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THE WARRIOR WAY

PLAYER PATHWAY
UNDER 15-16

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 | U15 - U16

Player Characteristics

- During this phase players begin to reach their **physical peak** and **those slow developers begin to catch up** with their peers.
- Encourage ideas of **self-awareness** and **self-help** within players.
- Profile should form the basis of their **Personal Development Plan. (PDP)**
- As a result of the above, **each player should have a PDP**, a component of which should be an individualised conditioning programme developed and delivered by a Strength & Conditioning coach. Every player should be committed to their programme as they will have had an input into their Self-Assessment Profile.
- Advanced technical skill development/**Skills developed under pressure.**
- **Understand the principles of game play, tactics and game sense.**
- Accept that the **team is paramount** and their role within the team structure.
- Instil concepts of **mental toughness and calmness under pressure** (winning behaviours).
- **Encourage flexibility** and fine tune the generic skills to play in a variety of positions.
- Players should be encouraged to **embrace positive life-skills**, i.e. time-management and to take control of their own athletic development.



COACHING | U15 - U16

Why do we focus on Game Scenarios & Modified Games?

We want the players to experience challenges which they are going to face in a game. Game scenarios allow players to practice their skills in the game setting and under pressure. Modified games force players into decision-making and problem solving. On match day, coaches should observe areas of the game which are common occurrences or scenarios where players are uncomfortable. The following week have players practice such scenarios in training through game scenarios and modified games. This will help the players to improve their performance in games.

Why do we do body resistance exercises?

We introduce body resistance exercises so players can learn the correct movement patterns of exercises such as the squat, the lunge, and the push up. We also use body resistance exercises such as this to enhance coordination, strength and movement technique. Bodyweight resistance is important in the long-term development of a player. It is important to start body resistance at this age so the player is at a reduced risk of injury later on when they begin loading the exercises with additional weight.

Why do we ask children questions?

Like practicing game scenarios in advance of games, we always want our players to problem solve. We ask players questions for several reasons. We want them to come up with solutions, but we can also check for a players' understanding. We cannot perform for the player on the pitch so by asking questions we can get the player to think about the game and learn. We also cannot see through a player's eyes on the pitch and asking questions avoids us as coach and as coaches jumping to conclusions. Ask open ended questions for example, 'If you had the ball in that area of the pitch again, what might you do differently?'.

How do we coach U15's?

- Players need to always feel part of the team. Remember every player, not just regular starters, need to play close to 16 matches per year.
- Include everyone in training, organise challenge games, and seize the opportunity to take part in tournaments.
- Have a sense of fun in training, give players compliments and make them feel important.
- Show players examples of good play. Video a game and show players examples of where they made good decisions. Also, freeze a game in training and highlight where the player did well.
- Build players awareness through training scenarios: how to break down a defence, how to cut out short or long ball or how to stretch an opposition etc.
- Include a team bonding or a team building activity in every training session.
- Give players tips on how to lead a positive lifestyle.
- Give players skills challenges and tests. Encourage players to master skills under pressure.





LEARNING TO USE THE BALL WELL | U15 - U16

Skill Emphasis	Physical Focus	Game Specific
Hurling Ball Winning <ul style="list-style-type: none">Catching high-low & half volley (protect from front & behind)First touch off the hurl-low, High controlDribble keep possessionRoll & jab lift at pace Sending & Receiving (L&R) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lift & strikeStrike front foot & Back footFeint & strikeStriking over the shoulder moving away from the targetOverhead doubling and battingOverhead blockOver head flick (direct the ball in your path) Travelling <ul style="list-style-type: none">Making room (with & without the ball)Take on opponent & protecting the body with the hurl.Dummy hand pass. Tackle <ul style="list-style-type: none">Shouldering, recover and flick & hook.	Speed (based on test results profile) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Multi directional (Efforts less than 20 secs)Quick footwork and agilityPlanting the foot (the 3 step movement)Running mechanics & techniqueStrength work to improve speed Strength (based on test results profile) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Functional Movement Assessment to establish core strength and techniqueCore programme for those still not ready for weightsIndividual programme for those with core strength & good techniquePerfect technique & control N.B. Only qualified coaches to undertake this training Stamina (based on test results profile) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Small-sided gamesDrills incorporating the ball Flexibility & Co-ordination <ul style="list-style-type: none">Maintain flexibility exerciseDynamic warm up	Intense Small Sided <ul style="list-style-type: none">Across the line•otal footballBreak-Ball & Kick4 Goal option Full Invasion <ul style="list-style-type: none">Backs v Forwards15 v 15Deploying a sweeper Defending the zones Deploying the big man Various Conditions

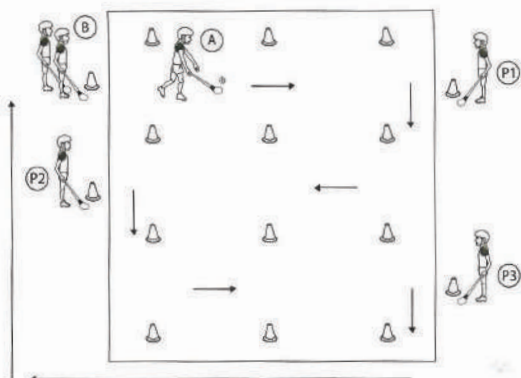


SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

| U15 - U16

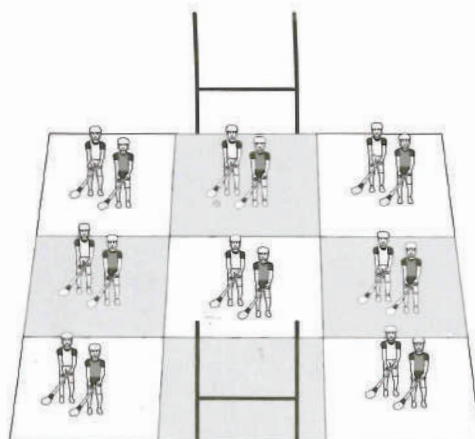
SKILL ACTIVITY 1: LANE TO LANE

Player A strikes the ball to Player 1. Player 1 returns a Hand-pass to the running A. A strikes to player 2. Player 2 returns a hand pass to the running A. A strikes the ball to Player 3 and returns a hand-pass to the running A, who solos back to the start. Player B continues the drill.



SKILL ACTIVITY 2: ZONES

The pitch is divided into zones. Players are split into two teams. Two players from opposing teams are assigned to each zone. Normal rules apply but players can't leave their zone. After a score, each player moves to a different zone.

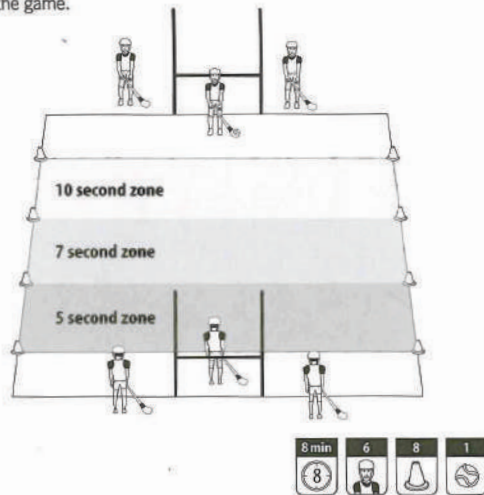

I.D.E.A

SPOT & FIX

FREEZE, REWIND, REPLAY

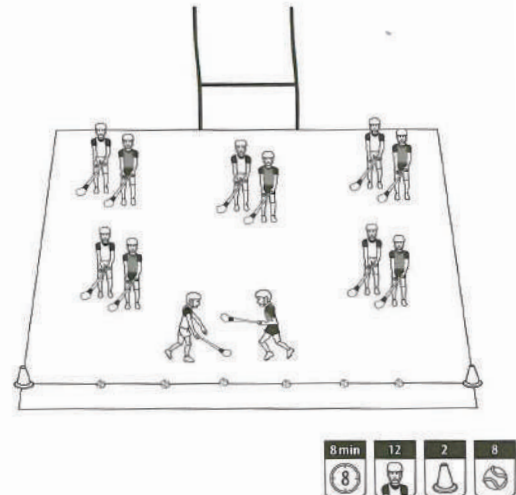
SKILL ACTIVITY 3: TIME ZONES

Mark out a large zone 60m x 20m with 3 equal zones. Two teams 3 v 3 aim to solo the ball past their opposite end line. The team in possession must keep possession of the ball for 10 seconds in their defending zone, 7 seconds in their middle zone and 5 seconds in their attacking zone before crossing their end line for a score. If a team regains possession of the ball in their attacking or middle zone they must first solo back to their defending zone before they may start the game.



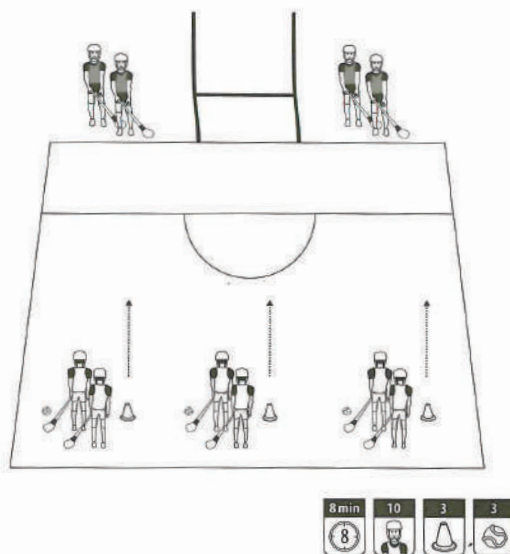
SKILL ACTIVITY 4: 6 OF THE BEST

Six scoring opportunities. One forward picks up a sliotar and along with his team-mate attempts to set up a score. If the ball is intercepted or the defenders win back possession then that attacking opportunity is gone. The forwards must then go back to the halfway line, retrieve another sliotar and set up another attack. How many scores do the forwards get from 6 attacks. Rotate defenders with attackers after 6 attacks.



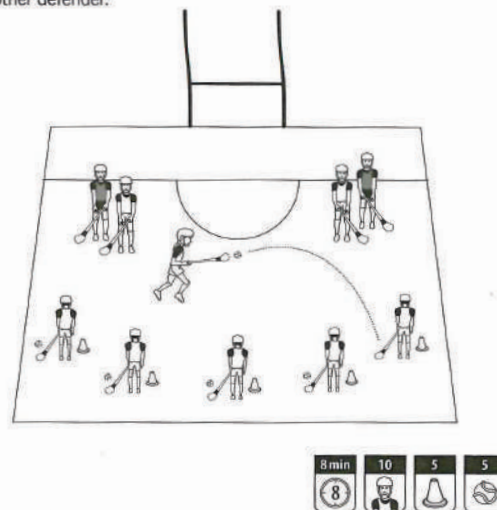
SKILL ACTIVITY 5: TIME ATTACK

3 attackers start in possession of a sliotar on the 45m line. 2 defenders start on the end-line either side of the goal. The attackers must pass the ball a minimum of 3 times and must carry the sliotar, beat the defenders and work a goal.



SKILL ACTIVITY 6: FREE FORWARD

Place 5 fielders around the pitch on the 45 in a half circle set up. Place 3 attackers and 2 defenders inside the 45. The aim of the drill is for the Feeder to make the correct decision and pick out the free forward. The free forward must carry the ball and create space for the other 2 attackers and make the correct pass to avail of this space and create a scoring opportunity. **Progression:** Add in another defender.



1,2 SCORE

How to Play

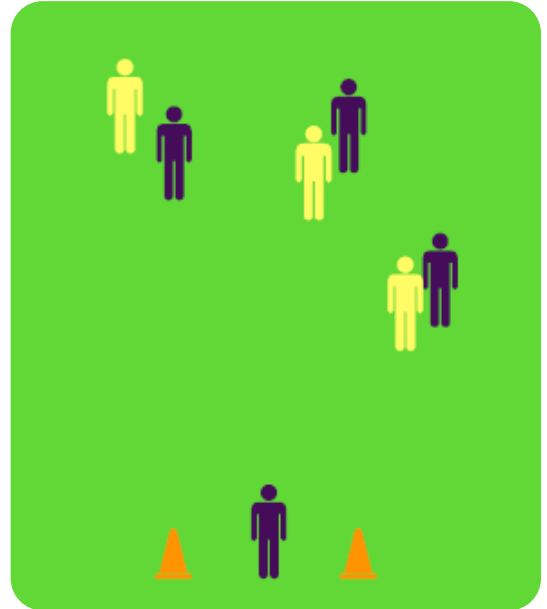
- Split into two teams. Throw the ball in & once a team is in possession of the ball, they must get a 1,2 pass before scoring.
- Team who scores starts with possession of the ball in the next round. They try to work a 1,2 pass & score.
- Team can keep possession until a 1,2 pass is available.

Progression

- 1,2 pass must occur through kicking or striking the ball. No handpass.

What it Develops

- Team play, off the ball runs, accuracy, defending, runners off shoulder, decision making.



BACKS & FORWARDS

How to Play

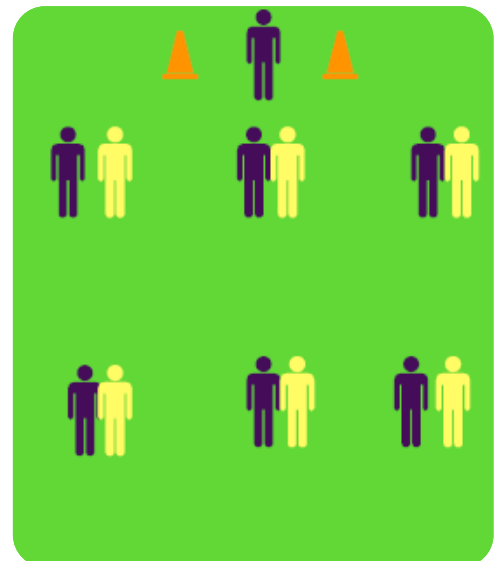
- Line players out in their positions as shown.
- Coach delivers the ball in with the forwards trying to work a score with the backs defending.

Progression

- Give defenders & opportunity to work ball out somewhere to play ball too.
- Allow the goalie to practice short puck outs.
- Forwards must defend.

What it Develops

- Game Sense, positional sense, attacking defending.



HEAD FOR THE GOAL

How to Play

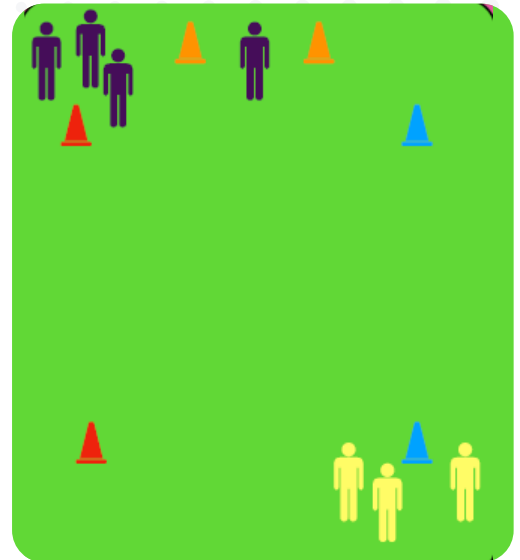
- Forwards start behind the red cone with a ball.
- They run out around the second red cone & try work a goal.
- Defenders run around blue cone & try to prevent a goal.

Progression

- Allow points & add in conditions, i.e must make a pass.
- Give defenders a method of working the ball out.

What it Develops

- Communication, attacking, defending, breaking the tackle, tackling, shooting.



CLEAN CATCH, SCORE!

How to Play

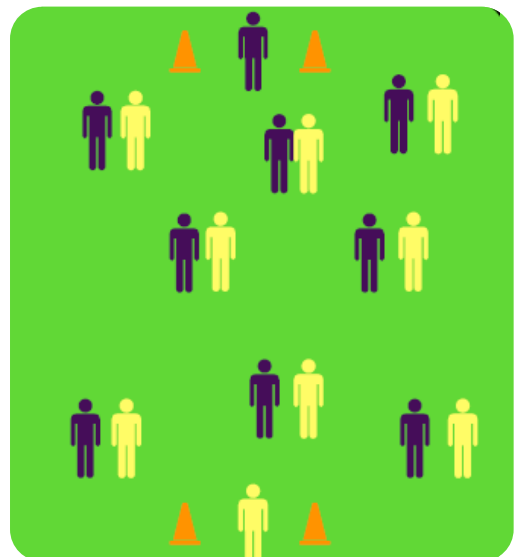
- Set up two teams as normal & start small-sided to allow more touches.
- Players can only score after catching a clean ball from a pass.
- If the ball hits the ground, the player can't score.

Progression

- Only allow kicking/striking. Promotes accurate long passing.

What it Develops

- Team play, scanning, accurate passing, movement.



START THE ATTACK

How to Play

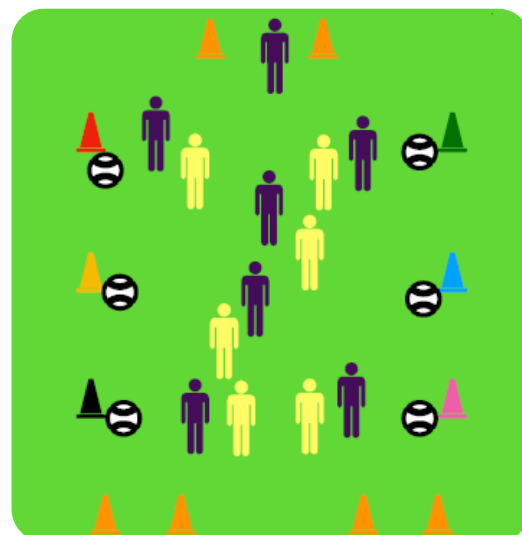
- Coach calls a colour cone. Nearest forward reacts & gets a ball from that cone & starts an attack.
- Defenders work the ball out through the gates.

Progression

- Defenders pick ball up & try work it out on coaches call. Make pitch bigger. Add more players.

What it Develops

- Positional sense, working scores, team play, movement, working ball out.



MOMENTUM

How to Play

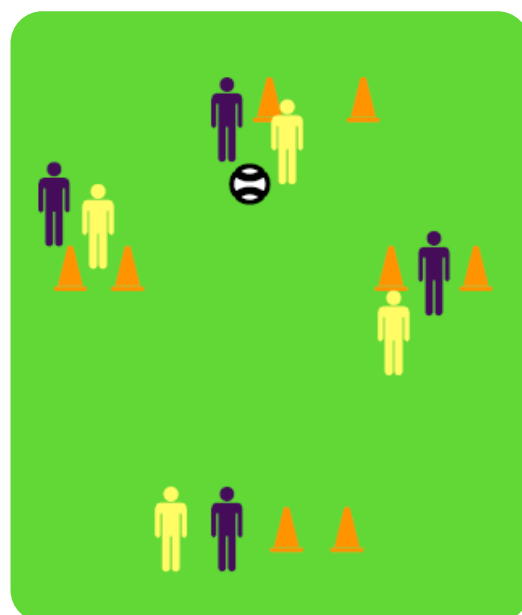
- Set up four gates as shown similar to 12,3,6,9 on a clock face.
- Two players mark each other at each gate.
- Player must carry the ball through the gates before passing to their next teammate.
- Purple must play ball clockwise, yellow anti-clockwise.
- First team to go around the clock wins.

Progression

- Make the clock bigger for longer passing, more players at each gate.

What it Develops

- Competition, passing, soloing, breaking the tackle.





SAMPLE SESSION | U15 - U16

Warm Up

Wexford Way Warm-Up

Core Part of Session

Part 1: *Play a Match & Give Feedback.*

Part 2: *Skill Development: Drill or Skill Refinement/Practice.*

Part 3: *Conditioned Game e.g. Clean Catch, Score!*

Finish with Fun

Part 1: *Modified Game e.g. Head for goal. Core Work or Speed Work or Higher Intensity Skills Drill.*

Part 2: *Match or Backs & Forwards.*

Coach Tip!

Ensure regular games for all players. Organise Challenge Games.

Emphasis for Child!

Ask Child questions and highlight examples of good play.





SKILLS CHECKLIST | U15 - U16

SKILL

DESCRIPTION

SCORING SYSTEM MAXIMUM SCORE = 300 POINTS

Ground Striking

6 balls are placed on the 30m line 4m apart. Players must run & strike the balls on the ground from alternate sides. The balls must travel a distance of 20m. Time allowed = 10secs
2points deduction for every second over allowed time

Maximum Score = 30 points

(5points per ball)

Free Taking

4 balls are placed on the 45m line as follows: (a) 10m to the right of centre (b) 10m to the left of centre (c) 25m to the right of centre (d) 25m to the left of centre. balls must be stuck over the bar. 10 points awarded for (a) & (b), with 20 points awarded for (c) & (d)

Maximum Score = 60 points

Jab Lift & Strike

6 balls are placed 30m from the end line, 12m apart (2 balls at each point; 1 for left, 1 for right). Centre ball is in line with the centre of the goal. Players must jab the ball into their hand & strike on the run to pass over the bar, first from the right & then the left & vice versa. Time Allowed = 30 sec
2 point deduction for every second over the allowed time.

Maximum Score = 60 points

(10points per ball)

Sideline Cut

4 balls are placed on the 30m as follows: (a) 10m to the right of centre (b) 10m to the left of centre (c) 25m to the right of centre (d) 25m to the left of the centre. Balls must be struck over the bar. 10 points awarded for (a) & (b), with 20 points awarded for (c) & (d)

Maximum Score = 60 points

Ball Control

6 grid poles are placed in a line 2m apart. Players must beging at the cone, 5m from the 1st pole, jab lift the ball & carry it on the hurl through the poles, around the end cone, 5 metres from the final cone & back through the poles to the start. All must not be dropped or taken into the hand at any stage. Time allowed = 15 secs.
2 point deduction for every second over the allowed time. 5 point deduction if ball drops or goes into the hand.

How many points out of 4 attempts?

Long Puck

Players must strike the 2 balls from the hand from the end line. Distance is measured from the first bounce. If the end line is crossed prior to striking the ball, that puck is null & avoid. Score: up to 60m = 5 points per ball, 60-70m = 10 ponts, 70m+ = 20 points

Maximum score = 40 ponts

Hand Pass of the Hurl

4 balls set up in line, pick 1st ball onto the hurl & solo 4 steps (don't take it into hand). Handpass to person on the left 5m away with the right hand off ht hurl. Pick up the 2nd ball onto the hurl & solo 4 steps (don't take it into hand) handpass to person on the right 5m away with the left hand off the hurl. 5 points per successful hand pass

Maximum Score = 20 points

ADDITIONAL TEST



I.D.E.A



SPOT & FIX



FREEZE, REWIND, REPLAY

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 and on our [youtube channel](#)

OTHER GAA RESOURCES

