



Fixtures Reviewers Handbook

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Introduction

The aim for the LGFA in regards to Fixtures Reviewing is that by 2015 the Association should be in a position where all units will be able to avail of training and support in regards to appointing Fixtures Reviewers therefore enabling them to provide a co-ordinated programme of meaningful, well scheduled games for players, appropriate to their needs and abilities.

Each county will have a Fixtures Reviewer who will work in conjunction with the County Fixtures Secretary/Committee on the production of ongoing fixtures plans and schedules.

In appointing County Fixtures Reviewers, it is recommended that they should have some or all of the following skills:

1. A good knowledge of the club structure in the county at all levels
2. A sound knowledge of current fixture planning procedures
3. Some knowledge of the complexities of fixtures programmes at local level
4. The ability to progress in a logical manner
5. Good I.T. skills will be essential
6. The skills to identify the key issues involved in having a regulated games structure and to identify the problems and the resolution of same
7. The skills to communicate with the county board, clubs and relevant committees
8. Be competent to network with other boards to share best practices
9. The ability to be flexible in approaching the planning process
10. The ability to set goals and review mechanisms

Minimum Standards For the Provision and Spread of Games

PROVISION OF GAMES

The following are the recommended minimum standards that have been set down by the Central Council.

<i>Adult</i>	<i>Under 15 – Under 18</i>	<i>Under 14 and Below</i>
Minimum of 16 games	Minimum of 12 games	Minimum of 16 games

SPREAD OF GAMES

Games should be scheduled with gaps of no more than 21 days between them in the months from April to September, in order to maximise the number of games played during the summer months.

An exception may be made around exam time (mid May to mid June) to accommodate post primary and third level students.

Games in the same grade should be scheduled at least 5 days apart (3 days in non-championship competitions) in order to avoid surplus of games at any one time.

SCHEDULING TARGET

The target for Counties should be to ensure 80% of games is played as initially scheduled (i.e. on the day they were originally fixed for, or within a number of days, either side of the original date, as defined in county bye laws).

The Role of the County Fixtures Reviewer

The Role of the County Fixtures Reviewer can be summarised as follows:

- To monitor the County Fixtures schedule (as drafted by the fixtures secretary/committee) for the current year. This will involve, on a monthly basis, calculating how many of the scheduled games for that period were actually played
- To audit the County Fixtures schedule on a weekly or monthly basis. This involves counting the number of games being played at each grade and code as well as measuring the spread of the games (i.e. the length of time between each game in a particular grade). This information gathered should be reported to the executive and fixtures committees on a monthly basis
- To analyse the County Fixtures schedule for the current year. This should be carried out following the publication of the County Fixtures Programme in January or February. S/He will analyse the scheduled fixture programme under (a) the number and (b) the spread of games. This process should assist the Fixtures Reviewer in making recommendations to the Fixtures secretary/committee for the following year
- To make recommendations to the Fixtures Secretary/Committee based on the results of the monitoring process and in conjunction with the Fixtures Secretary/Committee, formulate a fixtures schedule for the following year
- To monitor and evaluate on an annual basis the County's performance at all levels against the recommended LGFA minimum standards for provision and spread of games
- To use this information to prepare a report and present at the AGM and forward to the National Development Team
- To facilitate feedback from clubs and stakeholders in the fixture process, where required, through a Club Forum. A Club Forum can be:
 - A formal end of year Executive meeting
 - A forum of random club members facilitated by the Fixtures Reviewer
 - A series of focus groups chaired by the Fixtures Reviewer
 - A questionnaire circulated to and returned by clubs
- To liaise with and attend meetings organised by the National Development Team

The core responsibilities for County Fixtures Reviewers are summarised in the table below:

FIXTURES REVIEWERS' PROGRAMME	
Beginning of Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with County Executive and Fixtures Secretary/Committee • Organise focus group if required (or questionnaires)
Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit short report to the County Executive Committee • Submit report to National Development Team • Formal meeting with the Fixtures Secretary/Committee as appropriate
Once per Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend National Seminar if required
End of Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise Club Forum (where necessary) • Meet formally with the Fixtures Secretary/Committee • Present report to the County Executive (with conjuncted proposals) • Submit Annual Report for the National Development Team

PLANNING YOUR WORK

Some Fixtures Reviewers find it useful to outline their work plan for the year on a month by month basis. Below is a sample plan:

SAMPLE FIXTURES REVIEWER WORK PLAN	
January	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and set up Focus Groups if required (to elicit feedback from players, officials, club members etc.)
February	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold Focus Group meeting 2. Attend meeting between clubs and Fixtures Secretary/Committee (if any) where master plan of fixtures is presented for the year 3. Analyse the fixtures programme for the coming year under (a) number of games and (b) spread of games 4. Meet with county Chairperson 5. Attend meeting with Fixtures Secretary/Committee as an observer (to gain understanding of challenges facing them, how it operates etc.)
March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contribute information to annual fixtures booklet if required
April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make monthly report to the Executive Committee (i.e. number of games played in each grade for previous month & games planned v played)
May	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make report to Executive Committee (as above)
June	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make report to Executive Committee 2. Hold midterm meeting of focus groups (if required) or use questionnaires
July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make report to Executive Committee
August	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make report to Executive Committee
September	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make report to Executive Committee 2. Meet with county managers/liasion officers with a view to planning for the following year
October	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make report to Executive Committee
November	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make report to Executive Committee 2. Prepare Annual Report for AGM 3. Attend National Seminar if requested
December	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend pre-planning meetings with the Fixture Secretary/Committee 2. Present Annual Report at AGM

The County Fixtures Reviewer and the Fixtures Secretary/Committee

One of the key aspects to fixture making in the LGFA is the strong relationship between the County Fixtures Reviewer and the Fixtures Secretary/Committee.

Fixture making should begin with planning. This is a conjunctive function of the Fixtures Reviewer and the Fixtures Secretary/Committee. The Fixtures Reviewer should make recommendations to the Fixtures Secretary/Committee for changes to competition structures and timings, based on the experience of the previous year and the goal of achieving the minimum fixture requirements as provided on page 4.

The scheduling and arranging of these fixtures is a matter for the Fixtures Secretary/Committee alone.

The job of reviewing the year's fixture activity rests with the Fixtures Reviewer; s/he can be assisted in this process through the organisation of an annual club forum to provide feedback, through the establishment of focus groups to assist in this process or through the circulation and completion of fixture specific questionnaires to key stakeholders in the fixture process (i.e. players, managers, club officials etc.)



What is Planning?

(Conjunctive function of Fixtures Secretary/Committee and Fixtures Reviewer)

- a. Incorporating the views expressed as part of the Reviewing process,
- b. Designing each competition (number of teams, structure, number of rounds, where the competition will be placed during the season, which days of the week will be used for each competition) in order to achieve the minimum standards for the various grades
- c. Proposals to achieve this should be placed before the County Executive
- d. The County Executive will make final decisions
- e. Plan is then passed to the Fixtures Secretary/Committee for implementation

What is Scheduling? (Function of Fixtures Secretary/Committee)

- a. Scheduling means the placing of all fixtures onto a calendar, which shall be published prior to the beginning of the playing season
- b. This is the sole statutory function of the Fixtures Secretary/Committee

What is Arranging? (Function of Fixtures Secretary/Committee)

- a. Arranging means the deciding on specific matters relating to a fixture e.g. date, time, venue, referee etc.
- b. This is the sole statutory function of the Fixtures Secretary/Committee

What is Reviewing? (Function of Fixture Reviewer)

- a. Reviewing means collecting all statistical information on the games played during a season and comparing this information with the National recommended standards
- b. Producing a report from this information
- c. The report should then be discussed by a Club Fixtures' Forum (alternatively this can be a designated County Board meeting)
- d. Recommendations from this should be incorporated into the planning process

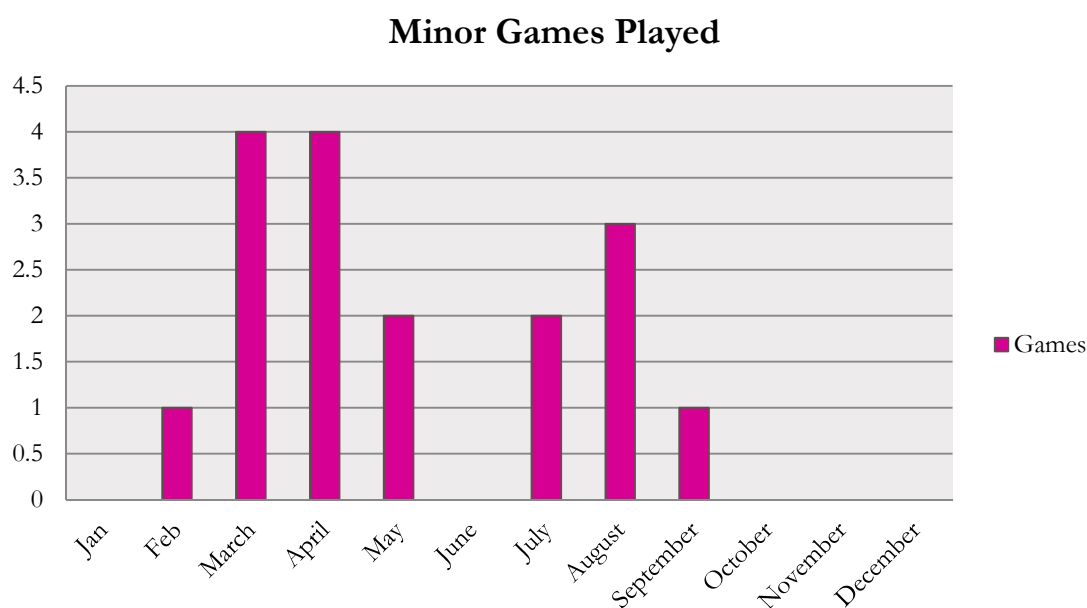
Writing a Fixture Report

County Fixtures Reviewers are required to submit a report to the AGM annually on fixtures played within the county in the previous year. This report should:

- ❖ Outline the number of games played at each relevant grading in the previous year
- ❖ Record the percentage of games played on time and to schedule (in accordance with the master fixture plan issued to clubs at the start of the year)
- ❖ Outline how Fixtures Reviewer interacted with the clubs in the county (i.e. via formal Club Forums, Questionnaires, attending County Board Meetings etc.)
- ❖ Contain comment on Spread of games, identifying areas that need improvement
- ❖ Contain the Recommendations that have been made to the Fixtures Secretary/Committee in the County to improve the situation in the coming year (s)
- ❖ Outline any other observations that are relevant

A sample template for a County Fixtures Reviewing Report is included as Appendix I on page 11

The visual impact of games reviewing reports can be greatly enhanced by the inclusion of simple illustrative graphs such as in the example (below).



APPENDIX I – County Fixtures Reviewer – Annual Report Form

COUNTY: _____

SUMMARY OF WORK CARRIED OUT BY COUNTY FIXTURES REVIEWER IN YEAR 2013:

(List any forums, questionnaires, meetings organised with clubs or changes made to the county fixture calendar as a result of future planning etc.)

GAMES PLANNED IN 2013

In this section list the minimum number of games planned for each team at the beginning of the season

GRADE	Min. No. of Championship Games Planned	Min. No. of Non Championship Games Planned	Total Min. No. of Games Planned per Team	% Comparison with recommended National Min. Standards
Senior				
Intermediate				
Junior				
Minor				
Under 16				
Under 14				
Under 12				
Under 11				

Additional Explanations/Notes etc.:

SPREAD OF GAMES IN 2013

In this section note the number of times a team had to wait longer than 21 days, or less than 3 days for next game

GRADE	Total Number of Games Played	No. of times when 'gap between games' was less than 3 days	No. of times when 'gap between games' was greater than 21 days	% within the 3-21 day limit
Senior				
Intermediate				
Junior				
Minor				
Under 16				
Under 14				
Under 12				
Under 11				

Additional Explanations/Notes etc.:

PERCENTAGE COMPLETION

In this section note the number of games unplayed, or played outside of the Bye Law

GRADE	Total Number of Games Scheduled	Number of Games Unplayed	Number of Games postponed by a margin greater than 7 days	% of Games Completed on Time
Senior				
Intermediate				
Junior				
Minor				
Under 16				
Under 14				
Under 12				
Under 11				

Additional Explanations/Notes etc.:

Summary of how Games Planned v Games Actually Played

Recommendations for the Future – Outline recommendations made to County Fixtures Secretary/Committee for the forthcoming year and other relevant observations: