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THE WARRIOR WAY

PLAYER PATHWAY
UNDER 17-18

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GAA

THE CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION
An Cumann Camógaíochta

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 andgives them theopportunity 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 do 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 | U17 - U18

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.
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COACHING | U17 - U18

Why do we expose players to tactical & match-day scenarios?

As players get older, they are going to be faced with many different challenges on the pitch. We want them to have the skills to adapt on match day. It is a guided discovery for players. At times in training they may make the wrong decision with or without the ball, but this is important as they will develop problem solving skills, mental toughness and calmness under pressure. All of these are associated with winning behaviors when they get to adult level.

Why do we encourage players to practice away from the team?

It gives players good habits ahead of their future in the adult game. It allows late developers to catch up with their peers. Players also only need to fine tune their skills. Test player skills and give them tips and feedback on how to improve. Every great player is built in a ball alley or at the gable end of their house.

Why do we need to be aware of player's other commitments?

Drop off rate can be high after this age because of factors such as work, college, school, relationships, and social life. We need to ensure that at this age, the player learns that GAA can go hand in hand with these commitments and not be an extra source of stress. Make sure we are not forcing the player to attend when they have other commitments. Training should be a release as extra responsibility comes to the player. Statistically if we can keep a player involved past 21, they stay for life.

How do we coach U17's?

- Lots of fun and team building can create friendships that will stay within the club forever.
- Incorporate match day scenarios into your training sessions such as defending a sweeper, how to break down the sweeper, deploying a target man, creating space and closing space, etc...
- Give players a platform to engage with their role models by inviting senior players to take parts of training sessions or to talk to your players.
- Drills in training must be done at a high intensity as players need to master skills in a game situation.
- Ensure players do not feel under pressure with other commitments such as school, other sports, etc...
- Ask players lots of questions about match scenarios and show players options of what they might do.
- Plan a schedule for players so they can organize themselves.
- Introduce time management practices and give players an Athletic Development program (see Wexford Coaching and Games for professional advice)
- Encourage players to take ownership over their nutrition and hydration. For example, get players to bring water to training and eat healthy meals in advance of training and matches.
- Ensure training sessions are planned and energetic.

LEARNING TO USE THE BALL WELL | U17 - U18

Skill Emphasis

Hurling

Ball Winning
- Catching high-low & half volley (protect from front & behind)
- First touch off the hurl– low, High control
- Dribble keep possession
- Roll & jab lift at pace

Sending & Receiving (L&R)
- Lift & strike
- Strike front foot & Back foot
- Feint & strike
- Striking over the shoulder moving away from the target
- Overhead doubling and batting
- Overhead block
- Over head flick (direct the ball in your path)

Travelling
- Making room (with & without the ball)
- Take on opponent & protecting the body with the hurl.
- Dummy hand pass.

Tackle
- Shouldering, recover and flick & hook.

Physical Focus

Speed (based on test results profile)
- Multi directional (Efforts less than 20 secs)
- Quick footwork and agility
- Planting the foot (the 3 step movement)
- Running mechanics & technique
- Strength work to improve speed

Strength (based on test results profile)
- Functional Movement Assessment to establish core strength and technique
- Core programme for those still not ready for weights
- Individual programme for those with core strength & good technique
- Perfect technique & control

N.B. Only qualified coaches to undertake this training

Stamina (based on test results profile)
- Small-sided games
- Drills incorporating the ball

Flexibility & Co-ordination
- Maintain flexibility exercise
- Dynamic warm up

Game Specific

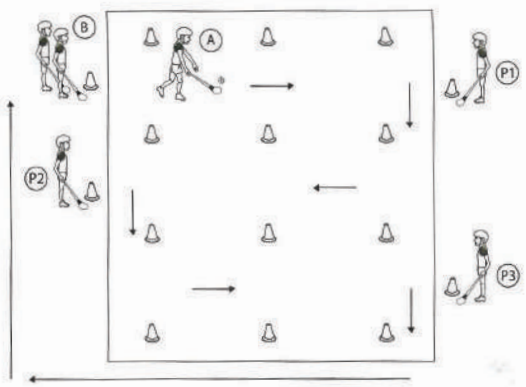
Intense Small Sided
- Across the line
- •otal football
- Break-Ball & Kick
- 4 Goal option

Full Invasion
- Backs v Forwards
- 15 v 15
- Deploying a sweeper Defending the zones Deploying the big man Various Conditions

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES
U17 - U18

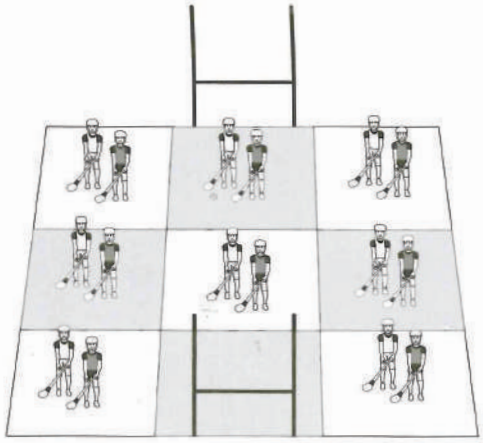
SKILL ACTIVITY 1: LANE TO LANE

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.



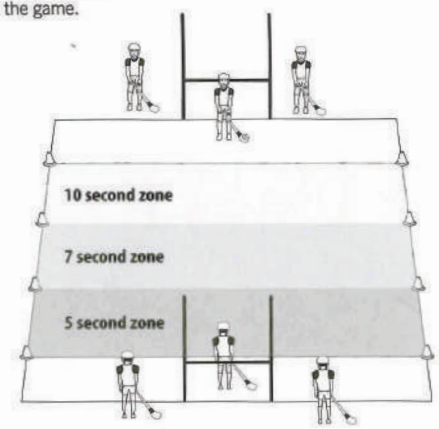
SKILL ACTIVITY 2: ZONES

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.



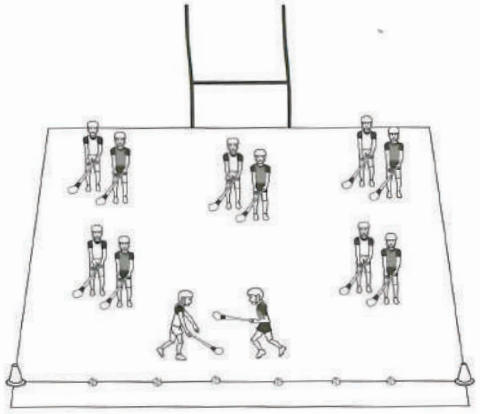
SKILL ACTIVITY 3: TIME ZONES

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.



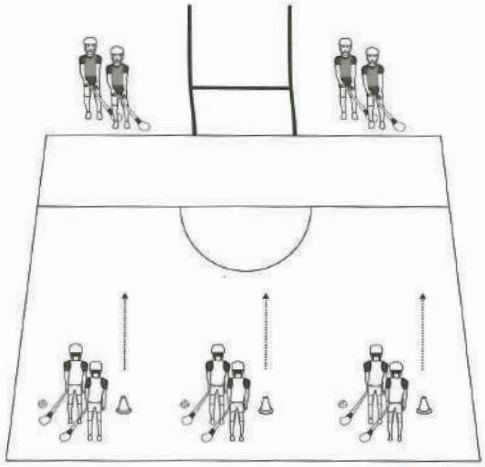
SKILL ACTIVITY 4: 6 OF THE BEST

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.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

How to Play

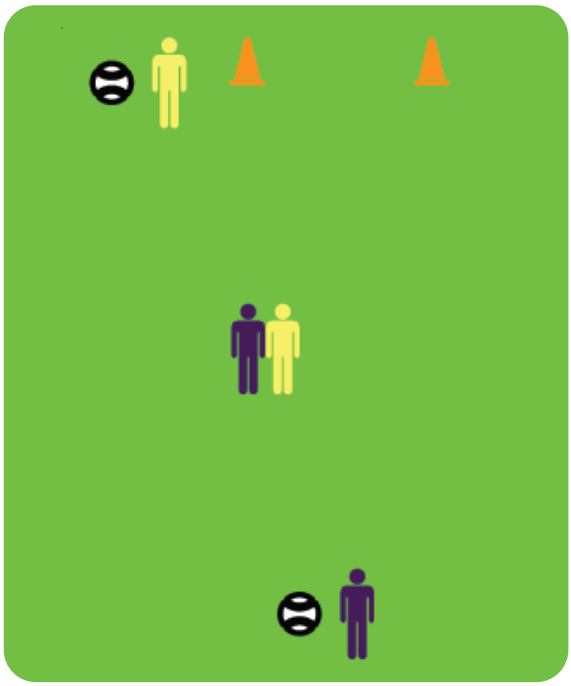
- Split into groups of 4, 2 backs & 2 forwards.
- One player goes to half-way line with the other going to the end line. The 2 in the middle are competing for the ball.
- Player on the outside plays the ball to the forward in the middle who must try & work a score. If the ball is turned over, the defender must clear to the ball.
- The defender must then try take ball from the player on the end line & work it out to the player on the outside. The forward tries to turn over the ball & get a score.
- Swap around the players.

Progression

- More/less space, more time competing for the ball.

What it Develops

- Attacking/defending, passing/shooting, tackling.



INTENSITY

How to Play

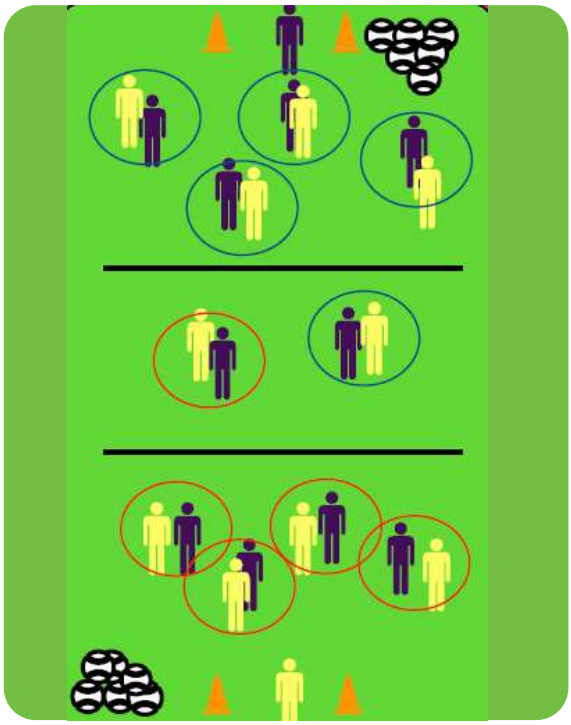
- Divide into 2 teams. Each set of backs and forwards has a midfield pair to work with.
- *Phase 1*: For 3 minutes each set of backs gets to work as many balls as they can to the hand of a midfielder they are teamed with.
- Once the midfielder has clean ball in hand they must drop the ball exactly as they stand.
- Defenders then work out next ball. If forwards turn over the ball, they work score.
- *Phase 2*: Midfielder (Still tracked by direct opponent) picks ball exactly where they dropped & delivers to their forwards opposite end to work score.
- Once ball goes dead midfielder delivers next ball. If defenders turn over ball, they try work the ball out at huge intensity and score from range.
- Winning team has most scores at end.

Progression

- More/less players, shorter pitch, different conditions.

What it Develops

- Match Sense with more touches



RESTART MAYHEM

How to Play

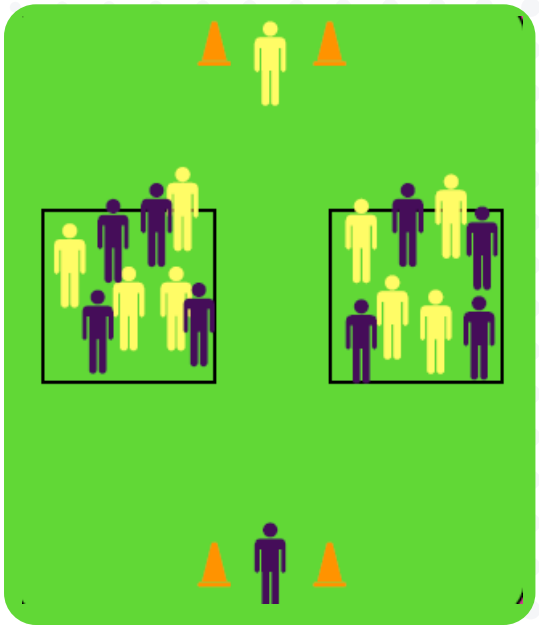
- Split 2 teams into 2 groups & put them in a square on either side of a pitch.
- Goalies both kick/puck out a ball at the same time to opposite sides. The team who wins the ball must try & work a score.
- First square to work a score gets double points.
- Goalies play the ball to opposite sides following each round.
- Players get opportunities to both attack & defend restarts.

Progression

- Bigger Square for goalie to try pick out players.
- Tactical runs.

What it Develops

- Competition in air, working scores, restarts.



DIVIDE & CONQUER

How to Play

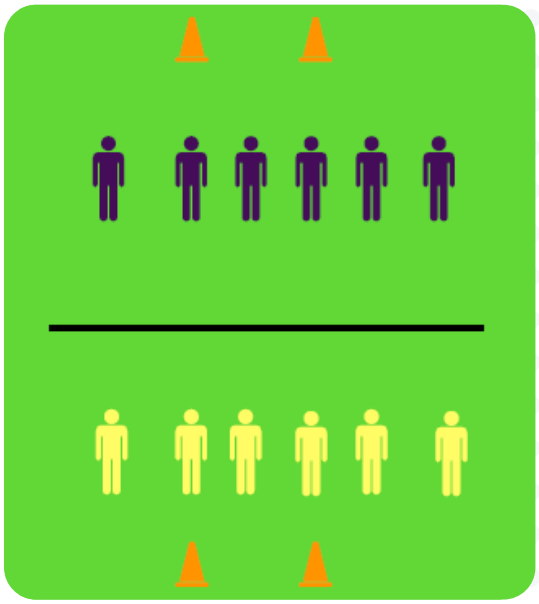
- Divide into 2 teams where the coach gives each player on the team a number - e.g. 1,2,3,4,5,6.
- Each team has a ball in their zone keeping possession.
- Coach calls numbers e.g. 2,4,6. Those players must sprint to the opposite side, turn the ball over & work a score.
- First team to score wins.

Progression

- Have more or less players.
- Instead of keeping possession remaining players work the ball out to score the opposite end.

What it Develops

- Game sense, communication, transitioning.



RECYCLE & SCORE

How to Play

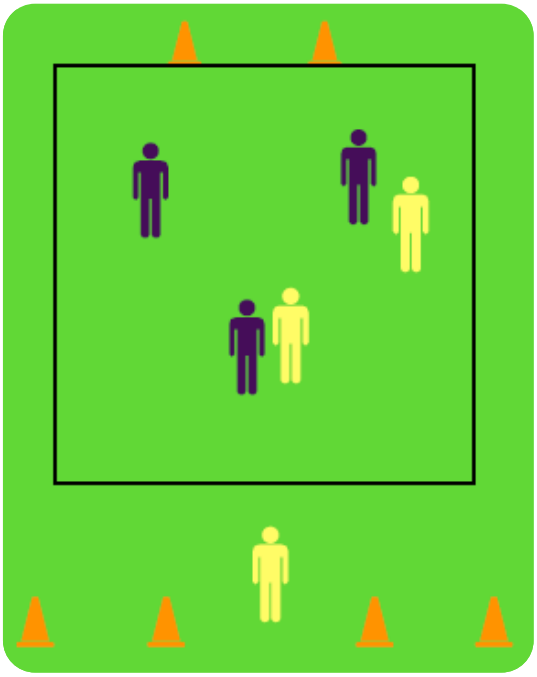
- 2 teams set up a square in front of goal with the attacking team leaving one player outside the square.
- The defending team must work the ball out through the gates.
- Spare attacker can only tackle when defenders work the ball out of the square. If the attacking team turn over the ball inside the square, they can work a score or recycle the ball to the outside player.

Progression

- Set up in a full match scenario, sweeper, third midfielder, recycling possession to half-backs etc.

What it Develops

- Positional sense, use of the spare player, pressing, recycling possession.



SHOT CLOCK

How to Play

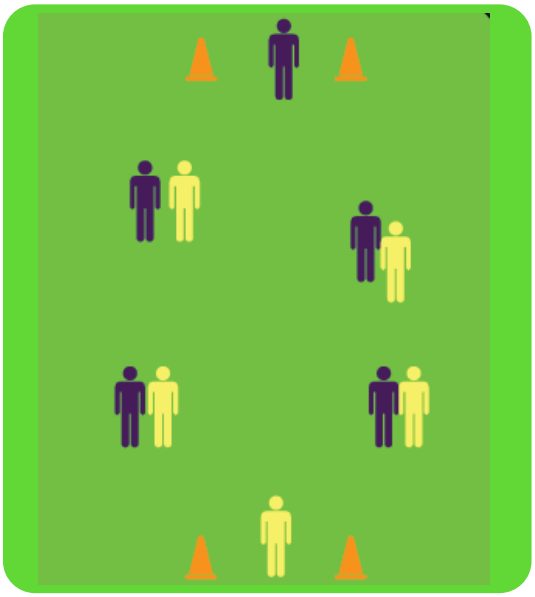
- Any amount of players can be on any size pitch.
- One team starts with the ball in hand & are given a time to get their shot in. e.g 20 seconds to get a shot.
- If no shot is taken in 20 seconds, the other team gets possession of the ball.

Progression

- Lengthen or shorten the shot clock.
- Change the shot clock to maximum pass count before shot.

What it Develops

- Playing with intensity, delaying the opposition, vision, use of the ball, clinical play, shooting, tackling, work-rate.



SAMPLE SESSION | U17 - U18

Warm Up

Wexford Way Warm-Up

Core Part of Session

Part 1: *Drills*

Part 2: *Match Scenario* e.g. Backs & Forwards

Part 3: *Conditioned* or *Modified Game* to reflect match scenario learning

Finish with Fun

Part 1: *Small-Sided Game* e.g. Personal Responsibility

Part 2: *Match*

Coach Tip!

Be aware of and discuss Players other Teams/ Commitments

Emphasis for Child!

Need to make own decisions on pitch and practice away from it

SKILLS CHECKLIST | U17 - U18

SKILL	DESCRIPTION	SCORING SYSTEM
Through the Hands	Coach or another player strikes the ball to player 30m from goal, player must control the ball on the move, step forward & strike into an empty net without the ball hitting the ground. player has 6 attempts. Note: Not a good scoring exercise, gitting the net is about ball distribuion. Score chart: moving to ball = 1 point, Clean First Touch = 1 point, Moving feet to strike = 1 point, Hitting Net = 1 point	Total Overall Score
High Catch /Over the Bar	Player standing in a 25m zone that's 30-40m from goal. Coach/ player pucks a high ball in from 35-40m away. Player must run & get underneath the ball, catch, change direction & shoot for the posts. Player has 6 attempts. Score Chart: moving underneath the ball = 1 point, Hand protected with hurl = 1 point, Feet off ground for catch = 1 point, Change of direction with ball = 1 point, Strike over bar for score = 1 point	Total Overall Score
First Touch & Hand Pass	Coach or player is 40m away from the player. Strike the ball low & hard to the player. Player must run to the ball, control & give a good handpass back to the coach or player. player has 6 attempts. Score Chart: Move to the ball = 1 point, Control the ball in front = 1 point, one touch to hand = 1 point, Catching below hip = 1 point, Moving forward with the ball = 1 point, Good handpass =1 point	Total Overall Score
Deliver the Ball	2 poles are 10m apart, 60m away & at an angle to the player. player stands 5m back from the coach/player with a ball. Player handpasses to coach/player, moves & receives return handpass & delivers the ball between 2 poles. Player has 6 attempts. Note: A good trajectory is the ball moves at crossbar height in the air & dips or bounces before going though the poles. Score Chart: Good Handpass = 1 point, Timing run for return pass = 1 point, Fast delivery = 1 point Good Trajectory = 1 point, Accuracy = 1 point	Maximum Score: 15 (5 points per attempt)
Shooting Under Pressure	Mark out a 10m x 10m square, 35m from goal. Place 5 balls in the square. Place 5 balls in the square. Player must run on the whistle/call & jab/roll lift the ball & shoot at the posts/score. Player has 3 attempts. Note: Poor pick up techinque will reduce score. 40 second per attempt	Total Overall Score
Work Rate	Mark out a 20m x 20m square. 3 players keep possesion of the ball, on the whistle/call player enters the square & for 30 secs attempts to hook, block, disposses, body tackle (arms low, don't foul), shoulder & turnover. Player has 4 attempts. Score Chart: Hook = 2 points, Block = 2 points, Shoulder = 2 points, Body Tackle = 2 points, Turnover - 4 points, Foul on a player in possesion = - 2 points	Total Overall Score

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

GAELIC GAMES PLAYER PATHWAY

HURLING 365 Wexford GAA

TUSLA

GAA Learning

Be Ready To Play In Partnership with UPMC

GAA Activity Planner