

# Small Sided Games

## Introduction



### What are Small Sided Games?

SSG are games with fewer players competing on a smaller-sized field. They are fun games that encourage players to have more contact with the ball because fewer players are playing in a smaller playing area. SSG have a definite developmental impact on younger players. The more confidence that players have in their own ability and the greater the level of enjoyment that they derive from developing and expressing this, the more likely they are to maintain a lifelong involvement in Gaelic Games.

### Why change to Small Sided Games?

It makes the game of football a better experience for children. More touches on the ball, more opportunities to make decisions, more actual play. Players will be more active due to playing both attacking and defensive roles within a match and will understand the importance of team-mates and playing and working together.

### Benefits

- Promotes full participation by all
- Caters for the development needs of all players
- Maximum enjoyment derived from involvement
- More touches of the ball by all players throughout all areas of the pitch
- More shots on goal
- More efficient use of facilities (multiple games on pitch)
- Repeated decision making experience
- The ball is in play more often
- Emphasis on player development rather than winning and losing
- Better success rate leads to improved quality of play, self-esteem and player retention
- The game is easier to understand
- Freedom of expression - no positions in early stages
- Less perceived stress on players
- Less perceived pressure from parents and coaches
- Parents are more likely to volunteer for SSG's

# Why Do Kids .....

## Play Sport?

- To have fun
- To improve their skills and learn new skills
- To be with their friends and make new friends
- To do something they are good at
- To be part of a team
- To get fit

## Quit Sport?

- Overemphasis on winning
- Lost interest
- Not having fun
- Time consuming
- Coach was a poor teacher
- Too much pressure

"We're asking kids to compete to win. Why not ask them to compete to have fun?" The primary goal of juvenile football should not be to form a winning team. The goal should be to create an atmosphere that is fun, child-centred and develops the skills of all the participants. Success should be measured in terms of personal growth and development and not by who won the league or championship. The majority of children would rather play on a bad team than sit on the bench for a good one. With this in mind it is extremely important that Ladies Gaelic Football provides the correct structures to ensure that when we do get young girls into our sport and that we do everything to keep them and ensure that EVERY player gets an equal opportunity to have fun and develop at their own rate.

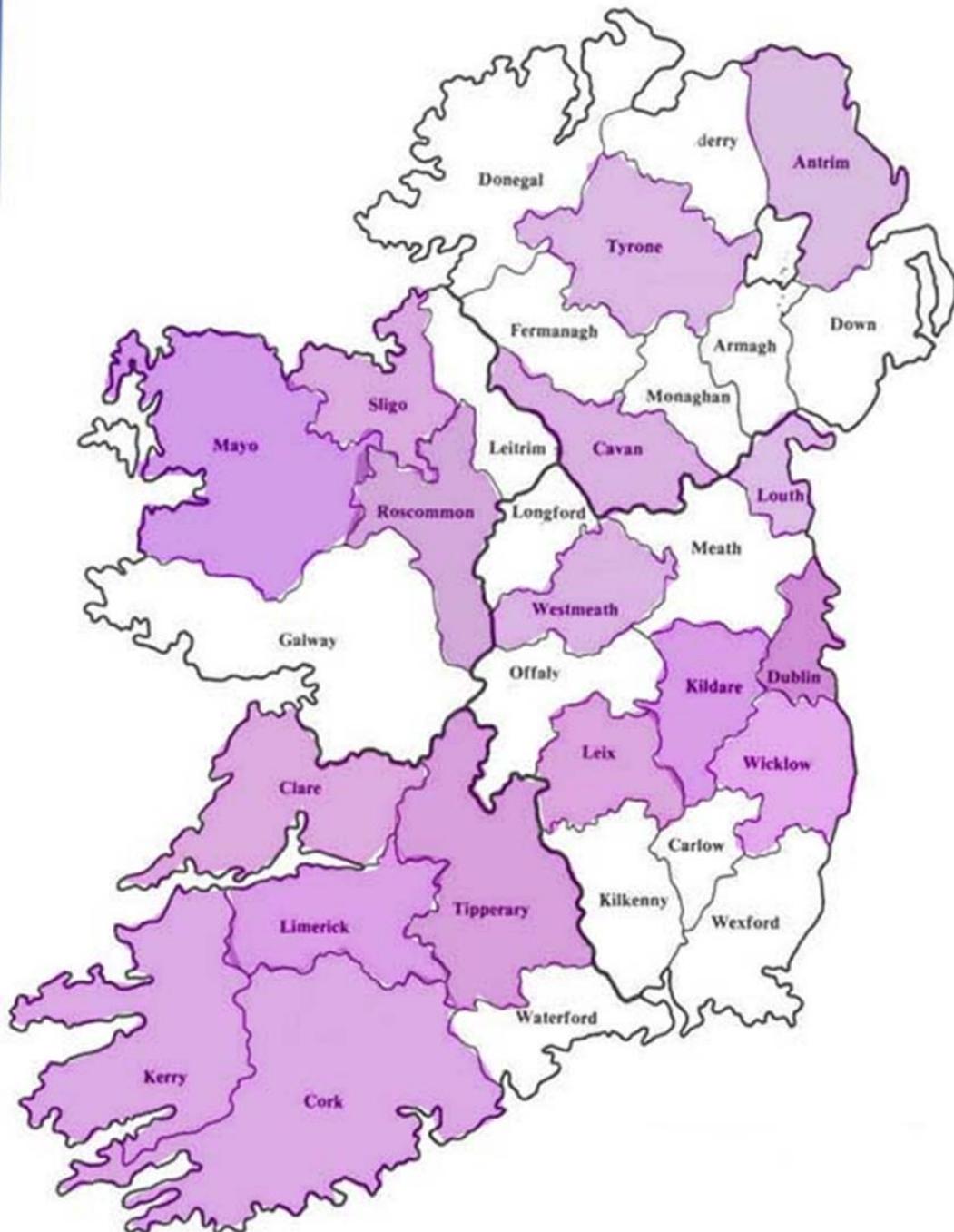
## Moving the focus away from winning or losing

The emphasis of SSG is on participation and enjoyment, and an associated removal of the current emphasis on the importance of winning. Children are much more likely to enjoy their football playing experience, will be keen to play more often and are less likely to drop out of the game. Clubs, coaches, team mentors and parents play the most important role in creating the right environment for SSG and need to stress and adhere to SSG playing conditions.

## How are teams ensured games?

Counties may still have clubs grouped to play on league basis so guaranteed a regular schedule of fixtures. These leagues are non-competitive though and no points are awarded therefore there are no winners or losers. Blitzes can also be arranged for the various age groups particular at off peak times of season Eg. During summer in some counties.

# Current Small Sided Games Practice



Denotes counties currently using small side games in some capacity following county survey by development team

The LGFA development team recently sent a survey to all counties to assess their current juvenile playing structures. It was found that many counties are already using small sided, non-competitive games to varying degrees. Some counties use only at under 10 level while others play right through all ages to under 12 grade. There are a number of counties who have yet to respond so the number of these counties may increase.

# SAMPLE UNDER 10

## Small Sided Games



### AIM

To improve basic technical skills and develop tactical awareness/ prowess i.e. decide on best option in terms of making use of and/or creating time and space when on the ball

### PLAYING RULES

The official rules of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association will apply to all games however the following exceptions will apply:

- Play to commence with a throw in from the centre of the pitch including after a score
- During the second period players must play the ball away by kicking it with the non-dominant foot or striking it with the non-dominant hand/fist
- The ball may be carried for four steps before bouncing or soloing—players are restricted to two touches i.e one solo, one bounce or two solos
- A player who is fouled takes the free and when an opponent fouls the ball e.g overcarries it, the player nearest to the ball takes the free
- The opponent nearest to where the ball crosses the sideline, takes the sideline kick from the hands
- Opposing players to be at least 5m from the player taking the free kick, sideline kick or kick out. Free kicks should be no closer than 13m from opposing line. No penalty kicks.
- There are no 45's, any ball behind the end line is a wide ball and will be a goal kick
- Backs/forwards must remain in zone they are assigned/ midfielders can enter any zone

### SCORING SYSTEM

- 3 points when ball is played over the crossbar
- 1 point when ball is played under the crossbar

### EQUIPMENT

- Well secured portable goal posts—4.57m x 2.13m, 10ft x 6ft (training poles may be used if necessary)
- Bibs or jerseys
- Cones for marking out zones and end lines
- Size 3/ quick touch footballs



# PLAYING THE GAME

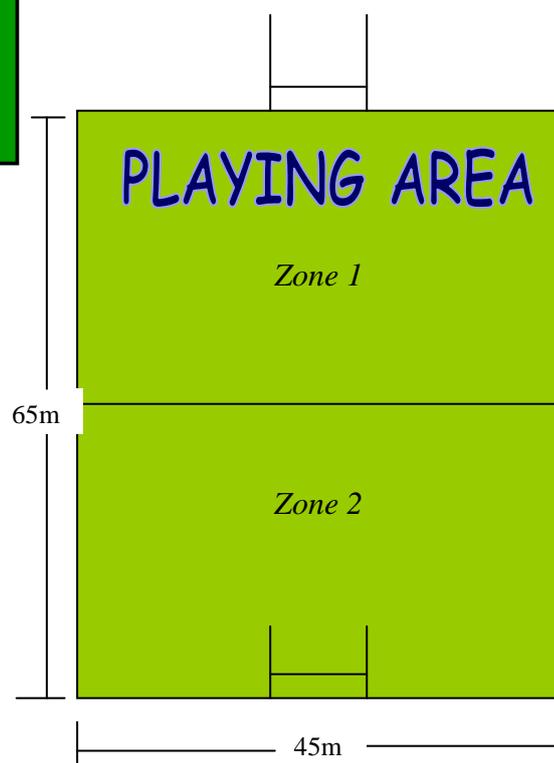
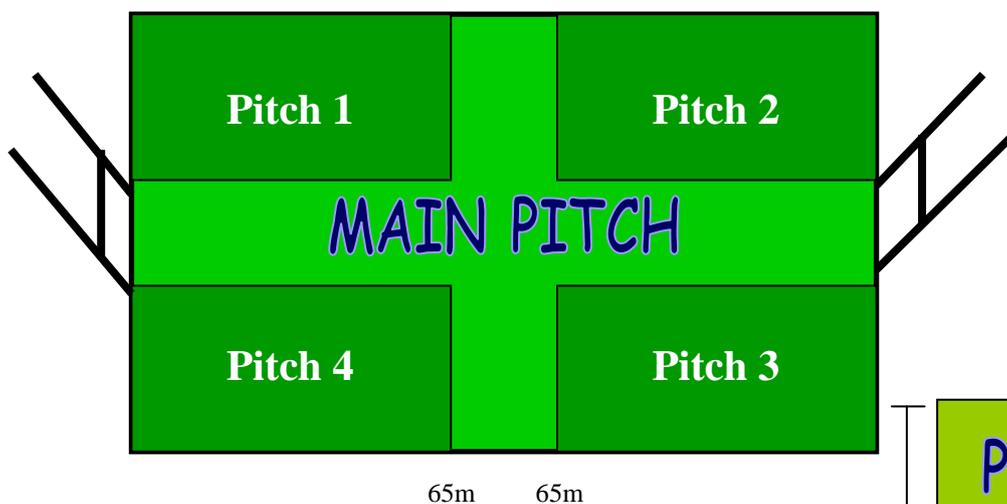
- 9 v 9—players should be of mixed ability
- Unlimited substitutions but preferably only where necessary
- Playing area 65m x 40m (full pitch divided into 4 areas)
- Team lineout 1-3-2-3 - 1 goalkeeper, 3 defenders, 2 midfielders and 3 attackers
- Two zones. Defenders/ attackers to remain within assigned zone—midfielders can enter either zone
- All players rotate positions after each period. Teams can also change sides

# TIME DURATION

- Three periods
- 15 minutes per period



# RECOMMENDED PLAYING AREA



- The main pitch can be divided into 4 Playing Areas
- Each Playing Area is divided into 2 zones

# SAMPLE UNDER 11

## Small Sided Games



### AIM

To allow players to develop their technical skills consistently in a dynamic environment while also enhancing team play

### PLAYING RULES

The official rules of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association will apply to all games however the following exceptions will apply:

- The ball may be carried for four steps before bouncing or soloing—players are restricted to two touches i.e one solo, one bounce or two solos
- A player who is fouled takes the free and when an opponent fouls the ball e.g overcarries it, the player nearest to the ball takes the free
- The opponent nearest to where the ball crosses the sideline, takes the sideline kick from the hands
- Opposing players to be at least 5m from the player taking the free kick, sideline kick or kick out. Free kicks should be no closer than 13m from opposing line. No penalty kicks.
- Teams are also awarded bonus points for a block or a high catch. Important to award good skill execution

### SCORING SYSTEM

- 1 point when ball is played over the crossbar
- 3 points when ball is played under the crossbar
- Point for block or high catch

### EQUIPMENT

- Well secured portable goal posts —4.57m x 2.13m, 10ft x 6ft (training poles may be used if necessary)
- Bibs or jerseys
- Cones for marking out zones and end lines
- Size 4/ smart touch footballs



# PLAYING THE GAME

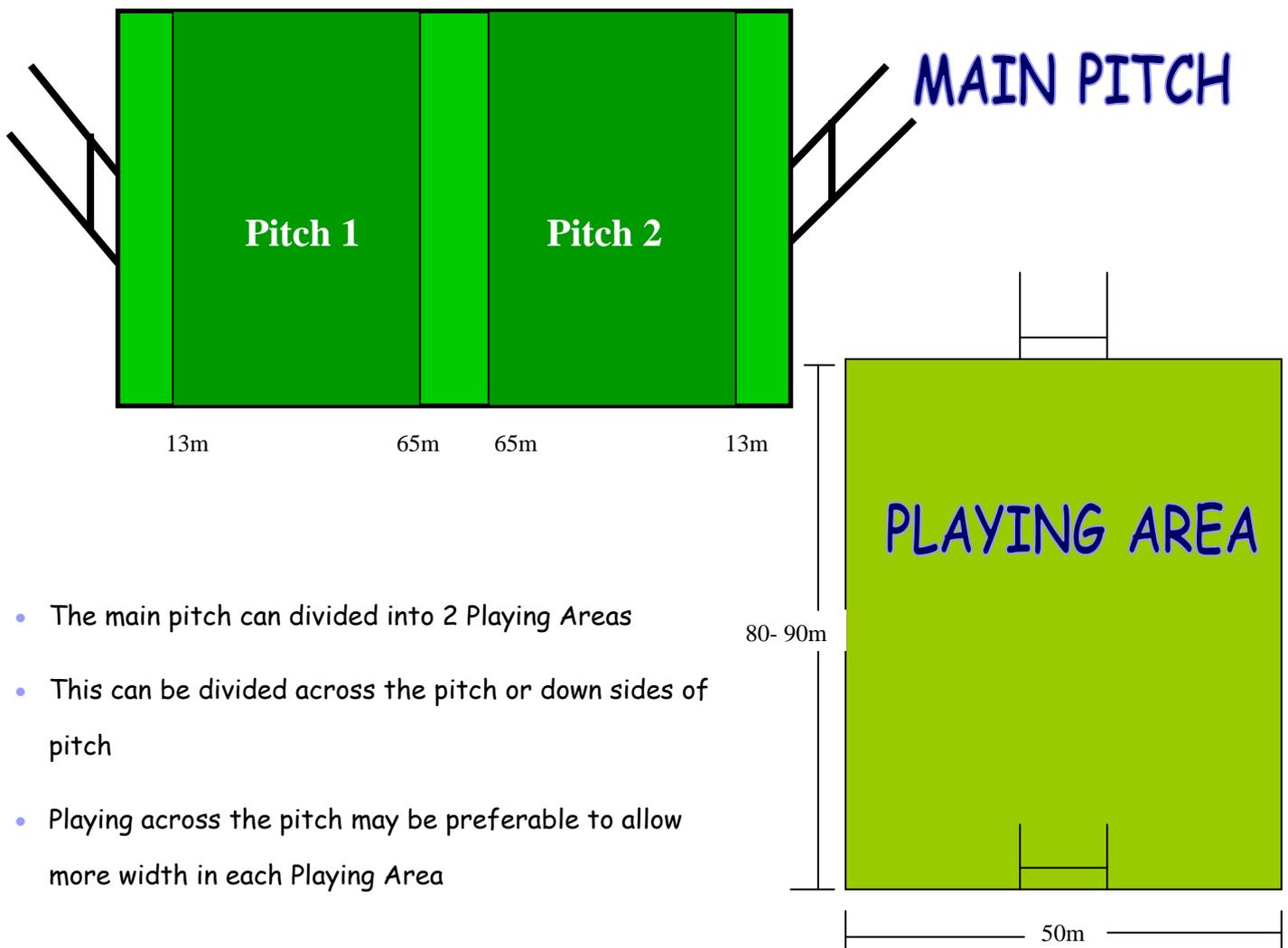
- 11 v 11 —players should be of mixed ability
- Unlimited substitutions but preferably only where necessary
- Playing area 90m x 50m (full pitch divided into 2 areas)
- Team lineout 1-4-2-4 - 1 goalkeeper, 4 defenders, 2 midfielders and 4 attackers
- No zones - free movement permitted
- All players rotate positions at half time. Teams change sides at half time also

# TIME DURATION

- Two halves
- 20 minutes per half



# RECOMMENDED PLAYING AREA



- The main pitch can be divided into 2 Playing Areas
- This can be divided across the pitch or down sides of pitch
- Playing across the pitch may be preferable to allow more width in each Playing Area

# Remember the Child!

*"I don't care if we lose 100-1. If my team goes out there and plays hard, plays fair, and has FUN. We are winners!"*

*(Ben Eaton)*

*"Kids don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."*

