Our choice.

## 9: Referee Education

**The GAA Referee Development Plan states that by 2015, every Club will have at least two referees refereeing regularly at Club level in the county. In order to support this aim, there are training courses available to train new referees and to up-skill current referees.**

With the growth in popularity of Gaelic Games, the demand for match officials is increasing. The referee, four umpires and two linemen are entrusted with the responsibility for the control of games. They work as a team of responsible officials dedicated to carrying out their duties with integrity, consistency and uniformity.

### **The role of the Referee is to:**

“Apply the rules in order to create conditions for our Games to be played well. The rules spell out the conditions for our Games to be played well; the proper application of the rules creates these conditions.”

For more information, visit the Match Officials tab of the Coaching and Games Development section of the GAA website, [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie). Also, contact your County Referee Administrator.





## 10: General

For further advice on all aspects of Coaching and Games Development in the Club, the Club Coaching officer should contact the County Coaching Officer or Games Development Administrator. See the Contacts and Links section of the Coaching and Games section of the GAA website, [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie) , for further information.

