



Parents encourage their children to make decisions in life that will assist them for the future and we often hear that what is learned in school, college and in the home will assist in shaping the person that this child will become. With that in mind can we say that ladies gaelic football will provide valuable life lessons to the many young girls we have involved?

Sport, and in our case ladies gaelic, can teach girls how to kick a ball, how to tackle but the life lessons learned are by far the most important part of being involved in our game. Coaches and parents are the key influencers when it comes to building character and it is essential as a coach to be aware that knowledge you are imparting now to a young child will stay with them forever.

Think about the 5 life lessons below – reinforcing these within your team culture can have a long lasting positive impact on your players

1 TEAMWORK

In workplaces around the country the importance of the team and being able to work as part of a team is viewed as one of the most important characteristics a potential employee can possess. A team can only be successful if all pieces of the jigsaw work together and are focused on achieving the same goal. One person deviating from the plan or not doing their job can have a massive impact on the rest of the team and hamper results.

2 SETTING AND AIMING FOR GOALS

Life works best with clear objectives. This applies both to personal and work life and successful people will have the ability to set short and long term goals for themselves. They will have a clear vision of what success will look like and the steps required to achieve this. Even children can learn that you can't just set goals and hope they come true, you need to work out a plan and work hard to make them come true. For young players this can be as simple as learning that if you

want to master a skill, you need to practice consistently.

3 IT IS OK TO MAKE MISTAKES AND YOU CAN LEARN FROM THEM

Mistakes will happen a number of times in both training and games and players develop coping skills to allow them to deal with these situations and learn from them. In sport and life a person must reflect upon what went wrong and identify what can be done differently. This in turn will create a plan to reduce or eliminate mistakes and implement a new behaviour. Learning from mistakes is a great form of education.

4 HOW TO LEAD OR FOLLOW

Nobody can predict the future so our children of today may turn out to be a leader of the future or a follower working with a great leader and knowing how to be led by others. Every child involved in sport should have the opportunity to be a leader at some stage whether that is rotating the captain, allowing them select

activities for training or even taking a little piece of the warm up. This will build confidence and activities like this also develop skills in team mates to be led by their peers. Coaches play a key role in ensuring players can take instructions and also are not afraid to ask for these instructions and clarification.

5 LIFE ISN'T ALWAYS FAIR

There will be times when girls will train hard for their games and yet the result does not go their way. Players must learn how to deal with defeat and that winning is not everything. Failure is only a temporary setback and lessons can be learned to improve and have a better

chance of success the next time. This is a tough rule for players to learn at an early age and thankfully with non-competitive Go Games it takes the focus of this too early but it is gradually taught none the less. Adulthood will be easier if realise that life will not always be fair. This is not just in relation to results but also in relation to injuries or set-backs, officials missing a call, being late for a game and missing it. Things will happen and players have to learn to accept them and move on. Life is tough sometimes.

There are many other lessons that can be learned through Ladies Gaelic Football from discipline to hard work through to the value

of preparation and practice but at the heart of all these is how the coach can instil these values in their players.

The lessons we learn in one area of life can often be applied throughout our entire life. Coaches must understand that life lessons learned by girls on their journey as a young player are much more important than the result of the match.

It is the duty of the coach to provide opportunities for players to learn from these lessons and be aware of them. Each one of the lessons offered will assist the girls to develop both as a gaelic footballer and a person. Remember as a coach you are always imparting life lessons so be careful what message you give.

