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**Graigue Ballycallan GAA Club.**

**Player Pathway 2022.**

“Player Pathways” are universally recognised nowadays, but when you sit back and look at them, they are basically what every GAA club has been, or should be, attempting to achieve, particularly, in the past twenty to thirty years, with the advent of all this modern underage activity. Player Pathways are essentially, what clubs are all about. Starting at an early age, and helping players through the various age levels, providing learning, enriching experiences for our players, so that they are still playing GAA at the end of their youth careers, then also prepared, and ready for the challenges they face as they progress to the adult ranks in their club/county.

This player pathway is a guide to mentors, players, and parents as to what they should be doing as the boy’s progress through each age group in their playing career in Graigue Ballycallan GAA club. The pathway is to aid and assist all concerned to maximise enjoyment and participation, with player welfare at the core of the plan. We hope this will aid in ensuring the development of all players to reach their full potential, from their first introduction to Gaelic games at nursery level, up to the adult teams and beyond. As Gaelic Games is not an international sport the ideas contained in the plan are in keeping with best practice and in line with the GAA’ s Total Performance Model.

The purpose of this Player Pathway initiative is to help guide coaches, managers, mentors, and parents who play an active role in the development of our young Hurlers. It should be noted that these are guidelines and recommendations for coaches, managers, mentors, and parents that 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 our players. It is intended, at its most basic form, 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”. This Player Pathway is a systematic approach adopted by Graigue Ballycallan GAA Club to maximise player potential and increase the enjoyment of all our players. It provides a framework for the development of skills, fundamental movement, physical focus, and game specific capacities that coaches can follow stage by stage

Each age group is covered separately and contains guidelines and ideas for players at each level. Everyone will develop at a different rate, mentally and physically, the same applies to teams. It is important to remember that children are not mini adults, they should be treated with respect, patience and perseverance is key. We are concerned with the long-term development of each player to reach their own maximum potential.

**Coaching Officer Role**

At Graigue Ballycallan Club the primary responsibilities of a Coaching Officer are:

* Promotion of Best Practice
* Support Kilkenny GAA Player Pathway
* Coach EducationCommunication and sharing ofcoaching workshops, courses and

information from Kilkenny GAA to club mentors.

* Collaborative Relationships
  + Parents
  + Players
  + Juvenile Mentors
  + Schools: Primary & Secondary
  + County Squads
  + Club Executive

Collaborative Relationships

The club coaching officers will foster and encourage collaborative relationships with parents and or guardians of players:

* to practice the skills of the game at home,
* to develop pride and passion for their club,
* to be leaders in their respective age groups,
* to attend club games where possible.

The club coaching officers will endeavour to

* encourage adult players to participate in mentoring and positively influencing younger players in our club.
* encourage head mentors to ensure that all mentors in their respective age groups have dedicated training and match day responsibilities: e.g., Player Attendance, Warm Up, Warm Down, First Aid, Hurls, Sliotars, Towels, Water, Competition Rules, Referee Fees, Team Sheets.

Best Practice

The club coaching officers will promote best practice in the coaching and organisation of games at each age group, particularly underage.

* The club nursery should focus on the development of appropriate skills for children aged 4-7.
* Within the 8–11 year-old age group focus is on the Go Games philosophy, nurturing and developing every player as a central part of the Club Coaching Programme.
* As young players progress into adolescence, the Club Coaching Officers will encourage the best players to participate in the County Schools of Excellence and Development Squads.
* GAA Respect Initiative.

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Coach Education

* The Club Coaching Officers will promote the education and qualification of all coaches within the club.
* They will encourage all club coaches to attend appropriate courses, workshops and seminars and receive coaching qualifications.
* They will support the development of coaches within the club, e.g., by communicating workshops and courses available for Mentors to attend.
* GAA Respect Initiative.

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**Coaching Personnel**

The following are a list of the coaching personnel that are in place at Graigue Ballycallan GAA Club:

* Club Coaching Officers and Access to County Coaching Officers
* Children’s Officer
* Club / School Liaison Officer
* Head/Assistant Mentors
* Pitch Coordinator
* Equipment & First Aid Coordinators
* Club Secretaries

## **Player Pathway Stakeholders**

This table outlines the key stakeholders and some of the key responsibilities and characteristics in a player’s development to adult playing.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Parent** | **Player** | **Mentor** | **Club** |
| Bring child to adult matches | Respect, discipline, and hard work | Good communication with parents | Monthly Meetings |
| Practice with child at home | Practice at home | Constantly evaluate training sessions | Ensuring Governance |
| Get involved in the club | Hurl outside club e.g., school/college | Promote  club activities | Getting to know new membersand involving them in the club. |
| Players that develop are ones with interested parents |  | GAA  Player Pathway | Use of social media |
| Encourage your child and their teammates |  | Head Coach, Assistant Coach & Helpers | Social Events – family days, cake sales, clean-ups etc |
| Attend club juvenile meetings |  | Enthusiastic and encouraging |  |
| Speak positively about the team/club |  | Create a culture of learning |  |
| All stakeholders constantly upskill.  All stakeholders show respect and discipline towards eachother, referees, and other teams.  All stakeholders make the club the centre of the community. | | | |

## **Coaching Structure**

Nursery 4-7 years old Child 7 – 11 years old

Youth 12 – 17 years old Adult 18 years and older

**Five Stages OF Coaching**

There are five 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 | 4-7 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 | 7-9 years | Major skills learning phase where all the basic hurling skills are learned. Emphasis on the fundamental movements. |
| Learn to Play Together | 10-11 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 | 16-17 years | Combining all aspects of performance including decision making, higher physical demands of the game and coping with competition |

**Go-Games**

Go-Games are modified and small sided versions of Gaelic games for children up to and including 11 years of age. They are organised on a blitz basis with other GAA clubs in the county. The key underlying principle is that every child gets a “Go” for the entire game. Some other club initiatives that compliment go-games and player development at this stage:

* Get as many parents involved as possible.
* Club sharing our values.
* Social gatherings.
* Adult hurling player visits.
* Showing parents hurling skills (short video)
* Hurling Fundamentals.
* Skill Development.
* Skill Benchmarking.
* Parent / Mentor Meetings.
* Fun.

**Competitive Games**

Competitive games start for hurling from U13 onwards. As the player progresses up the age groups here are some of the additional coaching activities that compliment the player pathway:

* Benchmarking fitness and skill.
* Skill specific coaching (goal keeping, free taking, side-line cuts, etc.)
* Adult players helping.
* Fitness plan.
* Training planned meticulously and increasing frequency and duration of sessions.
* Encourage children to play with school.

**Player Pathways**

**Under 7**

Points for coaches to be aware of:

• Easily distracted & short attention span.

• Not ready for formal sport.

• Don’t understand planned training.

**Club Training**

• Approx. 60 mins once a week

• FUN, FUN, FUN, (games, activities)

**Session Planner**

• 0 - 5 mins; Welcome children (ensure coaches know names of all kids)

• 5 - 10 mins; Warm up – should consist of fun games.

• 10 - 20 mins; Skill fundamentals: Establish dominant hand, grip, lock, ready position.

• 20 - 40 mins; Skill

* Split into groups to practice skill.
* Groups of roughly 6
* 4 – 5 stations set up.
* striking / tyres / dribbling / ABC’s / fun games
* 7 mins per drill

• 40 - 55 mins; Conditioned matches, small-sided games for all children

• 55 - 60 mins; Finish, talk to players / parents. Clean up.

**Things to watch out for**

• It is important to ensure that all children play with their dominant hand on top of the hurl from a very young age. It will make it easier to learn and develop essential skills as the move up the age groups.

• Hurl Size and weight, “Wristy Swing”.

• It is also important that both left and right sides are trained equally from a young age.

• Ensure that players get to play in all positions.

**Expected Skills Development**

Agility, jumping, landing, throwing

Ball control Catching, passing, striking,

Ground strike, Basic positional understanding, Ground strike on run. Dribble, Shoulder clash

**Under 9**

**Introduction**

Our goal is every player will play adult level for Graigue Ballycallan. Building relationships with parents, juvenile mentors, primary & secondary schools, county squads and the club executive is paramount to this goal. Consequently, this will lead to greater participation in club activities, greater attendance at club games and a greater sense of pride within the Graigue Ballycallan GAA Club.

**Player Characteristics**

* Easily distracted and short attention span.
* Difficulty in tackling and a tendency to stand back.
* Self-centred – expect others to adapt to them.
* Do not understand planned trainings.

**Session Planner**

* 0 - 5 mins; Welcome children
* 5 - 10 mins; Warm up – should consist of fun games.
* 10 - 20 mins; Skills – split into groups. (striking/dribbling/games).
* 20 – 55 mins; Conditioned matches, small-sided games for all children
* 55 - 60 mins; Finish, talk to players / parents. Clean up.

**Skill Emphasis**

Two sessions per week.

Off the ball – Agility, jumping, landing, throwing, catching, passing, striking and basic positional understanding.

On the ball – Ball control, ground strike (left and right), ground strike on run (left and right), striking from the hand (left and right), hooking, blocking, shoulder to shoulder clash, ground block, catch, jab and roll lift.

**Coaching Objectives**

All under 9 coaches should ensure the following.

* Prepare players for the move to Under 10/11.
* Players get to play in all positions.
* Bring a fun element to training.
* Dominant hand on top.
* Both left and right sides practised.
* Players should learn to use the ball well.
* Set targets and promote hurling outside the club grounds – instil practice at home with parents.

**Under 11**

Desired Club Training Session components

* The session should be pre-planned with Coaches ready to start on time not exceeding 70 mins.
* It will be Energetic, Enjoyable, Focused & Fun with short engaging individual skills stations.
* An emphasis will be placed on Little Fixes through short concise Feedback and little briefs throughout avoiding big chats. A close down & debrief to wrap up with takeaways/work-ons for players at home.

**Session Planner**

* 0 - 5 mins; Welcome children
* 5 - 10 mins; Warm up – should consist of fun games.
* 10 - 25 mins; Skills – split into groups. (striking/dribbling/games).
* 25 – 65 mins; Conditioned matches, small-sided games for all children
* 65 - 70 mins; Finish, talk to players / parents. Clean up.

**Skills Development**

* Basic Skills: Striking, Catching, Tackling, Hooking, Blocking, Ball control, Handpassing
* Game & Positional sense: define roles, playing as a Team, Reading the game
* Fitness: Robust physically challenging, Speed, Agility, Acceleration, & Reactions
* Education: Nutrition, Sleep & Recovery

**Characteristics**

* Continuous improvement executing all the skills of the game
* Increased enthusiasm to learning & applying themselves.
* Resilience & Ability to cope with the demands of the game physically & mentally.
* Physical & Athletic development threaded through session activities.
* Increased sense of being part of the Team & being a good teammate

**Coaching Ethos**

* Encourage & engage positively with all players throughout the session
* Highlight/Compliment good Attitude, Application & Effort
* Catch them doing good things - Eyes & Ears open throughout
* Spot & Fix - dominant hand on top always, using both sides
* Role models for the players always mindful & aware of behaviour
* Training underpinned by Togetherness, Team Spirit & Pride.

**Under 13**

Learning about Positions: the principles of play and applying good game sense increase

Focus on developing the player, not the team

Praise, Praise, Praise

**Session Planner** (Approx. 60-75 minutes twice a week)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Warm Up** (10/15 minutes) | * Static and non-static warm-ups * Basic core work e.g., stretches, push-ups, planks, squats etc. * Speed and agility - sprints of varying distances, use of agility ladders, jumps etc. |
| **Skills** (30 minutes)  Coaches demonstrate skills/drills before players participate | Variation of Skills to include:   * First touch, ball control * Ground hurling * Blocking/hooking * Block/catch under high ball * Strike left and right while moving * Hand pass, jab lift, roll lift, ground flick * Solo run, bat down * Battle for possession/shoulder clash * Movement and attacking the ball (non-static) * Side-line cut and free taking |
| **Game Time** (30 mins) | * Small-sided games e.g., 5V5 from panel of 20 * Rotate every second session to 10V10 * Players (not coaches) to practice playing in goal * Praise, praise, praise |
| **Warm Down** (5 mins) | * Variety of stretches * Chat to players * Praise players for effort |

**Under 15**

**Desired Club Training Session Components**

* *Training should be planned meticulously,* approx. 70 mins, 3 times a week
* Consider school / County involvement
* Kilkenny GAA Dynamic Warm Up & Core Exercises
* Skill development & Individual differences
* Mobility & Stability. Flexibility & Pre-habituation *(Prehab is a proactive approach to avoiding pain and injury. It’s as simple as an additional exercise, or range of motion exercise that is done to ensure that an injury does not occur.)*
* *Specific skills coaching (incl. Goal Keeping, Free Taking, Line Balls).*
* *Fitness plans*
* *Adult players helping on occasion*

**Skills Development**

Expected Skills Development

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Off the ball** | **On the ball** | |
| Agility, jumping, landing, | Ball control | Roll Lift / Jab Lift |
| Reading the game | Ground strike on run | Bat down |
| Communication with teammates | Strike from hand | Ground Flick / Brick Flick |
| Set Pieces | Block Down / Hook | Scoring |
|  | Shoulder Clash | Catching, passing, striking |
|  | Hand Pass | Solo Run |

**Characteristics**

* Ready for concentrated and specific training programmes
* Ready for individual programmes to work on weaknesses
* Will respond well to praise and challenge – mental fitness
* Group opinion important for evaluation.
* Peak Height Velocity
* Love a plan & able to embrace goals

**Coaching Ethos**

* A Happy United Team is a Success.
* Focusing on developing the players in relation to GAA Skills, Physical Fitness, Teamwork and Positive lifestyle choices off the field
* Holistic Approach to Player Development. Playing hurling is meant to be an enjoyable and rewarding pastime with friends.

**Under 17**

**Characteristics**

* Ready for concentrated and specific training programmes.
* Ready for individual programmes to work on weaknesses.
* Preparation for adult hurling within the club

**Club training**

• Approx. 70 mins three times a week.

• Consider school / county involvement.

• Skill Development.

• Style of play and gameplans can be developed and implemented

• Flexibility, Mobility & Stability.

• Specific skill coaching (goal keeping, free taking).

• Fitness plans.

• Players at this age expect Training to be planned meticulously.

**Expected skills development**

* **Physical**: Agility, jumping, landing,
* **Skill Based**: Ball control, Roll Lift, Catching, passing, striking, Ground strike on run, Bat down, Strike from hand, Overhead strike, Block Down Shoulder, Clash Hand Pass, shot stopping, Jab Lift, Free Taking, Solo Run, Sideline cut
* **Technical:** Reading the game, Communication with teammates Creating space, Closing down space

**Player benchmarking & evaluation**

* Create a profile/database for players with strengths and weaknesses identified and individual work-ons for the players. Players should be mature to want feedback and areas of development to work on.
* Ensure players and team are creating an identity and ethos consistent with that of the overall club to create a link/bond that will continue into adult hurling and as many players as possible remain active players for future years.