

Dear LGFA Development Team,



**We set up a ladies gaelic football section in our club this year and we now have under 11 and under 13 teams. We have attracted new players into the club but my fear is that we will lose these when training ends now for the winter. Have you any suggestions on activities we could use to keep these interested?**

**(Anne, Leitrim)**

Hi Anne

Firstly it is great to hear that we have yet another new club set up and we are delighted that you enjoyed your first year involved. I fully agree that it is important to keep the interest of the girls now that they are involved in the club as there are many other activities that they may join in the coming months however it is also important that you do not overload the girls with training as the break can keep them more enthused for the coming season. The break will also assist you as a coach to keep your enthusiasm and motivation so it is key to have the right balance with regards to rest and participation.

Many clubs use the winter period to have social activities for their team for example bringing them bowling or to a pantomime etc. These activities will assist to build team spirit and they will be looking forward to getting back out on the pitch again together in the New Year. If you would rather continue with football activities then it may be an idea to source a suitable indoor venue for your training as the cold weather may put these girls off the sport. You can then conduct your sessions indoor and develop the girls skills throughout the winter. In our coaching cards in this edition we have examples of some games that can be adapted to an indoor session so feel free to use these and also adapt some of your own games to the facilities you have available.

If you feel that your indoor facility is too small for a full football session then why not try out some circuit training with your team. These can be fun circuits with a number of stations set around the area and a different activity at each station. The exercises can vary from using the ball for hand passing to skipping to fun games etc. There are a huge variety of activities to choose from. This will allow you to get all your players active at the same time while utilising a small space.

The key thing to remember with any of your choices through the winter is to keep it fun. Remember that you want these girls wanting to come back for more and looking forward to the new season with their team mates.

I hope you find this useful and best of luck in the coming year.

LGFA Development Team

**Dear LGFA Development Team,**

**Our club AGM is coming up and the club want me to take the under 14 girls team this year. I have been with this team at under 12 and under 13 also and they are a brilliant bunch of girls but the problem I have is getting assistance from parents or other mentors. This is making me slightly reluctant to take the role. Do you have any advice on how I can get more volunteers involved to assist me?**

**(Paddy, Tipperary)**

Hi Paddy

This is a problem that we come across regularly and volunteer recruitment can be very difficult in clubs. The most important thing for you to do, as a mentor of that team, is to create a welcoming and safe environment for new volunteers. It is essential that people feel they are required and not 'stepping on someone's toes' by getting involved.

There are always a number of parents on the side lines during training sessions and matches and the key for you is to unlock that barrier that prevents them putting their foot across that line to assist. We would advise that the first thing you do is 'ASK'. There are many parents etc who are waiting to be asked and have no problem assisting if they are given a role and are aware what is expected of them. The challenge for you as the mentor is to ensure that you allow these volunteers to carry out their role and feel part of the set up.

It is also important to remember that it can be very daunting for new volunteers to become involved particularly if they have no previous experience in gaelic games so assign appropriate roles and allow them to shadow you and learn new skills if required. You could also organise our new Ready Steady Coach workshop in your club to help up-skill these new volunteers who want to be involved in coaching the team with you or our Ready Steady Play if they would rather be involved in any of the other volunteer duties. Full information on these workshops are available from Aislinn Harkin on 01 8363156 or email [Aislinn@ladiesgaelic.ie](mailto:Aislinn@ladiesgaelic.ie) . These workshops will help build self-confidence in your new recruits.

Regardless of how you recruit these new volunteers it is essential that they feel appreciated, as you know yourself as a mentor, and that you make them feel part of your team. These people could be essential for the future development of your club so you want them to have a positive experience in your presence.

We hope you decide to stay involved as volunteers like you are essential in our sport and the development of the girls in clubs like yours throughout the country. We, as an Association, appreciate the time and effort of all our volunteers.

Best of luck in 2013!

LGFA Development Team