



Supporting The School

Building a Base for Young
Player Development





Gaelic Games in Primary Schools

Richard Bowles

PE Lecturer, Mary Immaculate College of Education





Primary Schools are busy places...

- § “Curriculum overload”
- § Other sporting and cultural activities
- § Parental expectations
- § Academic pressures
- § School planning
- § School evaluation



Changing Landscapes...

- § Growth of suburban areas
- § Gender imbalance of the primary teaching profession
 - 1970: over 30% male
 - Currently: about 15% male
 - 2030: 5% male? (*INTO, 2004*)
- § More female teachers with personal playing experience
- § Child Protection Issues
- § “Newcomer” children
- § Inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs
- § More choices, less time...



Gaelic Games in Primary Schools: Evidence from Inspectors' Reports

§ DES Inspectors' Reports (2006)

Reports from 75 schools:

Specific Mention of the following Team Games:

Gaelic Football	46 (61%)
Hurling / Camogie	24 (32%)
Rugby	7 (9%)
Soccer	8 (11%)
Basketball	15 (20%)

Specific mention of coaching provided by National Governing Bodies (NGBs)

GAA:	37 (49%)
FAI	3 (4%)
IRFU	6 (8%)
Basketball	5 (7%)



Some inspectors' comments...

“The school makes maximum use of this service as a vehicle for in-career training and as a way to broaden the pupils’ experience of a wide range of activities”

“It is advised that the work of all external tutors be monitored carefully to ensure that the programmes followed are in line with the curriculum and that the lessons are supervised by the class teachers at all times”

“The importance of reviewing the role of external tutors in the context of the central role of the class teacher in curriculum implementation was highlighted during the evaluation”

(DES, 2006)



Current Practices

Schools where...

- § Teachers are solely responsible for promoting Gaelic games
- § Teachers and external coaches together promote Gaelic Games
- § External personnel are wholly responsible for the Gaelic Games programme



Primary School Curriculum...

§ Child-centred:

Enabling children to reach their full potential

Development of social skills

Prepare for lifelong learning

§ Subject Integration

§ 60 minutes per week are devoted to PE. “Discretionary” time can be used to extend this.



Gaelic Games in the Primary PE Curriculum...

“Gaelic games should be given particular consideration as part of the Games programme”

“Small-sided' or mini versions of ... games encourage maximum participation”

External personnel can “support the role of the teacher in the implementation” of the PE programme

(Primary PE curriculum, 1999)



What Quality PE should look like...

- § Inclusive
- § Broad and balanced
- § Enjoyable
- § Developmentally appropriate
- § Catering for *individual* difference
- § Involve *learning*
- § Safe practice
- § Promote life-long learning and activity
- § Develop *understanding* and *decision-making*
- § Encourage healthy living



Extra-curricular Gaelic Games...

- § Gaelic football is the most popular extra-curricular sport (34%), followed by soccer (30%). Hurling (21%) and camogie (13%) are a little further behind (Fahey *et al.* 2005)
- § “Although Soccer is the game in which children participate most often during PE...Gaelic football is the most widely available after school activity” (Broderick and Shiel, 2000)
- § “The extra-curricular programme ...should always reflect the aims and objectives of the physical education curriculum” (PE Curriculum, 1999)

- § *How do we manage “competition”?*



The role of Cumann na mBunscol

“To have Gaelic Games the games of choice for Ireland’s primary school children”

(Strategic Plan, 2007)

- § Unique position in the promotion of *all* Gaelic Games
- § Over 2,900 schools participating in activities
- § Significant increase in participation rates in the past thirty years
- § Involvement in the development of Gaelic Games in Britain
- § Key role in the implementation of national GAA policy

Future Directions...

Increasing quality participation



Involving Teachers



Empowering Teachers



Further Information...

§ Cumann na mBunscol Strategic Plan

(www.scoilspport.org)

§ Primary PE Curriculum

§ Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Mild General Learning Difficulties

(www.ncca.ie)



References...

- § Broderick, D. & Shiel, G. (2000) *Diet and Activity Patterns of Children in Primary schools in Ireland* Dublin: St. Patrick's College
- § Cumann na mBunscol (2007) *More than just child's play... Strategic Plan 2007-2012*
- § DES (1999) *Physical Education Curriculum* Dublin: The Stationery Office
- § DES (2006) *Primary School Inspectors' Reports* (www.education.ie)
- § Fahey, T., Delaney, L. and Gannon, B. (2005) *School Children and Sport in Ireland* Dublin: ESRI
- § INTO (2004) *Gender Imbalance in Primary Teaching* Dublin: INTO



Developing Club/School Links

Eoin Breathnach

Games Development Administrator Waterford





What is a club/school link?

- A link between club and schools in their catchment area
- An opportunity for GAA clubs to become a fuller part of the community
- Clubs with good links with local schools will increase playing numbers
- With regular coaching the playing standards of club & school teams will increase
- Both clubs and schools can avail of various funding available from governing bodies and local sports partnerships.



Who should be involved?

- Club – Juvenile Committee
 - Appoint a Club/School Officer
 - Club Coaches
- School – Principal
 - PE/Sports Coordinator
 - School Staff
 - Parents Council Rep
 - Pupils
- Others - Games Promotion Officers
 - Coaching and Games Committee
 - Local Sports Partnership

§ Five Easy Steps to Establishing Strong Club School Links (Ulster Council Club Maith)



§ STEP 1:

§ Write a letter to the School Principal outlining the youth activities in the club. The Club Youth/Coaching Officer and Chairperson should hand deliver the letter to the school Principal and ask for a following up meeting with the Principal and PE co-ordinator.

§ STEP 2:

§ Meet the Principal and PE co-ordinator. Outline the clubs work in the community and highlight the youth and coaching programme. At the meeting, each party should agree appointed contacts from both the school and club. It would also be helpful if arrangements for promoting the club activities within the school were also agreed.

§ STEP 3:

§ Establish a club notice board in the school, which is updated by the Club Youth/Coaching Officer informing the children of the club activities and events. Also circulate monthly newsletter to the all the children to encourage them to become involved in the club.

§ STEP 4:

§ Host a schools go games blitz at the club pitch and hold a follow up event on a Saturday or Sunday morning. In addition, the club should offer the school use of its facilities for its community and sporting events.

§ STEP 5:

§ Build on the new partnership, both the club and school should link together on new projects and schemes that will encourage children to get involved in Gaelic games!



Who would be suitable as Club/School Coach?

- Coach should be actively involved in club so players can associate him/her with the club
- Coach will need to be fully updated on club activities including games, training sessions etc
- Coach must have GAA Coaching Qualifications
- Coach should have Code of Ethics Course done (available through Sports Partnerships)
- Many schools now require Garda Vetting for all visitors to school who are interacting with children



Developing Club/School Links

§ Numbers being coached in Waterford

- 29 clubs in Waterford taking part in the scheme
- 55 schools received Club/School coaching
- Clubs spent on average 2 hours in school each session with 2/3 classes coached
- 43 coaches (male & female) involved in the club/school coaching
- Approx 40 children coached each session (all school sizes average)
- 2200 children receiving coaching each visit by club/school coach
- 1st to 4th class were classes most coached
- 70% of coaching takes place during schools time



Waterford

- Waterford has 16 week programme for all clubs.
- 8 weeks Hurling & Gaelic Football
- Clubs get grant of €400 from C&GD to be matched by clubs
- Clubs submit dates to C&GD
- Visits are monitored by GPO's
- Grant is issued to clubs on completion of report by GPO

§ 85% uptake by clubs

- Many clubs provide coaching all year round & purchase equipment for schools from grant received.
- GPO's provide coaching to all schools year round Gaelic Football from Sept until Dec & Hurling from Jan until June to tie in with Cumann na mBunscol competitions.
- Yard leagues organised in many schools with club supplying prizes.
- Clubs carried out a min of 16 sessions in each schools with some schools receiving school coaching every week from either club/school coach or GPO



Tipperary

- Clubs are responsible for providing coaching in the Primary Schools in their parishes.
- Each club provides 30 weeks of coaching in the school year
- Hurling and Gaelic Football are both coached in proportion to the club activities
- Tipp Co Board spent approximately €60000 on the project in 2008
- Each club that participates receives a grant pro rata on the number of schools they are coaching in
- GPO's in each division are responsible for monitoring the project and visit schools on a regular basis.
- Uptake is 90% of the clubs in Tipperary



Cavan

- Recently appointed 5 new Development Coaches
- Each coach responsible for 8 clubs and attached schools
- 7 weeks coaching by Dev Coaches followed by 7 weeks by club coaches (2 periods)
- 6 weeks Hurling in Spring
- GAA Club notice boards in each school
- 60% uptake so far
- Clubs in Cavan pay Coaching levy each year to cover Coach Education, Blitzes, Young Whistlers, School Coaching.



The Benefits

- **Clubs**

- Increased profile in school

- Opportunity to recruit new players

- Club can increase profile in local community

- Possibility of using school facilities if required for club training, meetings.

- Chance to recruit parents as Coaches, Volunteers in club

- **Schools**

- More physical activity for children

- Financial and personnel support from club to school teams

- Helps school get recognised as more than just place for formal education

- **Players**

- More quality coaching for players

- Opportunity for players not playing to get involved in game and go on to club

- Talent Identification by coaches can develop players

Clashmore/Kinsalebeg GAA Club Training Times 2008



Team	Year Born	Managers	Contact Number	Training Time	Training Venue	Match Time
U8 H&F	2000	John Smith	087-1234567	Sat 11am	Club Pitch	
		John Davis	087-1234567			
U10 H&F	1998	Sam Browne	087-1234567	Sat 11am	School Field	
		John Browne	087-1234567			
U12 H & F	1996	Shane O'Loughlin	087-1234567	Wed 7pm	School Field	Fri 7pm
			087-1234567			
U14 H & F	1994	Tony McKenna	087-1234567	Tue 6.30pm	Club Pitch	Mon 7.30pm
		Sean McCarthy	087-1234567			
U16 H	1992	Andy Fleming	087-1234567	Wed 7pm	Club Pitch	Sat 3pm
		Cathal Reid	087-1234567			
U16 F	1992	Pat Savage	087-1234567	Fri 8pm	Club Pitch	Mon 7.30pm
			087-1234567			
Minor H	1990	Eoin Breathnach	087-1234567	Tue & Thur 7pm	Club Pitch	Wed 7pm
		Dick Hackett	087-1234567			
Minor F	1990	Pat Hackett	087-1234567	Mon & Wed 7pm	School Field	Fri 7pm
			087-1234567			
U21 H & F	1987	Barry Kelly	087-1234567	Tue & Thur 7pm	Club Pitch	Sat 2.30pm
		Brian O'Toole	087-1234567			
Junior H		John McCarthy	087-1234567	Tue 8pm	Club Pitch	Fri 7pm
			087-1234567			
Junior F		Mike Fleming	087-1234567	Thur 8pm	Club Pitch	Fri 7pm
		Thomas O'Keefe	087-1234567			
Snr F		Franny Smith	087-1234567	Tue & Fri 8pm	Club Pitch	
		Roger Kelly	087-1234567			
Int H		Tom Hynes	087-1234567	Tue & Thur 8pm	Club Pitch	
		Liam Salmon	087-1234567			



Ag teacht le chéile

Micheál Martin

GAA Primary Level Co-coordinator





GAA Games Development Educational Resources

Fun Do Coaching Resource: Digital Media – Best E-Learning Product or Course 2007





Exercises to develop Fundamental Movement Skills for children aged between 4 and 8 years old.



Exercises to develop Basic Motor Skills for children aged between 4 and 8 years old.



Basic skills of Hurling & Gaelic Football for children aged between 7 and 12 years old.



Information on how to organise a series of modified skill development games for Under 8's, Under 10's and Under 12's.



Series of skill challenges designed to encourage young players aged between 7 and 12 years old to practice the basic skills



A further series of skill challenges to test the technical proficiency of players aged between 13 and 14 years old.



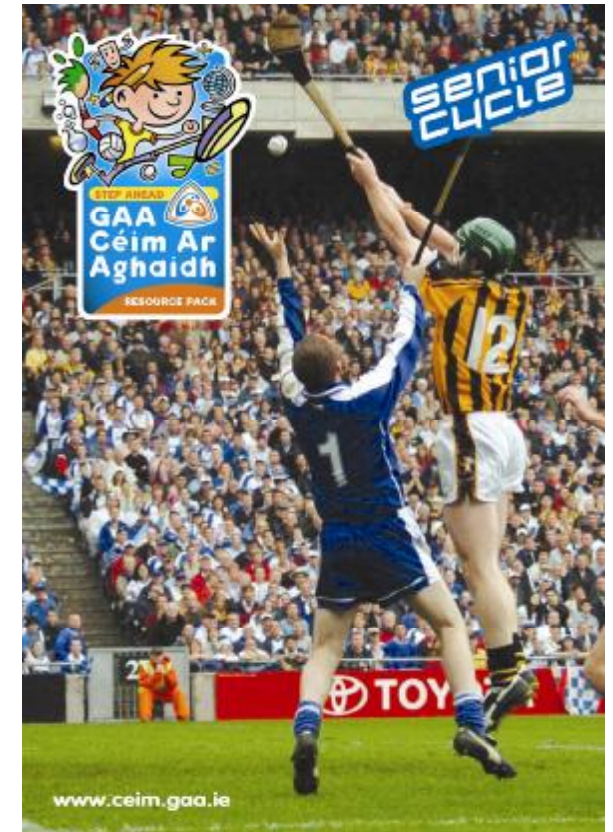
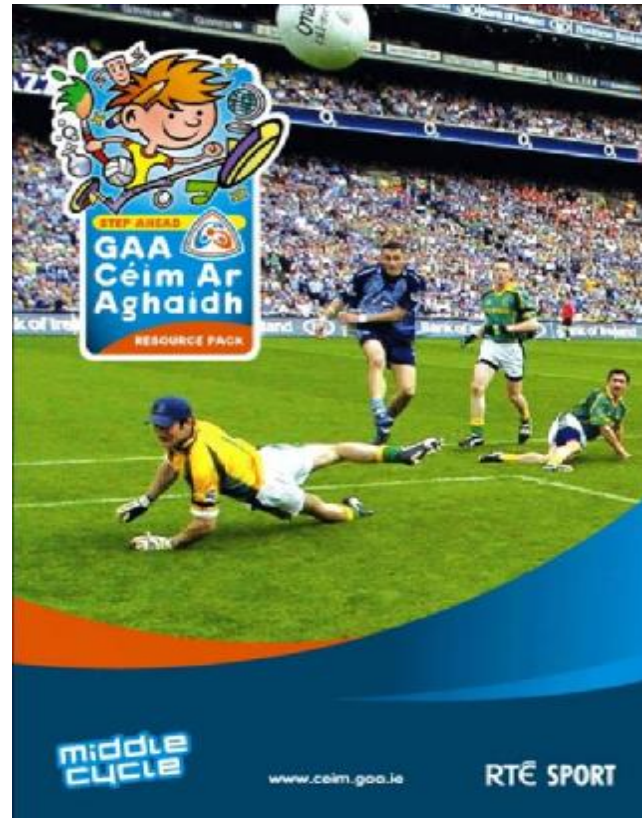
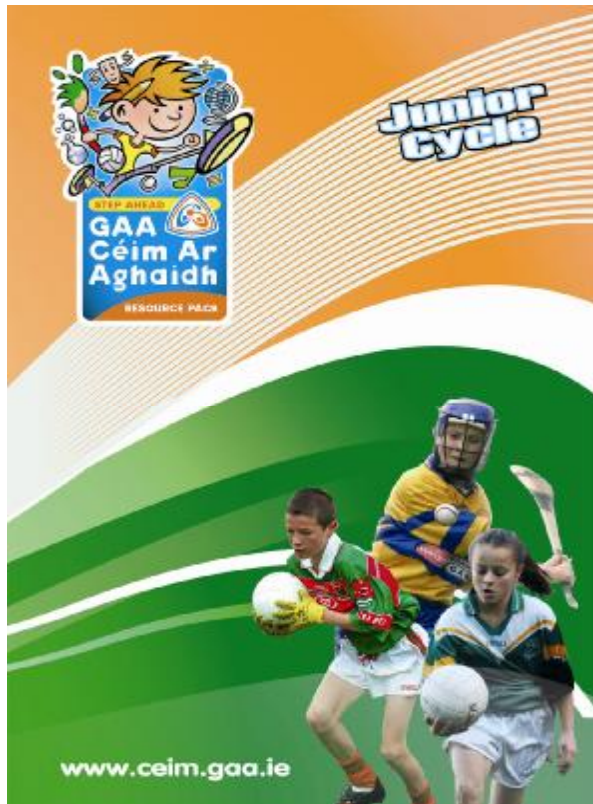
Create your own Coaching Sessions by adding key activities from throughout the Resource to a recommended coaching session template.



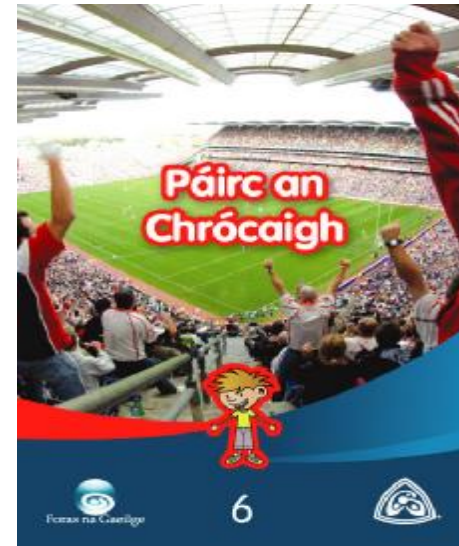
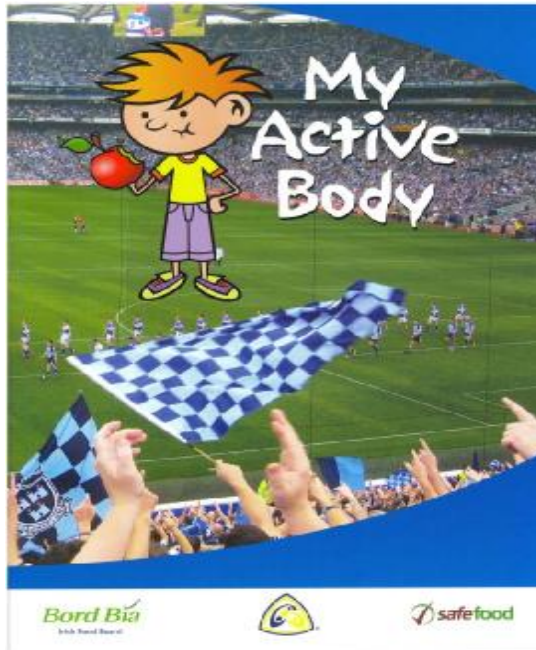
Information about coaching young players using recognised principles of Best Practice.

Céim ar Aghaidh/Step Ahead Resource

Integrates the theme of Gaelic games with all subjects of the Primary School Curriculum. It can be adapted to suit children of varying abilities through differentiated worksheets.



Children's Educational Books





GAA Children's Promotion

Cúl4Kidz magazine

www.cul4kidz.com



Teachers Website: www.ceim.gaa.ie

Referee Promotion: Young Whistlers Programme (Cumann na mBunscol)



Promoting Participation



- Participation/Promotion
 - July/August
 - 1988 – 8, 000 Participants
 - 2008 – 80, 000 Participants

Why are we here?



When we could be here?





Focus on Participation in Clubs and Schools

§ “Go Games will be adopted as best practice up to and including 12 years of age...all children will get meaningful playing time to develop the skills of our games in a challenging and fun environment.”

The GAA Strategic Vision and Action Plan 2009-2015



Reflecting The New Ireland

§ Adapt “Go Games” model in all schools to suit the primary school setting and to ensure the widest possible participation, regardless of children's backgrounds or levels of ability.”

Cumann na mBunscol Strategic Plan 2007-2012

(www.scoilsport.ie)



- Participation - Games
- Small Sided Skill Development Games
 - First Touch – U. 7/8
 - Quick Touch – U. 9/10
 - Smart Touch – U. 11/12
- Organised on a Blitz basis in Clubs and Schools



Coach Education



Coach Education

§“....put in place a programme that makes sure every player is coached by a person qualified to the appropriate level.”

The GAA Strategic Vision and Action Plan 2009-2015

GAA Coach Education Structure



Children

Youths

Adults

Award 3

Award 3

Award 3



Award 2

Award 2

Award 2



Award 1

Award 1

Award 1



Foundation Award



Coaching in Schools-Future Directions

- § Empower teachers to teach skills and provide Go Games
- § A pilot programme to be rolled out in February 2009
- § Joined up approach between schools, clubs and county C & G department
- § Protocol to be drawn up for GAA members entering schools
- § Skill Cards to be provided for teachers
- § Scheme to be endorsed by INTO, IPPN and DES
- § Club-School Brochure to be delivered in 2009
- § National Seminar of Cumann na mBunscol officers in January 2009



Coach Recruitment-Future Directions

- § Gearóid Ó Maoilmhichíl appointed National Children's Officer in October 2008
- § Introduce a coordinated recruitment and selection process for all coaches
- § Code of Ethics (ISC) module-GAA Code of Best Practice as part of Coach Education Programme
- § Garda vetting/Police checks for all persons working with children in the GAA in 2009
- § Pilot vetting programme of all full time personnel and selected clubs underway
- § Vetting procedure to be outlined to all at provincial and county level
- § New GAA Code of Best Practice- launch February 2009(Respect Initiative)
- § New GAA Code of Conduct- launch February 2009



Summary

- § **Developmentally appropriate participation to be central**
- § **Club-schools link vital to the young players development**
- § **Teachers must feel that they are appreciated**
- § **Professional protocol should underpin our approach to schools**
- § **One size does not fit all**
- § **Be flexible, adaptable and address the needs of the school**
- § **GAA has a strong and vibrant presence in schools**

Go Raibh Maith Agaibh

