



# Club Coaching Structures

Struchtúr Oilíúna an Chlub

**CLUB MAITH TOOLKIT**



## INTRODUCTION

Every club's coaching structure will be unique to that individual club. The population base of players can vary, the number of volunteers available to get involved in coaching can vary and clubs can offer any combination of male football, hurling, ladies football, camogie, handball and rounders. What is presented here, is an ideal situation where good policy and practice underpin a sound structure and systems to promote best practice, FUN, and a lifelong participation in Gaelic Games.

## PRACTICE AND POLICY

Outlined below are the fundamental things that are needed to underpin coaching in the GAA club.

### SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN SPORT AND BEST PRACTICE

- All coaches, administrators and parents have an opportunity to take this programme.
- Definitive Codes of Best Practice are established for coaches, mentors, parents and players

### ACCESS NI/GARDA CLEARANCE

All coaches working with Children and Youths are processed through the Access NI / Garda vetting system to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable young people

## COACH EDUCATION

The coach education programme focuses on continuing education, so that coaches can improve by means of a series of specifically designed courses, workshops and conferences incorporating internationally recognised principles of best practice.

### NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY AWARDS

- All coaches should be suitably qualified to work with the specific age groups. The structure for National Governing Body coaching awards incorporates the Foundation coaching Award and then coaching pathways for Children, Youth and Adults.
- The GAA has developed a model of Coach Education to take account of the different playing capacities that exist between children (up to 12 years), youths (12-18) and adults (age 18+), and the competencies that a coach is required to display when working with each of the playing populations. These streams have been identified to cater for the diverse needs of children, of youths and of adults.
- To date courses have been developed at Foundation, Award 1 and Award 2. Award 3 programme is currently under development.

### E LEARNING AND WORKSHOP ACCREDITATION

- It is now possible to do the Foundation Award via online learning (theoretical online assessment only). Log onto [www.learning.gaa.ie](http://www.learning.gaa.ie) to view available coach education workshops and coaching award opportunities.
- It is anticipated that more courses and workshops will eventually be assessed online with National GAA coaching credits available on completion.

### COACH EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

The role of the Club Coaching and Games Development Officer is to make club coaches aware of workshops delivered by Ulster GAA and County Coaching and Games Departments, and to encourage them to attend and implement best practice back in the club setting.

## ULSTER GAA PROVINCIAL COACHING CONFERENCE

The Club Coaching and Games Development Officer and other club representatives should attend annual Provincial coaching conference and bring best practice back to the club.

## QUALIFICATIONS IN COACHING AND MANAGEMENT

Experienced coaches can gain further qualifications by completing the Diploma in Performance Coaching and / or the Diploma in Team Management, which are both accredited by the Open College Network.

## STRUCTURES

The ideal club structure will have the following in place:

### CLUB COACHING AND GAMES DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Duties to include:

- Establish a coaching and games committee representative of all codes.
- Appointment of underage coaching teams
- Devise, Implement and monitor club coaching plan (short term and long-term goals).
- Manage and direct the content of all coaching programmes at all age groups
- Ensure that club coaches are up to date with coaching resources and coach education opportunities – promote best practice with regard to coaching.
- Promotion of integration and equitable facility time of all codes within the club.
- Implementation of an effective club-school link.
- Promotion of Go Games and age appropriate coaching.
- Ensure that all age groups receive a meaningful programme of games.
- Promotion of Cúl Camps and summer activities.
- Promote RESPECT initiative.

### VOLUNTEER COACHES

The club coaching officer should endeavour to ensure that all codes represented in the Club have a voice and access to facilities in the club. The establishment of a Coaching and Games committee will provide a forum to discuss best practice, issues, and debate club coaching policies.

- Each age group in each code should have a Head Coach who will have overall responsibility for that group.
- Each age group should also have sufficient Assistant Coaches to work with the Head Coach to create an effective coaching environment for the group.
- All coaches should endeavour to attain the GAA Foundation Coaching Award as a minimum, and as they gain experience, they should be encouraged to gain further coaching qualifications, in the Child, Youth and Adult pathways, at Award 1 and Award 2.
- Coaches should keep the welfare of the child or young player at the centre of all they do.

## CLUB COACHING COMMITTEE

The coaching committee should consist of Club Coaching Officer, Club Children's Officer, and representatives from each code and age group.



## KEY POINTS

- An effective Club Coaching Structure requires a significant number of club members working together for the betterment of Gaelic Games within the club.
- The process requires planning, organisation, ambition and dedication to implement best practice so that children and young people can play Gaelic Games to the best of their ability.
- It is important that clubs are inclusive and welcoming and provide playing opportunities for people with disabilities and also for people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Recreational games can provide this opportunity.
- Retention of young people is a good indicator if things are going well in a club and as such coaches have a responsibility to make Gaelic Games FUN at all levels.
- Coaches have to get the balance right between participation and competition. The focus needs to shift from winning at all costs to improvement, development and progress of players and teams