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THE WARRIOR WAY

PLAYER PATHWAY
UNDER 7 - 8

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 | U7 - U8

Player Characteristics

- They will **begin to look up when in possession and start choosing options** [e.g. passing rather than shooting]
- They will have **difficulty tackling opponents** but will puck the ball away from them and attempt to block any shots.
- They have a **tendency to stand back in hurling** so encourage them to get close to the opponents.
- Players will **beg for a game at every opportunity**, yet their technique is best improved through individual, paired and small group work. This is an ideal time to use the 'Whole-Part-Whole' approach to some sessions where the coach starts with a game, stops it after ten minutes, works on one technique for a short period then restarts the game.
- Coaches need to focus **on positive feedback**, this is the age where **drop-outs occur if children think they are no good**.
- They will also 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.
- At this age players **must also get used to attacking the ball** [i.e. running and not stopping] and breaking tackles
- **First critical period for speed development.**



COACHING | U7 - U8

Why do we develop Fundamental Movements?

Developing Fundamental Movements helps develop confidence in their body and this will make it easier to develop skills along the pathway.

Why do we use stations?

Using stations offers exposure to different activities, control group size and player/coach ratio to ensure better quality of coaching. Constant change keeps them interested throughout the sessions. It also allows a coach to focus on a particular Skill/Game for the entire session and allows more time to 'Spot' any incorrect technique and 'Fix' it.

How do we coach U7's?

- Keep it Fun and match their energy with your enthusiasm.
- Lots of variety in your activities to maintain their interest.
- Plan your session but don't be afraid of a bit of chaos, free play is important.
- Players will beg for a game at every opportunity, yet their technique is best improved through individual, paired, and small group work. This is an ideal time to use the 'Whole-Part-Whole' approach to some sessions where the coach starts with a game, stops it after ten minutes, works on one technique for a short period and then restarts the game.
- 1 v 1, 2 v 2, 3 v 3. Keeps teams small.
- Do not over complicate it, one step at a time and keep the instructions to a minimum.
- Children at this age love being asked questions and it gives you an opportunity to check for understanding.





LEARNING TO USE THE BALL WELL | U7 - U8

Skill Emphasis	Fundamental Movement	Game Specific
Hurling Handling <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correct hurley size• Identification of the 'strong' hand• Grip & Swing• Ready & Lock• Claw catch• Cupped catch Sending & Receiving <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ground striking (a moving ball) L & R• Ground doubling (same & opposite direction)• Striking from the hand (Stationary) Jab lift (Stationary Ball) Travelling <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bean Bag balancing• Ball balancing Tackle <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ground Flick (backhand)• Ground clash• Hooking Frontal &• ground block (Hurl to• Hurl)	ABC & RJT Agility e.g. zig zag relay Balance e.g. One leg hopping e.g. hop land on other leg Co-ordination Skipping, Ladder Work. Running e.g. On the spot e.g. Relay races e.g. Hurdle running e.g. Stopping Jumping e.g. leap frog, e.g. Donkey kicks Throwing Target Roll, Bowling, Dodgeball Conditioning: Partner Resistance e.g. Tug of war, e.g. Push & Pull partner, e.g. The bridge, whole body exercises, introduce basic flexibility	Target Games <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skittles• Through the gate• Tower ball Court Games <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over the river• Scout Ball• Cúchulainn Field Games <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rounders• Four hitters• 4v4 (two touch)• 5v5 (Wide man) Part Invasion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4v4 (zoned) No Goalie• Line game

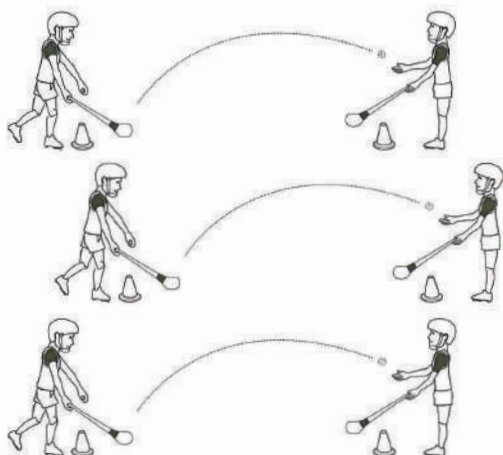


SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

| U7 - U8

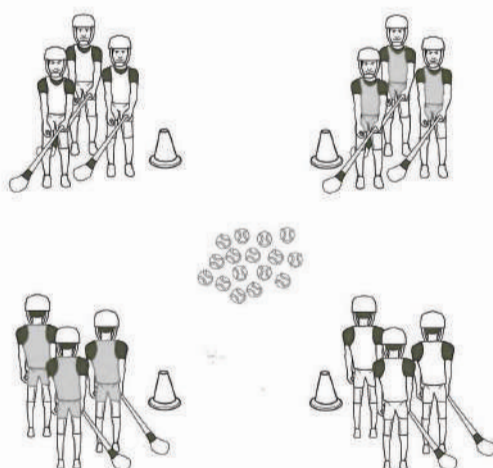
SKILL ACTIVITY 1: FLICK AND CATCH

Players in pairs 2m apart. 1 player has a bean bag on a hurl. He flicks the bean bag to partner who attempts to catch in their hand.



SKILL ACTIVITY 2: ROB THE NEST

12 players split into 4 teams of 3. In 60 seconds dribble as many sliotars as possible from the centre to your own area.



I.D.E.A



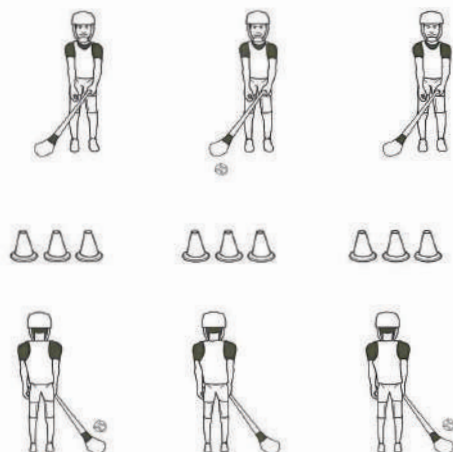
SPOT & FIX



FREEZE, REWIND, REPLAY

SKILL ACTIVITY 3: SKITTLES

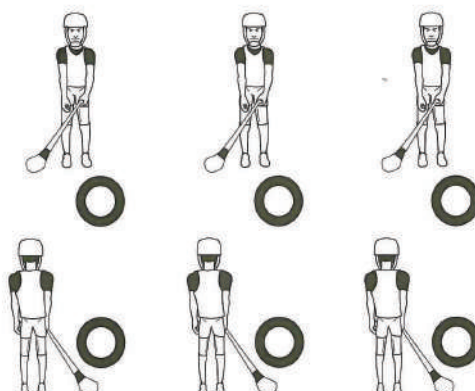
Two players face each other with a set of cones in between. Players stand a designated distance back and try to knock the cones with the ball/sliotar. Award one point if skittle is hit, 2 if it is moved and 3 if it is knocked down.



8 min	6	9	3
			

SKILL ACTIVITY 4: TYRE HIT

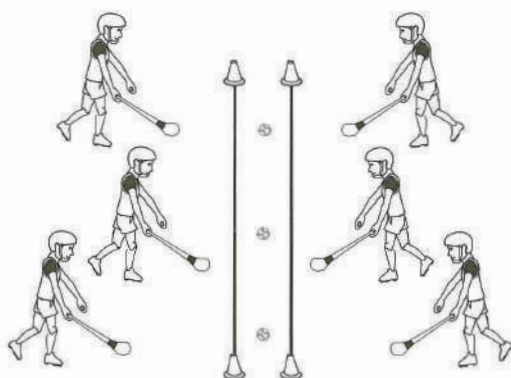
8 players - each at a tyre. One handed strike while walking around the tyre - both sides. Switch to two-handed striking. Jump onto the tyre. Jump back down & strike right/left. Jump into the tyre, jump out and strike right/left.



8 min	6	6	0
			

SKILL ACTIVITY 5: FLICK THE FLIES

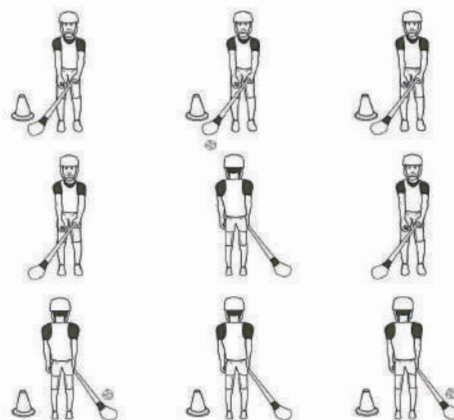
Step 1. draw two parallel lines of 4 meters distance. Step 2. two players facing each other on the parallel lines. Step 3. Put a ball in the middle (2 metres distance). Execution: the winner is the player who Flicks the ball away first. Each flick reward is 1 point. Set player to execute from ready position to flick action, using your thumb and finger as a spring.



8 min	6	4	3
			

SKILL ACTIVITY 6: PASS THE GUARDS

The first player begins by striking the sliotar towards the central player. The central player, without stopping the ball, must strike it on towards the third player. The third player strikes it back to the central player again and so the drill continues. Encourage the central player to play the ball on whatever side it approaches. The first team to move the ball up and down the line a set number of times wins.



8 min	9	6	3
			

ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS, SCORE

How to Play

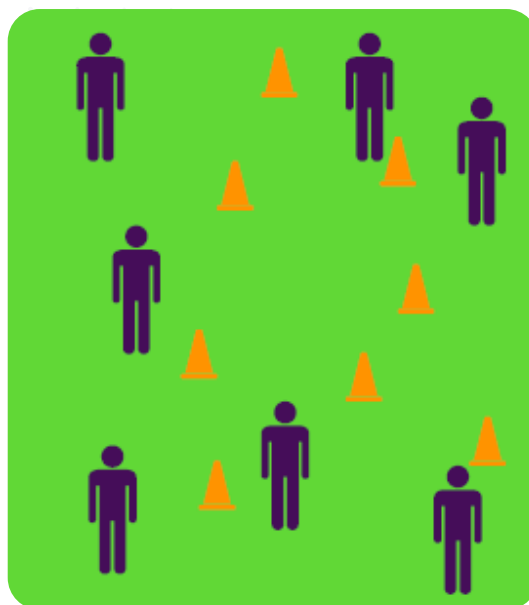
- Scatter out cones and balls, everybody against everybody.
- Find another player & play Rock Paper Scissor's.
- Loser of Rock Paper Scissors steps between any two cones becoming a goalie.
- Winner of Rock Paper Scissors takes a shot & finds someone new to play.

Progression

- Goalie can come off line.

What it Develops

- Striking or kicking. Shooting and Defending



SHIP, SEA, SHORE

How to Play

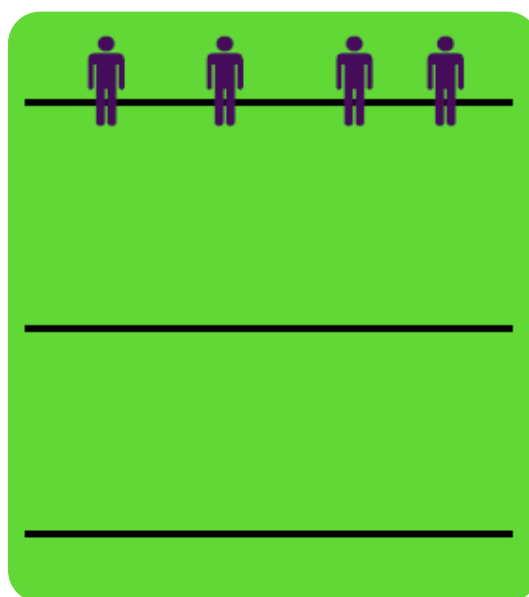
- Mark out 3 lines Ship, Sea, Shore.
- Coach calls and player must run to that line.
- First player to be first 3 in a row times wins.
- Coach tries to trick players.

Progression

- Add sport specific movements.
e.g. players must dribble/bounce/carry ball to next line.

What it Develops

- Listening, concentration, fitness, speed, dribbling, ball control.





CLEAN THE YARD

How to Play

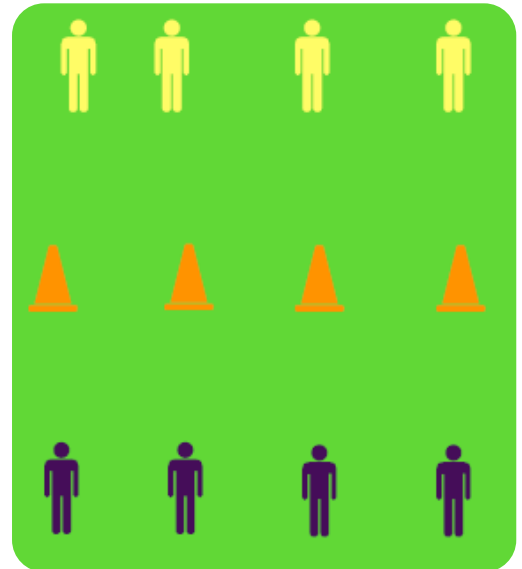
- 2 Teams either side of the cones.
- Loads of balls on either side.
- Players strike ball to opposite side.
- Cleanest side wins.

Progression

- Make only 1 pass.
- Only use opposite side.

What it Develops

- Striking or kicking
- Awareness.



POOPER SCOOPER

How to Play

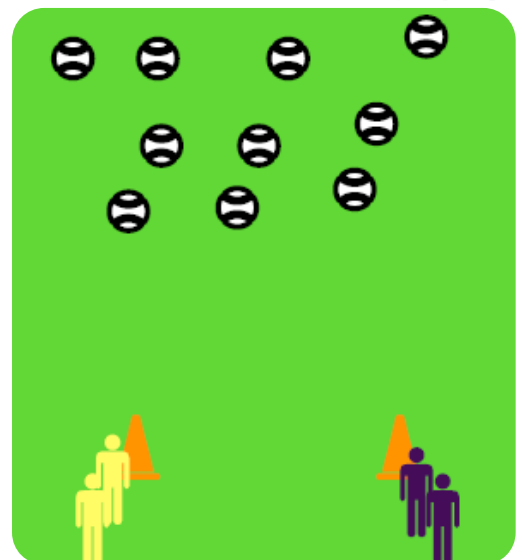
- Each Team lines up behind a cone.
- Scatter a bunch of balls on the ground 10 metres away.
- Each player at the front of each team has a cone.
- Player runs to scoop up the ball with cone - no hands.
- Team with most balls at end wins.

Progression

- Introduce hurling and football pick up.

What it Develops

- Fundamentals of the pick up.



FIRST HOME WINS

How to Play

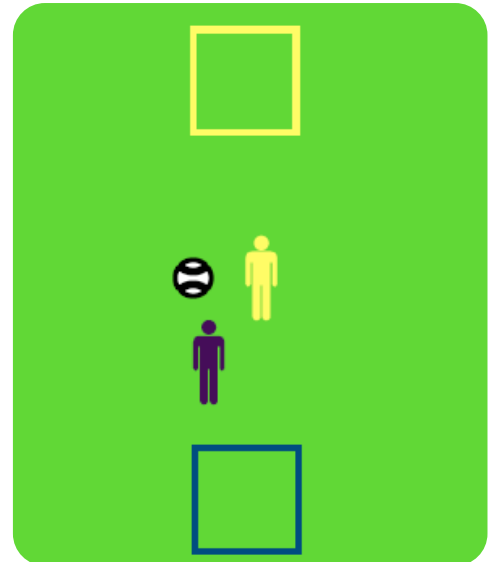
- Set up two squares 10m apart .
- Two players in the middle with the ball on the ground.
- On coaches call/whistle, player must dribble the ball to their own home square.

Progression

- Add in extra players.
E.g 2v2, 3v3. Solo, Tackle instead of dribble

What it Develops

- Competition, ground block, four steps & bounce the football.



KING OF THE RING

How to Play

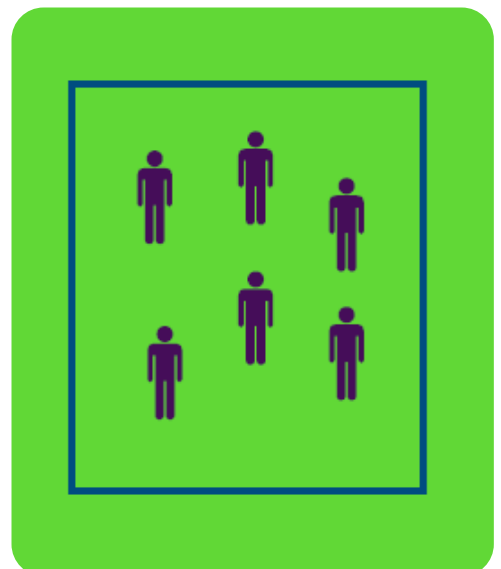
- Coach marks out a square.
- Each player starts with a ball.
- Player dribbles or carries the ball around the square.
- Players must try flick other players' balls outside square.

Progression

- Two teams. Ball for each team, first team to remove other teams' ball from the square wins.

What it Develops

- Travelling, protecting ball, ground flick hurling, ground dribble football.





SAMPLE SESSION | U7 - U8

Warm Up: Fun Game

E.g. Chasing game, must match player's energy.

Station 1: Fundamental Movements

E.g. Coordination: crawling.

Station 2: Skills Station

Players have own ball or partner to practice skill. E.g Striking/Kicking.
Lots of demonstration and encouragement from coach.

Station 3: Games Station

Game to practice specific skill focus.
E.g. Skill is Striking, Game is Clean the yard.

Station 4: Small-Sided Game

Mark out small pitch. Allow players to play a short match showing their skills. Aim for no more than 4v4 in training to maximise touches.

Coach Tip!

Players will beg for a game at every opportunity, yet their technique is best improved through individual, paired and small group work.

Emphasis for Child!

They are developing their skills so have lots of games and activities to start challenging them





SKILLS CHECKLIST | U7 - U8

Ground Strike (right side) Fluid 'C' Swing	0-10m <input type="checkbox"/>	10-15m <input type="checkbox"/>	15m+ <input type="checkbox"/>
Ground Strike (left side) Fluid 'C' Swing	0-10m <input type="checkbox"/>	10-15m <input type="checkbox"/>	15m+ <input type="checkbox"/>
Roll Lift	How many in 60 seconds? <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ball Hops (Hop Ball on Hurl)	How many in 60 seconds? <input type="checkbox"/>		
Solo Bean Bag/Ball (out 10m turn & back)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Overhead Catch Coach throws ball from 10m, player catches overhead	How many catches from 5 attempts? <input type="checkbox"/>		



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

