



SPONSORED BY

**THINKPRINT**

# THE WARRIOR WAY

**PLAYER PATHWAY**  
**UNDER 11 - 12**

[NAFIANNACLONARD.IE](http://NAFIANNACLONARD.IE)



**THE GAMOGIE ASSOCIATION**  
An Cumann Camógachta



# INTRODUCTION

## The Warrior Way: Player Pathway

This pathway has been created to provide a structured, consistent framework to help guide coaches, managers, mentors and parents who play an active role in the development of our young players.

### MISSION

- To give our young players the best opportunity to succeed at whatever level they may play and reach their full potential “doing the right thing, at the right time and in the right way.”
- Identity appropriate content that should be coached or practiced at a particular age and stage of the player’s career.

### FLEXIBILITY

- It should be noted that these are guidelines and recommendations for coaches, managers, mentors and parents and may be used with a degree of flexibility.
- They are not written in stone as players grow, develop and learn at different rates through their lives. This is a general guide to bear in mind when working with players.





## 5 STAGES OF COACHING

There are 5 key stages outlined in our pathway which have **detailed player characteristics**. They describe the practical elements that must be coached during these ages.

Stage	Age	Emphasis
Learn to Master the Ball	4-6 Years	Should be about fun and participation with key emphasis on physical literacy and fundamental movement skills with the ball.
Learn to Use the Ball Well	7-10 Years	Major skills learning phase where all the basic skills in football & hurling are learned. Emphasis on the fundamental movements.
Learn to Play Together	11-12 Years	Emphasis on understanding how to play and work together as a team.
Learning about Positions	13-15 Years	The principles of play and applying good game sense increase.
Learning to Perform	16-18 Years	Combining all aspects of performance including decision making, higher physical demands of the game and coping with competition.





# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## I.D.E.A

- **Introduce:** the Skill Verbally introduce the skill, providing a brief description. Outline the Key Teaching Points.
- **Demonstrate the skill:** perform it in full a number of times. Then break the skill down, making a point of noting the position of the Head, Hands, (Hurley) and Feet for each distinct component. Repeat the skill in full again.
- **Explain:** Verbally and Visually explain how you want the skill practiced, i.e. the organisation of the drill or activity.
- **Attend:** Observe the players performing the skill a number of times. Provide feedback on how to correct any errors.

## S.T.E.P.R

- **Space:** Increasing or Decreasing the amount of space available may reduce or increase the difficulty.
- **Time/Task:** Change the task that the players are required to perform, e.g., choosing a more difficult technique to perform. Use time to challenge players e.g., how many passes in 30 seconds.
- **Equipment:** Change the equipment used, e.g., from using a big ball to a smaller ball, or from using a wall to a partner.
- **Players:** Introduce opposition, firstly in token form, before progressing gradually to full opposition. Change the number of players to give an advantage to the attacking or defending players.
- **Rules:** vary the playing rules e.g., 1-2 touches, number of passes required, goals/points only.



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## SPOT & FIX



When players are performing a skill watch their technique and 'SPOT' any mistakes, take the player aside and 'FIX' their technique.

This helps prevent poor technique becoming ingrained.

## FREEZE, REWIND, REPLAY



During an activity/game stop the players by calling FREEZE, ask the player to pretend to REWIND what they have just done and ask them to REPLAY it to see would they do anything differently.

## QUESTIONING & FEEDBACK

Coaches by asking questions and by encouraging feedback can check if their players are understanding what points they are trying to get across. It also involves the players and gives them the opportunity to come up with solutions themselves. Ask open ended questions, E.g., if the ball is in a certain area of the pitch what might your options be?

## IMITATION OF STAR PLAYERS

Give the players 'free play' time in each session and ask them to try some skills/tricks that they have seen their favourite player doing. Maybe show them a video of a county player doing a skill and challenge them to try replicate it.







# LEARNING TO USE THE BALL WELL | U11 - U12

## Player Characteristics

- Players will compete with **greater intensity** against each other.
- At this age players will now **try to win** the game not only **by scoring** but also by attempting to **deny the opposition** the opportunity to score.
- They will **begin to understand the need to change the direction** of a run or a pass to be more effective and they will begin to grasp the idea that a player may need support from behind and to the side as well as in front.
- Coaches should continue to run **small sided games** and condition the players to solve problems in a game based environment.
- During training, these players **must always feel part of the session**. Coaches must be ready to pay as much attention to them as to other established players and always work to improve their skills (e.g. 1-1 coaching may be needed)
- Coaches must be quick to **address the problem of 1 or 2 players dominating play** and preventing others from developing their skills during games. Modifying the rules can help here.
- Many players at this age fail to recognise the need to attack the ball and prefer to wait for the ball. If this is allowed to persist, that player will find it increasingly difficult to change their instincts.
- **Training needs to be moderately increased** at this stage.
- Players are now **ready to develop general strength** through their own body weight and core exercises.



## COACHING | U11 - U12

### What should we start to focus on with U11's?

- Reactions. Sport in its nature is based on reactions. We react to the breaking ball, our players actions as well as our opponents. It is important to train the way we play.
- They will begin to understand the need to change the direction of a run or a pass to be more effective and they will begin to grasp the idea that a player may need support from behind and to the side as well as in front.
- Many players at this age fail to recognise the need to attack the ball and prefer to wait for the ball. If this is allowed to persist, that player will find it increasingly difficult to change their instincts.
- Games and drills to force decision making. Coaches should continue to run small-sided games and condition the players to solve problems in a game based environment.

### How do we coach U11's?

- Fun is still really important in every session, if it's fun and the coach is engaging, they are more likely to keep coming.
- During training, these players must always feel part of the session. Coaches must be ready to pay as much attention to them as to other established players and always work to improve their skills (e.g., 1 to 1 coaching may be needed and is often very beneficial if it is done in quiet way and not picking out a player in front of everyone).
- Use questioning to check for understanding and encourage feedback from the players e.g., Use 'Freeze' 'Replay', 'If you had that ball again, what would you do?'.
- Use drills and games to encourage attacking the ball and movement on and off the ball.
- Challenge players with overloaded situations, e.g., 5 v 3, 3 v 2 etc. and see how they react.
- Coaches must be quick to address the problem of 1 or 2 players dominating play and preventing others from developing their skills during games. Modifying the rules can help here.
- Try to give equal Game Time for all, try to plan not to have any subs in matches.





# LEARNING TO USE THE BALL WELL | U11 - U12

Skill Emphasis	Physical Focus	Game Specific
<b>Hurling</b>  <b>Handling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High catch (protect from front &amp; behind)</li><li>• Hand pass off the hurley (Both Hands)</li><li>• Chest catch</li></ul> <b>Sending &amp; Receiving</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jab lift at pace</li><li>• Striking on the run (Moving away from target)</li><li>• Striking on the run</li><li>• Ground striking on the run</li><li>• Free taking</li><li>• Roll Lift</li><li>• Doubling ball in the air</li><li>• Shooting for scores</li><li>• First touch control</li></ul> <b>Travelling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soloing (changing direction)</li><li>• Tap &amp; move</li></ul> <b>Tackle</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Frontal block (Hurl to ball) • Low block</li><li>• Ground tussle</li><li>• Flick off the hurley (Snig) • Hooking (Still &amp; Moving)</li><li>• Ground clash</li><li>• Hooking Frontal &amp; ground block (Hurl to Hurl)</li></ul>	<b>Speed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multi directional (Efforts less than 20 secs)</li><li>• Quick footwork and agility</li><li>• Acceleration and deceleration e.g. go go stop</li><li>• Game related reaction exercises</li><li>• Relay racing e.g. crazy ball drills</li></ul> <b>Strength</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Body weight Circuit training Upper body ,legs, and back</li><li>• Develop core strength e.g. plank</li><li>• Learn correct weight lifting techniques e.g. squat, clean, snatch, N.B. Only qualified coaches to undertake this training</li><li>• Introduce free weights and medicine balls N.B. For upper age range group only Plyometric e.g. multi directional jumps</li></ul> <b>Stamina</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3v1games</li><li>• Drills incorporating the ball</li></ul> <b>Flexibility &amp; Co-ordination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain flexibility exercise</li><li>• Dynamic warm up</li></ul>	<b>Part Invasion</b> Zone games <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wide man</li><li>• Zone to zonel</li></ul> <b>Full Invasion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Backs v Forwards • 15 v 15</li><li>• Possession Games</li><li>• One rule games</li><li>• e.g. Give and Go</li><li>• 4 seconds 2 touch</li></ul>



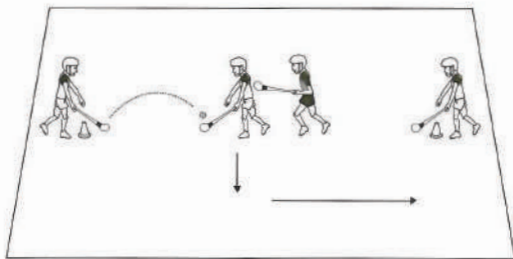


# SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

## | U11 - U12

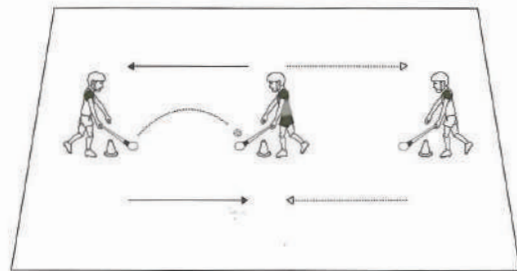
### SKILL ACTIVITY 1: COLLECT, TURN & STRIKE

Set up in groups of 4. 2 feeders and 2 men in the middle, 1 defending and 1 attacking. Feeder 1 plays the ball into the attacker who is under pressure from the defender. The attacker must turn and beat the defender and play the ball to feeder 2. The drill continues from feeder 2. After 2 minutes reverse the roles and switch the feeders into the middle.



### SKILL ACTIVITY 2: 2 BALL HAND

Split the team into groups of 3. 2 feeders and 1 striker working in the middle. Feeder number 1 strikes to the man in the middle he controls it and strikes it back. As soon as he's finished he turns and receives a ball off the second feeder. Drill continues for 2 minutes then man in the middle is changed.

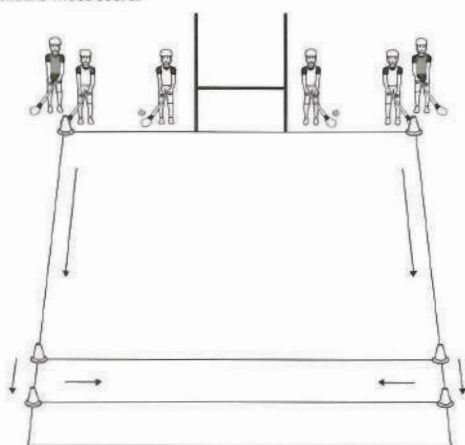

**I.D.E.A**

**SPOT & FIX**

**FREEZE, REWIND, REPLAY**

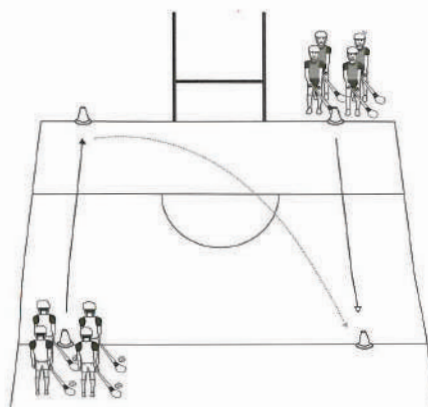
## SKILL ACTIVITY 3: FAST TOUCH

Divide players into 2 groups of 4/5. 2 feeders either side of the goal. Place 2 cones the first 40 yds from goal and the second 45m from goal. Players should be in two at the end line. On the call the attacker runs around the near cone defender around the far cone. Feeder feeds the attacker the ball. The attacker under pressure must score.



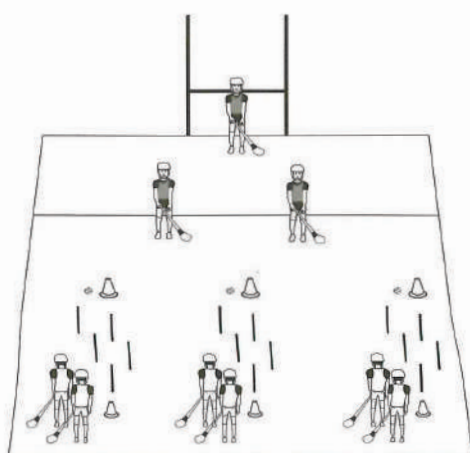
## KILL ACTIVITY 4: DEFENDER & ATTACKERS

On the goals call 2,3,4,5 etc. Players set off from either side of the pitch. Defenders have the ball and pass to each-other. Attackers just run out to 45. Defenders once they have reached the end-line turn and strike the ball out the field to the attackers. Attackers collect the ball and head for goals. Defenders take up positions in the scoring zone (Inside the D). Only once the attackers have entered the zone can they shoot for a score.



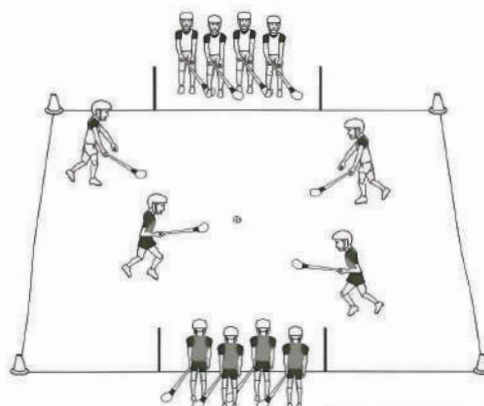
## SKILL ACTIVITY 5: REACTOR GAME

Team divided into 3 groups. Attackers run around the poles in a slalom layout. When they come out of the poles Coach calls a colour and the player at that cone picks up the ball. They must beat the defender and attempt a score the other two runners are assisting them as team mates.



## SKILL ACTIVITY 6: LINE GAME

**Equipment:** 2 Sets of bibs, Cones to mark out grids 30m x 20m. **Layout:** 2 Teams of 10, split into 2 groups of 5 each. Give a colour to each group Yellow and Blue. Nos. Players in each group 1 to 5. When a player's number is called e.g. 1's from both group play against each other. 2 Numbers may be called at a time. Uneven team numbers could be called given one team a numeric advantage e.g. 'Yellow 2,3, & 4' v 'Blue 2 & 5' etc. **Progression:** Groups rotate to approach grid from different angles.



# FLICKER PICKER VS. RUCKER PLUCKERS

## How to Play

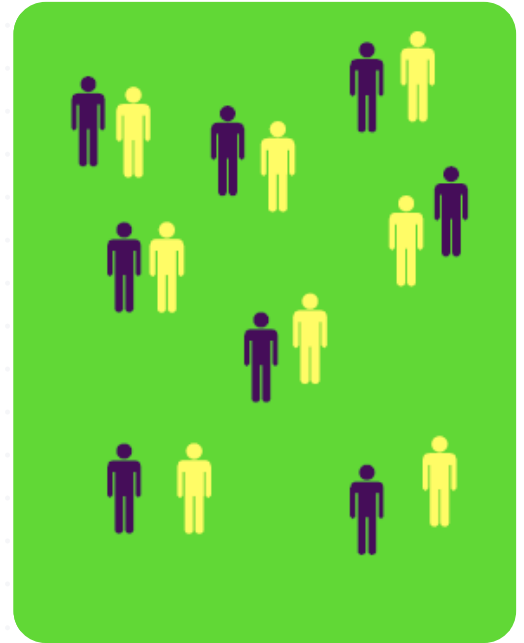
- Half of the players start with balls.
- Purple must roll lift standing over ball, yellow team must flick the ball into the space & jab lift.
- Players must accelerate 4 steps before dropping a ball & getting a different ball.
- Once every player on each team gets to 10, their team wins.
- Swap the pick up method.

## Progression

- Less balls to let the players decide different methods of gaining possession.

## What it Develops

- Accurate kicking or striking, catching, team play.



# OVER THE BAR

## How to Play

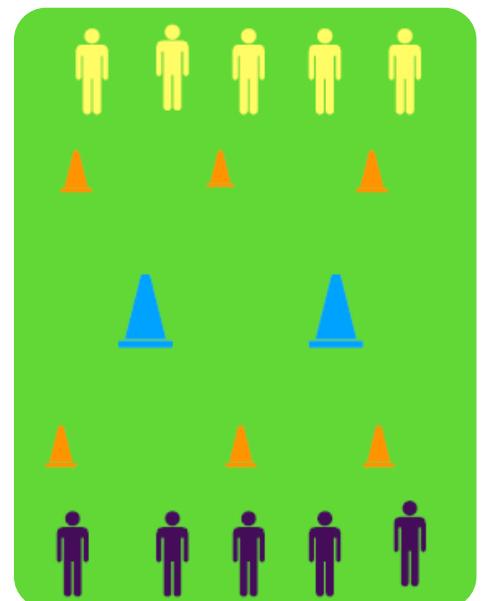
- Place two teams either side of the goal .
- Line cones out 10 metres away from the goal in the middle where players must strike the ball over bar from behind the cones.
- Most points win.

## Progression

- Players must make a pass before scoring. Mix players up equal numbers each side so more like a game.
- Less balls.

## What it Develops

- Develops the jab/roll lift & flicking the ball under pressure.



## REACT

### How to Play

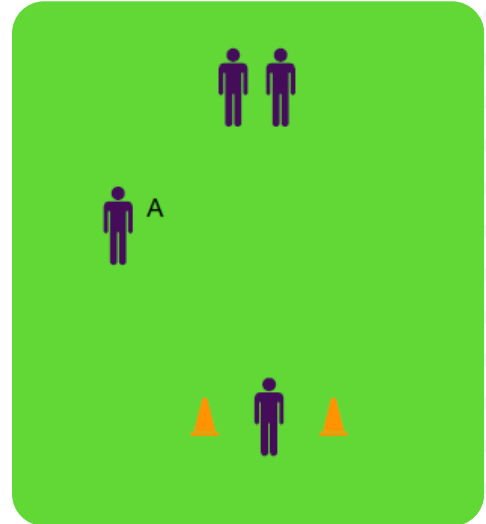
- Player A has a ball in hand.
- On the whistle, player A must drop the ball.
- Two competing players must react (attack the ball) & try score a goal.
- After 4 attempts, rotate the goalie & Player A to compete.

### Progression

- 2 v 2 reacting to player A's dropped ball.

### What it Develops

- Attacking the ball, reacting to breaks, tackling, scoring



## HOOP FREAMS

### How to Play

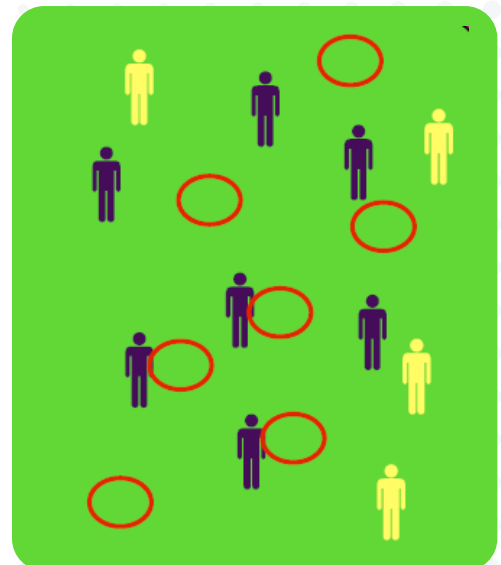
- Nominate four catchers.
- If tagged, players must stand still & hold a hula hoop by their side.
- To get free team mates must handpass/kick/strike a ball through the hoop.

### Progression

- Players caught must throw hoop up and down.
- Hit a moving target.

### What it Develops

- Agility, evasion, accuracy, striking/kicking on the move.





## KEEP IT MOVING

### How to Play

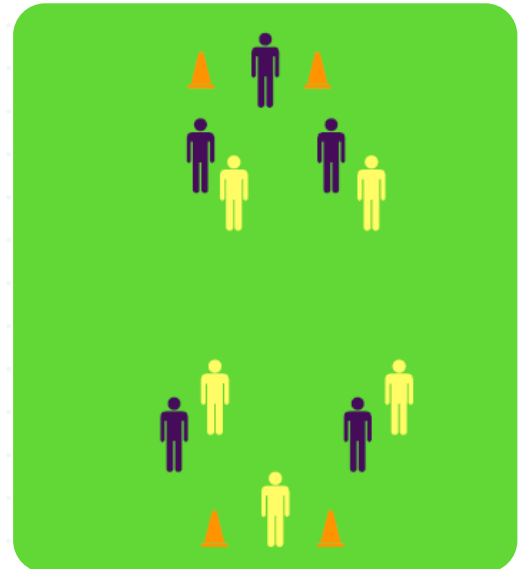
- Conditioned Game: 5 v 5 - Players can only strike from hand if caught clean in air.
- No lifting all ground hurling if the ball is on the deck.
- Puck outs, line balls & frees taken from hand.
- A score after catch is worth double.

### Progression

- Introduce a jab lift once everybody is comfortable attacking the ball.

### What it Develops

- Agility, evasion, accuracy, moving to the ball.



## ADD A PLAYER BLITZ

### How to Play

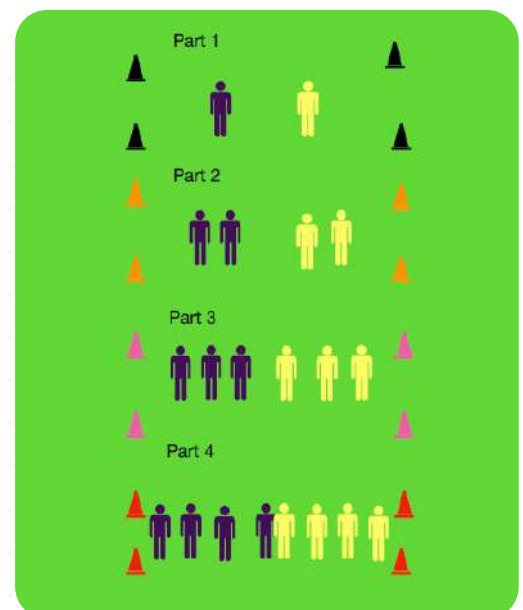
- Great game to kick off training as players arrive.
- Players pair off & play each other. Players set up a small pitch. Every 1/2 minutes, add a player to each team & make pitch bigger. E.g. 16 at Training. 1v1, 2v2, 3v3, 4v4, 5v5, 6v6, 7v7, 8v8.

### Progression

- No progression just let them off. Have plenty of balls & cones. Instead of adding 1 player, teams could double in size. E.g 2v2 goes to 4v4.

### What it Develops

- All skills, changes in space and decision making.





## **SAMPLE SESSION | U11 - U12**

### **Warm Up: Fun Game**

**Part 1:** Game: Add a Player Blitz

**Part 2:** Physical Fitness: Movement & Resistance Exercises

### **Core Part of Session**

**Part 1:** Conditioned Game: e.g. must make a pass before scoring

**Part 2:** Skill Development: Ball each, in pairs or in a drill

**Part 3:** Modified Game e.g. React

### **Finish with Fun**

**Part 1:** Skills Challenge: Hurling/Football/ Fundamental  
Movment/Resistance

**Part 2:** Game: 7v7, 9v9

### **Coach Tip!**

Send Fun Activities home  
with the child to Practice

### **Emphasis for Child!**

Learning to play together.  
Team games and decisions.





# SKILLS CHECKLIST | U11 - U12

## Check List: Overhead Catch

Hand Reaching  
Above Head ☐

Hurl Protecting  
Hand ☐

Claw Shape  
Hand ☐

Clean Catch ☐

### SKILL

### DESCRIPTION

### SCORING SYSTEM

#### Strike from Hand Left & Right

Strike from 21m line & hit the net in the goal without the ball bouncing.

How many out of 5 attempts?

#### Strike on the move

3 cones on 21m line (1 centre, 1 20m either side) with 2 balls at each. Player starts 5m back from 1st cone, runs, jab lifts the ball & strikes over the bar. Repeat with next 2 balls, turn at 3rd cone & repeat on theft side. 40 sec to do all 6 balls

How many points out of 6 attempts?

#### Hand Pass

4 balls set up in a line, pick up 1st ball, take 4 steps & hand pass to coach 5m to the right using left hand. Pick up 2nd ball, take 4 steps & handpass to coach 5m to the left using right hand. Repeat 4 time on each hand.

Total score = 8 points (2 points per accurate pass)

#### Ball Control

Coach strikes ball towards player from 20m away & player must control with hurl & catch.

How many out of 6 attempts?

#### Jab Lift & Move

3 cones 5m apart in a line. 6 balls at middle cone, player starts at end cone, runs out, jab lifts the ball & carries it to the 3rd cone. Go around cone & repeat for all balls. 2 sec penalty for each missed pick up

Time taken to complete:

#### Roll Lift & Carry

2 cones 5m apart, 2 balls at each. Roll lift ball at 1st cone, carry to 2nd cone & drop. Repeat with all balls.  
How many roll lifts in 60 secs?

How many in 60 seconds?



# RESOURCES

## Skills Cards and Videos

- High Catch
- Roll Lift
- Jab Lift
- Solo
- Strike from the Hand
- Batting
- Dribble
- Frontal Block
- Hook
- Grip & Swing
- Ground Strike
- Hand Pass

Available at [nafiannaclonard.ie](http://nafiannaclonard.ie) and on our [youtube channel](#)

## OTHER GAA RESOURCES

