



**Presentation to the
National Games Development Conference
County Academies
A Pathway for Developing Talented Players**

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High Performance Manager for Gaelic Games

Sports Institute Northern Ireland

Saturday 29th November 2008





Background



Employment:

- Ø 2003-05 Coaching Administration Officer – Tyrone Gaa
- Ø 2005-08 High Performance Manager for GAA – Sini

Coaching:

- Ø 2003 Coached Gortin to Tyrone Intermediate Championship
- Ø 2005 Coached Carrickmore to Tyrone Senior Championship
- Ø 2002-05 Development Squad Coach
- Ø 2005-08 UUJ Sigerson
- Ø 2005-08 Coached Tyrone Minors to Ulster and All-Ireland success

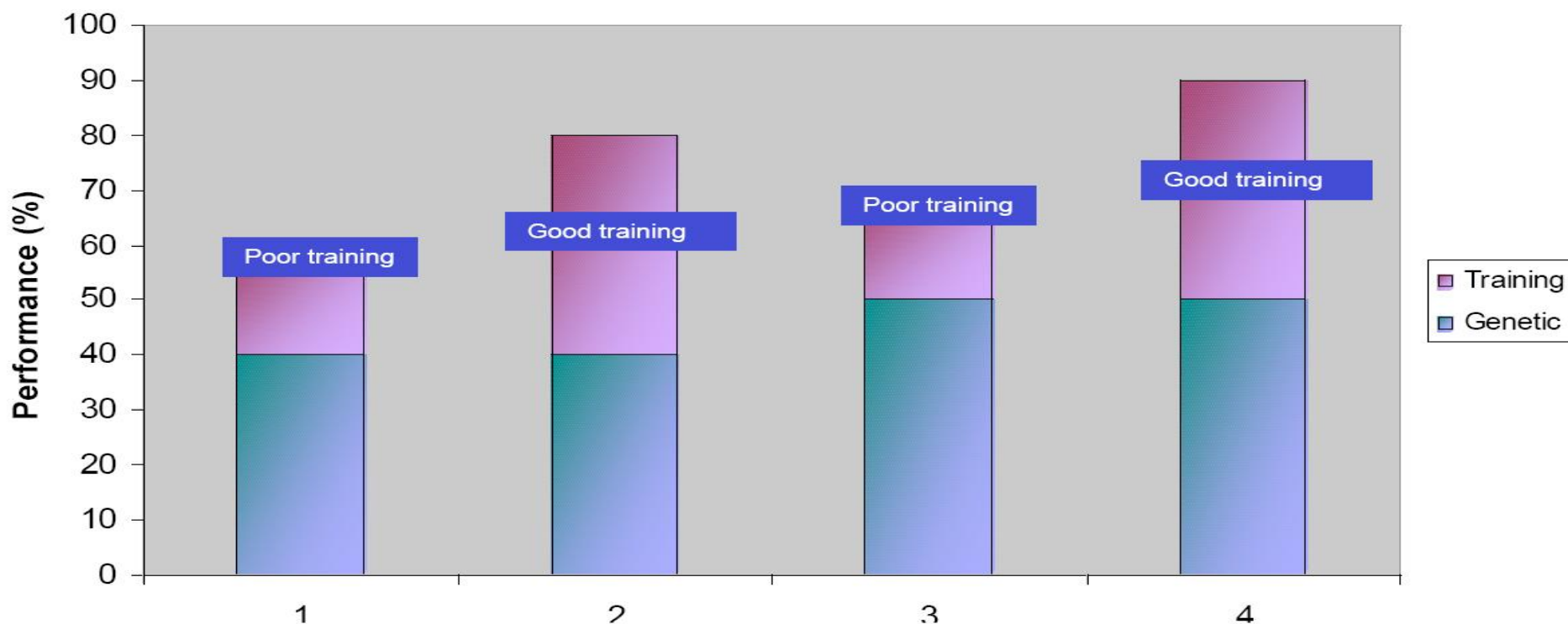
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Nature verses Nurture?



Symbolic representation of impact on performance by genetics and training

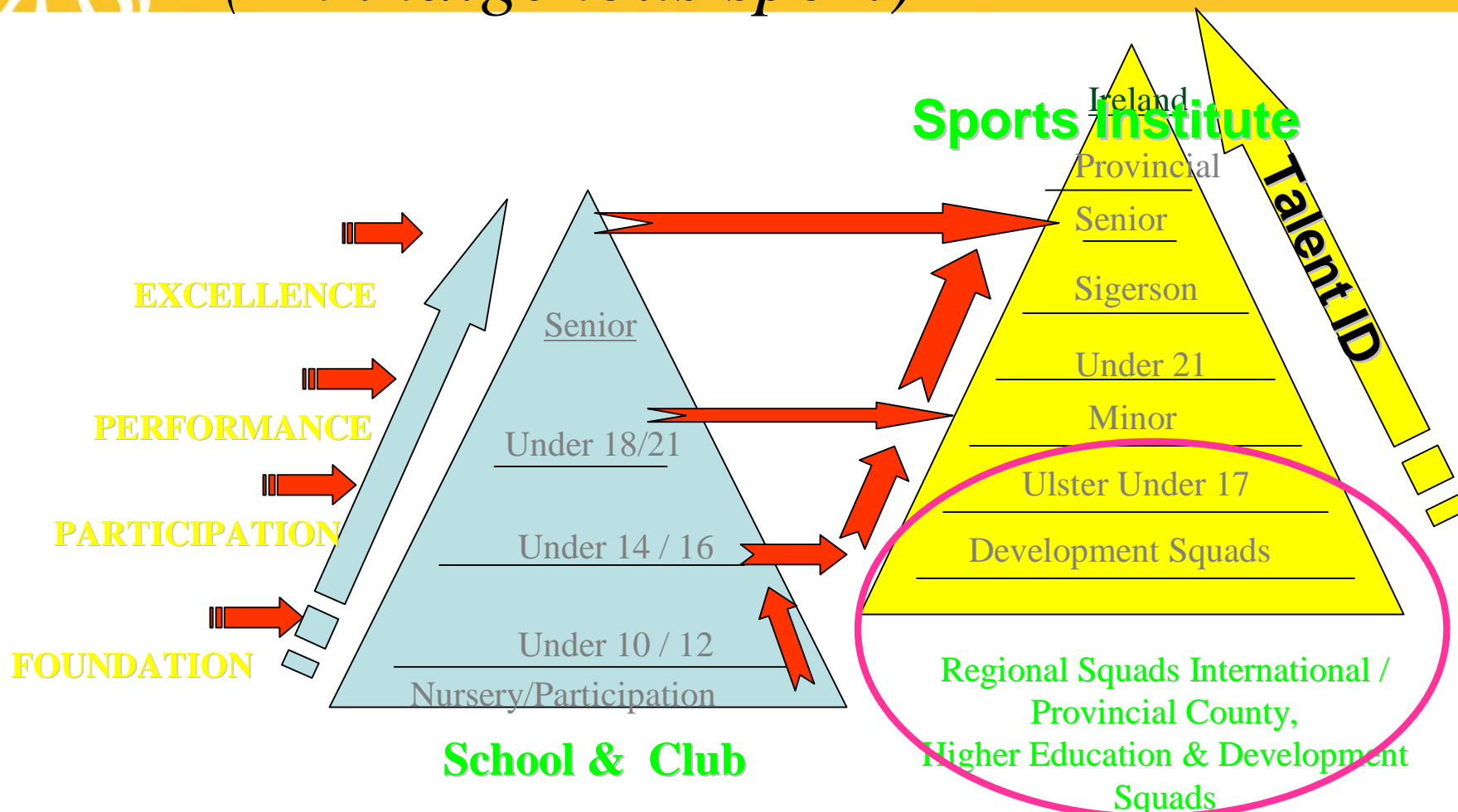


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GAA Performance Ladder

(An indigenous sport)



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Provincial Strategy.....



Nursery Primary Stage 3-11 Years



- Ø Maximize Participation/optimize skills
- Ø Physical Literacy –core strength with a Gaa flavor
- Ø Emphasis on Fun/non-threatening
- Ø Encourage club/schools links
- Ø County Boards Primary School Coaches
- Ø Summer Camps
- Ø Half time games
- Ø Schools Blitzes
- Ø Lots of positive feedback-rewards, PR, parents, staff
- Ø County Players – Role Models



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Early Secondary 11-14 Years



- Ø Skills Confirmation – technical proficiency
- Ø Introduction to tactical awareness
- Ø Instilling team ship v individualism
- Ø Competition – schools/clubs
- Ø Sport Education-Lifestyle
- Ø Fundamentals of core strength
- Ø Begin to build up a player profile - CSFs

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Development to Minor 14-18 Years



- Ø Talent ID – clubs/schools
- Ø Recruitment sessions-profiling & testing
- Ø Players must meet the criteria – skill/fitness
- Ø 8 key sessions- best practice (Ulster Council)
- Ø 2 blitzes
- Ø Constant feedback
- Ø Encourage self analysis/subservience to team
- Ø Strive to make it a world class experience
- Ø Coaches must have credibility – Level 2
- Ø Provincial Elite Camps
- Ø UU Academy



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The Graveyard Group (18-21)



- Ø 3rd Level Institutions
- Ø County U-21s
- Ø Club Seniors (large clubs)
- Ø Sports Institute
- Ø Those who don't go to 3rd level?
- Ø Those who do and don't make it?
- Ø Those who don't step up to U-21
- Ø Those whose lifestyle changes?



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Research



Recent Studies of Olympic sports have shown that many athletes identified at 14-16 are not making it through! Why?

Ø Poor Talent ID Systems – incorrect criteria

Ø Biological Development – Physical (Don't look for what is but what might be)

Ø Lifestyle Choices – Priorities

Ø Poor Talent Confirmation System – no progression/feedback

Ø Hunger – Some believe that they have “arrived”

Provincial Strategy.....

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Development Squads- Blueprint



1. Introduction
 - *Background*
 - *Opportunity*
 - *Philosophy*
2. Development Squad Structures
 - *Annual Programme*
 - *Player Education*
 - *Support*
3. Talent Identification
 - *Underlying Principles*
 - *Timetable*
4. *The Role of the Coach*



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1. Introduction



Background

- Subject of much debate
- Gulf in commitment between counties/codes
- Personality driven rather than structurally driven
- Those counties that have invested have reaped the rewards
- Other successful field sports have embraced the concept
- This is an attempt to standardise best practice in Ulster
- Talented players and quality interventions are the key
- (English Rugby – Conor O’Shea)

“no more meaningless games and mediocre training inputs”

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Opportunity



- A new beginning – out with the old and in with the new
- A structured programme – a Provincial Core Curriculum
- Better Coaches – working with level 2 qualification
- Better players – with a focused plan for improvement
- Greater satisfaction for all involved
- Player profile

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Philosophy



- Creating a high performance culture
- The most talented players
- Technical & tactical development
- Sport education
- Lifestyle issues
- Standard Talent ID criteria
- Coach mentoring and support



“To develop and prepare talented young players to play for their counties, schools and clubs, supported by an effective, well trained workforce of coaches within a strong partnership of county boards, schools, and clubs”

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2. Structures



Numbers

U-14 Hurling 30-40 (large numbers to ensure a good base)

U-15 Hurling & football 30-40 (same as above for football)

U-16 Hurling & football 20-25

U-17 Hurling & football 20-25

- * *Counties need to accept that Development Squads are for the most talented young players. Maximum numbers should be adhered to but if there are not sufficient players of the necessary quality then numbers should not be made up.*



Annual Programme



- Structured Programme (March – October)
- Ring fenced dates (agreed between all parties)
- County Boards need to be proactive in protecting the programme
- 2 Recruitment Sessions
- 8 Key Sessions
- 2 Blitzes
- 2 Discretionary Sessions (Specific areas)

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Player Education



Lifestyle Management (Learning for life & work)

- Managing Time (athlete diaries)
- Prioritising
- Managing Crisis
- Nutrition/Hydration
- Performance Analysis
- Sports Psychology
- Sports Physiology
- Injury Prevention/Management
- Parental Input
- Joined up programme



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Implementation and Support



- County Chairmen, Secretary & fixtures
- County Coaching Officer
- Full time county staff & RDOs
- Ulster Council liaison officers (to coach the coaches)
- In Service days for development coaches
- Consistent standards of delivery across counties

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3. Talent Identification



Underlying Principles

- Nomination Process – Clubs/Schools
- Initial identification of talent according to specific criteria i.e. fitness levels, technical and tactical proficiency
- Full time county staff to manage the nomination process
- Physical assessment and technical ability completed by coaches
- Feedback to those involved on areas for development which should begin to form their programme
- Those not selected must get feedback on where they need to improve

2	Name		Date	
3	Position		Level	
4	Age		Assessor	
5				
6	Criteria For Selection/Testing			
7	Components of Physical Fitness	Standard	Result	Squad Aver Weighting
8	Strength - Vertical Jump/Medicine Ball Thow			1
9	Speed - Sprint 5m, 10m, & 20m			1
10	Agility - 10 metre T-test			1
11	Flexibility - Sit & Reach Test			1
12	Endurance - Bleep Test			1
13	Musculo-Skeletal Screening			Total
14	Functional Movement - one legged squat/hurdle jumps			2
15	Injury History - Deficiencies			2
16	Technical Ability			Total
17	Good first touch - Doesn't spill ball in contact			1
18	Hand-Passing - Proficient off both hands			1
19	Kicking - Proficient off both feet			1
20	Blocking - Can execute a perfect block			1
21	Catching - Can execute overhead, body and low catch			1
22	chooses the right pass for the situation			1
23	Defensive Game			1 Total
24	Understands the principles of defence - Delay, Deny,			1
25	Disposes, and Develop			1
26	Running/attacking play - Can score of either foot. Sees			1 Total
27	space and gets into good positions.Beats opponents with			1
28	a variety of footwork. Can bring other attackers into the			1
29	game.			1
30	Game understanding - Communicates clearly & accurately			1 Total
31	Reads the game well.Plays "heads up" .Sees plays			1
32	developing. Doesn't waste support runners & doesn't			1
33	get isolated on the ball			1
34	Knowledge of the rules - Learns from the referees			1 Total
35	decisions. Can go to the limit without being penalised			1
36	Position Specific - knows the requirements of his/her			1 Total
37	position			
38	Lifestyle - Exhibits the lifestyle of a high performance athlete			3 Total
39	Good time management & diet/balanced life			
40	Leadership - Takes responsibility. Leads by example.			3 Total
41	Strong in crisis.Encourages teammates and gains respect			
42	Courage - Will take charge during crisis points/mentally strong			3 Total
43	Puts self in physically challenging positions for team			
44	Ambition - Wants to be the best he/she can be in that position			3 Total
45	Benchmarks the best players in the sport			
46				



Timetable



- January – nomination by Clubs/Schools
- Recruitment Days – March/April
- Final selection-April
- 8 sessions plus 2 Provincial Blitzes - April-October
- Player assessment reports completed – October/November

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4. The Role of the Coach



THE EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT COACH

Improving players' performance through high quality coaching

Key outcomes of a player centered approach:

1. Increased self awareness
2. Increased self reflection
3. Increased responsibility and understanding of their own performance & development

The coach has a clear responsibility to the players and the Development programme to help create a coaching and learning climate that must be of a higher standard than the player receives back in their own club or school environment.

Effort and commitment are obvious prerequisites to success. However, they are not enough on their own; the players' development will largely depend upon your coaching methodology and the effective delivery of game related knowledge and skills.

Traditional approach	Game-sense approach
Use drills primarily to practise technical skills	Uses drills that are closely aligned with the game to teach technical and tactical skills
Teaches the specific aspects of the game and then combines them into the whole	Teaches the whole game and then refines the parts
Coach centred (the coach uses direct instructional methods that may or may not consider the players' needs)	Player centred (the coach creates a learning environment that focuses on the players' needs using a variety of teaching methods)
Practices are often boring and therefore un-motivating to the players	Practices are fun, relevant and challenging and therefore increase intrinsic motivation
Players become highly dependent upon the coach for decisions and feedback	Players develop increasing independence from the coach by being actively involved in the learning process
Through extensive drilling, coaches strive to develop automatic responses that promote mindlessness when playing	Practices are designed to develop the thinking, understanding and decision-making skills that are required to play well
Players provide little or no input to the coach, who makes most of all the decisions	Players have considerable input to the coach and help the coach make decisions
Players are not encouraged to help each other master the skills of the sport	Players are encouraged to help each other master the skills of the sport
Preferred approach of command-style coaches	Preferred approach of co-operative-style coaches

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Session Plan For Development Squad					2008	Number In Squad	25	County	Antrim
Session Number	1	Session Date	25th April	Venue	Casement				
Resources:	Ulster Council Website http://www.ulster.ie/index.html								
Session Education Content (Highlight areas to be addressed in this session)								Age Group	U-16(Football)
Lifestyle Management	Fitness Testing/ Physiology	Nutrition/ Hydration	Flexibility	Rest & Recovery	Running Mechanics	Core Stability/Lifting Technique	Injury Prevention & Mgt	Mental Toughness	Performance Analysis
Tackle	Full Fitness Test		Kicking for possession/scores	Speed Practical	Practical	Attacking Play	Ball Retention	Goalkeeping Coaching	
Time	Activity			Description			Facility/Equipment		Coach/Specialist
9.30am	Programme Outline			Introduction-Setting The Scene			Conference Facility		Lead Coach
9.45am	Presentation			Lifestyle Management - Identifying Crisis Points			Conference Facility		Specialist
10.30 am	Break(packed lunch/selection of fruit)			Rest & Recovery			TBC		
10.45 am	Pitch Session			Tackle - Stance/Balance/Positioning			Pitch		Coaches
11.15am	Pitch Session			Front Tackle - Delay, Deny, Dispossess & Develop			Pitch		Coaches
11.45 am	Pitch Session			Side Tackle/Block-Principles of Technique/Timing/Skill			Pitch		Coaches
12.15 pm	Pitch Session			Tackle - Conditioned Games with tackling/blocking as theme			Pitch		Coaches
1.00pm	Conclusion/Departure			Summing Up - Homework			Conference Facility		Coaches

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Welcome to Development Squads

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New Users Registration

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First Name

Last Name

Address

Address 2

City

State (or Province)

Zip (or Postal Code)

Event Calendar

February 2008

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Upcoming Events

No events.

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Welcome to Development Squads

The concept of Development Squads has been the subject of much debate since first introduced almost 7 years ago. While some counties have embraced the idea with enthusiasm others have questioned their worth and struggled to deliver meaningful programmes for their best underage players.



However a number of things are clear. Those counties who positively embraced the project have reaped the rewards not only at underage level but more importantly by the quality of player now available to their senior inter-county management.

When we look at other successful field sports it is interesting to note that they all have embraced the concept of underage academies, schools of excellence and regional development squads.

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Presentations

Below are a selection of presentations specifically prepared for Under 14 Development Squads:

Core Stability

[Core Stability \(U14\)](#)

[Core Stability \(Resource Document\)](#)

Fitness Testing

[Fitness Testing \(U14\)](#)

[Fitness Testing \(Resource Document\)](#)

Flexibility

[Flexibility \(U14\)](#)

[Flexibility \(Resource Document\)](#)

Injury Management & Prevention

[Injury Management & Prevention \(U14\)](#)

[Injury Management & Prevention \(Resource Document\)](#)

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Session Planners

Session 1 - U14 Hurling

Educational: Physiology of Fitness Testing

Physical: Full Fitness Test

TIME	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	FACILITY/EQUIPMENT	COACH/ SPECIALIST
9.15am	Roll Call	Complete Attendance Sheet	Conference Facility	Lead Coach
9.30am	Programme Outline	Setting the scene	Conference Facility	Lead Coach
9.45am	Presentation	Fitness test "Bench marks"	Conference Facility	Lead Coach/ Specialist
10.30am	Break	Rest & Recovery		
11.00am	Fitness Test	Speed & Agility	Sports Hall	Coaches/ Spedalist
11.45am	Fitness Test (g1)	Bleep Test	Sports Hall	Coaches/ Spedalist
12.15pm	Fitness Test (g2)	Bleep Test	Sports Hall	Coaches/ Spedalist
12.45pm	Cool Down	Flexibility		Coaches/ Spedalist
1.00pm	Conduision / Departure	Summing Up/ Homework	Conference Facility	Coaches

Session 2 - U14 Hurling

Educational: Nutrition, Motivation, Lifestyle

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Drills

Attack and Defend 2



Purpose of Drill:

To encourage support to player on ball and also to tackle when opposition has ball

Key Coaching Points:

Creating space when on the ball and proper tackling when defending

Variations:

1 V 1 3 V 3 Greater/Shorter Distances between Goalposts

Equipment Needed:

- Permanent, Mobile or Grid poles used as Goalposts and a number of balls
- Set up 40 Metres between Goals, 2 V 2.
- After you attack you stay in to defend the next move coming from the goals you attacked and then you step out at next move defended

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Guiding Philosophy



“When winning is kept in perspective sport produces children who enjoy being skillful, who strive for excellence, who dare to risk error to learn and who develop with practice and constructive feedback.

When winning is kept in perspective there is room for fun in the pursuit of victory – the pursuit of victory is fun”

Geoff Gleeson - The growing child in competitive sport: Hodder Staughton (1987)



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