



Cooperative Coaching: Níos fearr le Chéile (Better together)



Coaching Philosophy

In five years time we want to be able to say:

“Our juvenile section is a model of excellence where our children, young people and coaches thrive. We have achieved excellence in coaching standards and in providing games for our young players in a safe and enjoyable environment. We have developed our model of cooperative coaching, built on a strong foundation of working towards shared and agreed goals. This has happened because our children and young people have a voice and are valued; parents and guardians are fully engaged and resourced to support children and young people develop to their full potential and we have a coaching structure which is motivated, informed and places children and young people at the heart of everything we do. Our focus is on participation, inclusion and player development. As a Club we understand that when people of all ages come ‘down the lane’, they are coming to play our games and have fun. Ultimately we maximise playing time for all. As a consequence of this, our Club’s adult teams perform to their full potential because we have the best possible coaching and games development structures in place at under-age level, based on both the Player and Coach Development Pathways”

At the heart of our Club, cooperative coaching will enable all our children and young people, regardless of perceived ability to:

- Have fun
- Express themselves and be listened to
- Develop playing and emotional resilience skills
- Grow their self-esteem and confidence
- Make new friends and feel part of a welcoming Club community

Equally, as a Club we will work to develop our coaching teams at all levels, providing them with the encouragement, support and resources they need to not just deliver inclusive child centred programmes but so they too enjoy coaching and feel valued. We are mindful our coaching teams are volunteers who make sacrifices to help our children and young people develop. Club support must be tailored and entirely based around listening to our dedicated coaching teams.

Key Objectives

- Develop a distinct coaching & games development committee, reporting to the Club Executive, to support our vision and values.
- Design platforms to give children & young people, parents & guardians and coaching teams a voice and ensure outcomes are fully communicated to all.
- Ensure the Player and Coach Development Pathways are integrated into how we plan and implement coaching and games development.
- Utilise all available external opportunities to:
- Enhance our thinking and develop our approaches
- Encourage coaches to embrace personal learning
- Provide the necessary resources for our children, young people and parents/guardians to support the development of skills, resilience and areas like nutrition or hydration.
- Develop our internal expertise in key areas including:
 1. Physical literacy
 2. Skill acquisition & development
 3. Athletic development
 4. Nutrition, hydration, strength & conditioning
 5. Ensuring we retain as many as possible for as long as possible

Action	Desired outcome	Timescale	Responsibility
Establish a Coaching & Games Development Committee[CGDC]	Committee operational and managing the action plan	Short	Coaching and Games Development Officer [CGDO]
Develop a Coaching Pathway	• Implement an annual coach information programme using internal and external expertise. This will increase knowledge, understanding and confidence in a positive environment • Facilitate and encourage existing coaches to pursue coaching qualifications. We will grow our pool of qualified and experienced coaches • Design a coach mentoring framework to include 4 sessions for parents and interested others on game skills & child centred coaching techniques. This complements the pathway and will help us increase our pool of confident coaches • Formalise our coaching library, making online and physical resources available to coaching teams to help increase knowledge and confidence • Encourage 18 to 30 year olds to consider coaching- targeted communication to this demographic promoting being part of a coaching team		Coaching & Games Development Committee [CGDC] & CGDO
Install equipment stores for generic equipment to be shared within and between our 4 codes	This will enhance training sessions and add variety for coaches as well as squads.	Short	Coaches, CGDC & Club Executive
Design appropriate feedback opportunities for coaches, parents, children & young people	• Using a mixture of in person and online consultation opportunities, we will develop a greater sense of 'cooperative coaching' – a genuine partnership between parents, coaches and most importantly our children and young people. We need to deliver on the outcomes of this as well as listening. • We will establish a parents forum. This forum will focus on health and wellbeing and will also consider how we best support parents to assist their children & young people. We will look at how we develop	Short	CGDC & CGDO, parents

	social opportunities and how our juvenile programme is funded. This initiative will include additional people in Club planning and diversify our thinking. • We will explore online and in person opportunities for children & young people to better engage with our Club. • At present we mostly use a WhatsApp group to communicate with coaches. It has limitations and in conjunction with coaching teams we will a range of communication and learning channels.		
Implement the Gaelfast 'Buntáiste Baile -Home Advantage' programme across our U8 & U10 groups.	This is an opportunity for our Club to engage and support parents/guardians at these age groups in the continued development of our juvenile players. They will be provided with a simple but progressive skills testing programme and the Club will recognise each stage of progression.	Short	CGDC, CGDO, Coaches and parents/guardians
Retain every player	Each participant at juvenile level is important. We will ask coaching teams to notify the CGDC if a player leaves. The Committee will follow up with parents/guardians to identify reasons.	Short	Coaching and Games Development Committee [CGDC]
Programme of activities outside of training/games	To build a sense of belonging, we will identify opportunities for non-sporting activities such as quizzes, challenges, art competitions and other family events. These will further engage families and our young people.	Short -medium	Coaching teams, parent's forum, children & young people's forums,
Implement the Inspire Youth Award	The Inspire Youth Award encourages young people aged 14 to 25 to become involved in their club. To make this happen we will actively promote the opportunities available and support young people to become involved	Short	CGDO & Coaching teams
All coaching to be child centred	We will work ethically with children and young people when we adopt child centred approaches such as 'Play Their Way'. Simple things like asking children how we can improve will show children they are valued. Importantly it encourages young people to think about our games and how they play. 'Thinking players' are essential and will greatly help our adult teams going forward. Coaches will be provided with a guide.	Short	CGDO
Develop a nursery programme	We will work with parents to develop a nursery programme with a focus on physical literacy or fundamental movement skills[FMS]. We will teach children basic movement skills like balance, coordination,	Short	CGDC, CGDO and parents/guardians

	agility and speed. This will help develop confidence, creativity, social skills and enhance physical and emotional wellbeing		
Inclusive Games	Every child has the right to experience the benefits of physical activity, the joy of our games and the solidarity of belonging to our club. We will implement a 'GAA for All' programme.	Short	CGDC, CGDO & parents
Consistent communication between codes	We provide opportunities across 4 codes but need to manage this to ensure dual players are not overtrained. We will encourage mentors at each age group to establish contact at the start of each season with a view to achieving balance for our young people	Short	CGDC, CGDO, Coaching teams
Lifelong participation	It's important we foster a positive lifelong passion for our games and club. While much of what we do is focused on developing children and young people & adult competition, we must also provide opportunities for people to remain active and connected for longer. We will consider participation in half pace hurling, G4MO & social camogie as additional elements of the Player Pathway. We will explore opportunities for Dads & Lads football, rounders and handball to complement what we already do.	Short/medium	CGDC, CGDO & Club Executive

Background to Cooperative Coaching

As part of the club's 'Have Your Say' initiative we sought the views of a wide range of people using different methods. As well as the main event, there was an online survey and face to face discussions. We also carried out 3 additional coaching focused surveys aimed at coaches, parents and 16 to 18 yr olds.

In summary, there was strong appreciation of the efforts from volunteer coaches and praise for both the amount and quality of this contribution. We did ask people to highlight positives and also to make suggestions as to how we can add value to or extend the scope of what we all do. We need this feedback if we are to progress. Society and our community are changing and we must seek to harness and maximise the opportunities this presents.

1. Main online survey

- **173 responses**
 - 22.6% were from parents
 - 41.1% were players/coaches/referees
 - 45% were other

2. Experience of the delivery of juvenile coaching – scored from 1 to 10

- 95 responses to this
 - 78.9% scored 6 or above
 - 21.1% scored 5 or below
 - 81 people contributed reasons behind their scores

3. How do we engage children and young people / 78 responses

4. 'Have Your Say' event

- **35 responses**
 - 19 coaches
 - 9 parents
 - 7 players

5. Coaching online survey

- **17 responses**
 - 16-18 yr olds – 1
 - Parents – 9
 - Coaches 7