

Go Games Policy Document



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Introduction

The Gaelic Games Go Games refers to a games development pathway that is aligned to the Gaelic Games Player Pathway Foundation 2 (F2¹). Emphasis during this phase is on further developing functional movement skills and the early acquisition of the specific skills of Gaelic Games. The child should have several years before participating in formal Gaelic Games competition.

¹ <https://learning.gaa.ie/sites/default/files/14236%20PathwayCards%20update%203.pdf>



Go Games is national policy of the GAA, Camogie Association, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, and their constituent units at provincial, county, club and educational level, responsible for organisation and delivery of Go Games. Each unit must be aware of and comply with the provisions of this policy.

All units and members participating in Go Games are bound by the official rules of their Association

The purpose of this policy is to deliver a structured, standardised, and unified approach to the development of our young players across all three Associations. We want Go Games to provide children with an appropriate introduction to competition on a phased basis. The game itself provides a sufficient skill development challenge for children.

Above all this policy is in line with the Gaelic Games Player Pathway and its six key underlying principles:

1. Club is Core
2. Player Centred
3. Quality Coaching Experiences
4. Connection
5. Inclusive
6. As Many as possible for as long as possible

Defining Go Games

Go Games are modified small-sided versions of Hurling, Camogie, Gaelic Football and Ladies Gaelic Football which have been devised to cater for the development needs of children aged 7 and up to and including 12 years of age. Go Games can be played in a club, school and/or community setting to introduce children to Gaelic Games. They allow children to have fun, grow, and learn, physically, socially, and psychologically and develop the key attributes for life. Go Games are inclusive, structured to cater for the needs, abilities and backgrounds of all participants.

Key Principles Underpinning Go Games

- i. All participants play in the Game i.e., everyone 'Has a Go'
- ii. Games are small sided with modified playing rules to allow more time and space for players to master the skills, make decisions and as a result experience a sense of achievement.
- iii. Participant needs are catered for at U7, U8, U9, U10, U11, U12. The U6 age grade or below is not permitted
- iv. The games are progressive and inclusive, structured in a manner which optimises the level of fun, friendship, fair-play, and enjoyment.
- v. Participants are coached aligned to their needs in a safe, supportive, and stimulating environment where they are encouraged to risk error, to learn and to derive maximum enjoyment from their involvement.
- vi. Everybody involved in Go Games, whether as players, parents/ guardians, spectators, mentors, teachers, officials, etc., should adhere to the key underpinning principles and give expression to the Gaelic Games relevant Respect campaigns.



Organising Go Games

- i. Go Games U-11 and below must be organised on a blitz basis. Go Games may be organised by the County, Club, Primary School or at an approved venue on an internal (i.e., single unit) or external (i.e., multiple units) basis.
- ii. The relevant County Coaching and Games Development Committee shall oversee the delivery of Go Games.

Go Games Playing Rules

- i. The recommended playing rules for Go Games Hurling, Camogie, Gaelic Football and Ladies Gaelic Football are provided overleaf in Appendix 1. These playing rules are provided by way of best practice recommendations.
- ii. Where units from different counties play a blitz, these playing rules will be used.

Go Games Regulations

The following Go Games Regulations shall apply and subject to general rules of GAA, LGFA and Camogie Associations.

- i. Go Games are subject to general rules of each Association
- ii. To maximise playing opportunities teams shall endeavour to play the minimum numbers recommended; **U7** - 4 v 4, **U8** – 5 v 5, **U9** - 5 v 5, **U10** - 6 v 6, **U11** – 6 v 6.
- iii. Participants may play up two Go Games age grades – Under 7 may play at their own age grade plus Under 8 or Under-9 level; Under 8 can play their own age grade and Under 9 or Under 10 level Under-9 may play at their own age grade plus Under 10 or Under 11. Under 10 can play their own age grade and Under 11 or Under 12 for example
- iv. In Clubs and Primary Schools, up to under 11, no League or Championship competitions shall be organised
- v. No provision is made to publish scores, to play on a knock-out basis nor to include semi-finals, finals, etc. Go Games should not be used, publicly or otherwise, as grading for any older age grades. No scores should be kept or utilised in any way.
- vi. No provision is made to present trophies, cups, etc. Where certificates/medals are presented in lieu of participation, the same certificate/medal must be presented to every participant
- vii. Club and Primary School blitzes shall be organised subject to Association rule. No provision is made for the organisation of club or primary school Go Games blitzes with formats that include, knock-out games, semi-finals, finals etc.
- viii. Official Go Games Footballs and Sliotars must be used

Sanctions

Members, or affiliated units not in compliance with the above regulations will be subject to sanction in accordance with each Associations rules/policies as set out in Appendix 1.

General Go Games Guidelines and Recommendations

- i. Go Games must be played with the appropriate and approved equipment i.e., balls, goalposts
- ii. Go Games are inclusive with coaches and organising bodies required and encouraged to provide playing opportunities for children with special needs
- iii. Go Games shall be reviewed annually in each county by representatives of all three Associations in October/November and on a provincial/national basis.



- iv. Where Clubs or Primary Schools have panels of players in excess of the recommended maximum, playing numbers should be reduced and additional teams formed where feasible to ensure full participation
- v. Clubs are encouraged to host or participate in club organised blitzes subject to Associations Rules and in accordance with the principles and ethos of Go Games.
- vi. Go Games should be refereed by a Go Games referee (or Young Whistler). Where the number of games or blitzes exceeds the availability of Go Games referees, a qualified coach shall be permitted to referee the game
- vii. Recommended Annual Blitz Programme:
 - a. Under 7: Minimum of 8 Blitz opportunities in each code
 - b. Under 8: Minimum of 8 Blitz opportunities in each code
 - c. Under 9: Minimum of 8 Blitz opportunities in each code
 - d. Under 10: Minimum of 10 Blitz opportunities in each code
 - e. Under 11: Minimum of 10 Blitz opportunities in each code
 - f. Under 12: Organised on a league and blitz format
- viii. Counties are encouraged to organise festivals on an all-county or regional basis as part of the Go Games programme
- ix. At Under 7 to Under 9 clubs and counties are encouraged to organise 'free-play' days where children from all clubs are mixed up and referees are encouraged to communicate and cooperate to ensure teams are evenly matched to avoid one-sided games
- x. Coaches are encouraged to provide players with the opportunity to experience playing in all positions
- xi. Coaches must possess Garda/Access NI Vetting certificate, a Child Safeguarding 1 certificate and as a minimum Introduction to Coaching Gaelic Games Coaching Certificate. Coaches should complete the online Go Games workshop
- xii. The streaming of players is discouraged with players divided up evenly regardless of ability to ensure we live by the principle of 'as many as possible for as long as possible'.
- xiii. Only children whose 10th, 11th or 12th birthday is on or after January 1st can play at the U-12 age grade in that calendar year
- xiv. Children at 7 years of age and younger are still in the process of developing the fundamental skills required to support early acquisition of the specific skills of Gaelic Games. It is therefore recommended children aged 7 and younger are introduced slowly to Go Games with their continued participation in the club nursery preferred.
- xv. Go Games explicitly commences at U7 age grade, with participants permitted to play at 2-year cohorts i.e., an 8-year-old can play U9
- xvi. Children whose sixth birthday is on or after January 1st can play at the Under 7 age grade in that calendar year only
- xvii. To enhance activity and support maximum participation mixed playing opportunities should be encouraged and facilitated through collaboration between GAA, Camogie and LGFA
- xviii. In Primary Schools, blitzes may be organised on a single class year or a two-class year basis, i.e. First Class, Second Class, Third Class etc, or First/Second Class, Third/Fourth Class depending on the County and the size of the participating Primary Schools. Players should play within their own age cohort (either one or two class-year age eligibility).
- xix. At Club level, it is recommended that the playing season should commence at the beginning of April and continue to the end of September. In Primary Schools, it is recommended that the playing season should commence in mid-September and continue to May (not including school holidays).
- xx. U12 age grade is organised on a league basis with the top 2 teams qualifying for a league final. No ¼ or ½ finals or knock out rounds are permitted as part of the U12 league programme.



Appendices

Appendix 1

Sanctions

GAA

The following sanction applies to the GAA

- Non-compliance with T.O. Rule 6.27 and Association policy by a unit within a county may result in the subsequent reduction of Games Development funding for the county concerned.
- Non-compliance with Rule T.O. Rule 6.27 and Association policy by a unit may result in the exclusion of that unit from Games Development Activity Days (county, provincial or national), and Exhibition Games for a period of 12 months from date of breach.
- Non-compliance with Rule T.O 6.40 may result in:
 - For Organising an Unauthorised Tournament –
 - **County**
 - Withdrawing a percentage of Games Development funding from the County where the breaches take place will have an impact.
 - **Club**
 - Exclusion from Clubs Grants programme
 - Exclusion from Go Games Activity Days in Croke Park
 - Fine - €1,500 - €2,000

Camogie Association

The following sanction apply for the Camogie Association

Rule Breaches by clubs or mentors: THDC.

As per rule 33.8 and ratified Gaelic Games Go Games Policy, non-compliance with policy by a unit will be referred to the relevant Transfers, Hearing and Disciplinary Committees (THDCs) for sanction.

Non-compliance with Go Games Programme: National

Where a county fails to comply with the Go Games Policy for the provision on their games programme structure from U7 to U11, breaches shall be reported to the Coaching and Games Committee and any proposed sanctions will be subject to ratification by Ard Chomhairle.

- Non-compliance with Go Games policy by a unit may result in the exclusion of that unit from Games Development Activity Days (county, provincial or national), and Exhibition Games for a period of 12 months from date of breach.
- For Organising an Unauthorised Tournament –
 - County - Fine €1,000
 - Club - Fine €500; Liable to a minimum Suspension of 8 weeks.
- For Participation in Unauthorised Tournament –



- County - Fine €500
- Club - Fine €250

LGFA- Rule 297 of Official Guide

Games in Under 7 to Under 11 shall be organised on the Go Games Model in line F2 development stage of the Gaelic Games Player Pathway.

Go Games are modified where results are not formally recorded, and where all participants get to play during the course of the game.

Teams at Under 7 shall be a maximum of 7-A-Side. Teams at Under 8 and 9 shall be a maximum of 9-A-Side. Teams of Under 10 and 11 shall be a maximum of 11-A-Side.

At Under 12 level, competitions may be organised on a league format, with no championships, on the basis that participating teams should be a maximum of 13-A-Side. Only children whose 10th, 11th or 12th birthday is or after January 1st can play at the U-12 age grade in that calendar year.

Games should be organised over four quarters, and provision shall be made for all members of the team panel to participate in a minimum of one quarter.

A breach will be referred to CODA for sanction.

2. Education

[Online Go Games Workshop](#)



Appendix 2

Go Games Matrix

	Under-7 Go Games	Under-8 Go Games	Under- 9 Go Games	Under-10 Go Games	Under-11 Go Games	Under-12 Go Games
Team Sizes	Min. 4 v 4 Max. 7 v 7	Min. 5 v 5 Max. 8 v 8	Min. 5 v 5 Max. 9 v 9	Min 6 v 6 Max. 10 v 10	Min 6 v 6 Max. 11 v 11	Min 8 v 8 Max 13 v 13
Substitutions	Unlimited – Equal Game Time for All	Unlimited – Equal Game Time for All	Unlimited – Equal Game Time for All	Unlimited – Equal Game Time for All	Unlimited – Equal Game Time for All	Unlimited – Equal Game Time for All
Zones	2 Zones - Pitch split with cones across at halfway	2 Zones - Pitch split with cones across at halfway	None	None	None	None
Max. pitch length x width	45 m. x 30 m.	65 m. x 40 m.	65 m. x 40 m.	100 m. x 45 m.	100 m. x 45 m.	105 m x 50 m.
Max. Goal size	Training poles: 3m Apart	Training poles or portable goals: Where available	Training poles or Portable goals: Where available	Portable goals	Portable goals	Portable goals
Ball Size	First Touch	Quick Touch	Quick Touch	Smart Touch	Smart Touch	Hurling/Camogie Smart Touch/ Size 4 Football Smart Touch
Gaelic Football – In play Rules	Only 1 v 1 Tackling; Allowed carry ball with bounce for 8 steps or 8 seconds.	One hop & one solo allowed Standard: As per existing Association rule	One hop & one solo allowed Standard: As per existing Association rule	One hop & one solo allowed Standard: As per existing Association rule	One hop & one solo allowed Standard: As per existing Association rule	Two touches of ball permitted. Hop & Solo or Solo & Solo Standard. As per existing rules. Additional rules can be modified to meet local needs.



Hurling / Camogie - In play Rules	Only 1 V 1 Tackling / Allowed to crowd on a loose Sliotar; 6 seconds to strike before referee intervenes. Ground Hurling with goalkeeper allowed to lift, catch and strike from hand. No deliberate kicking of Sliotar. Additional rules can be modified to meet local needs.	One touch of ball on hurl permitted. Standard. As per existing rules.	One touch of ball on hurl permitted. Standard. As per existing rules.	One touch of ball on hurl permitted. Standard. As per existing rules. Additional rules can be modified to meet local needs.	One touch of ball on hurl permitted. Standard. As per existing rules. Additional rules can be modified to meet local needs.	One touch of ball on hurl permitted. Standard. As per existing rules. Additional rules can be modified to meet local needs.
Game Duration (during training session, blitz, festival)	10-minute blocks up to 40 Minutes	10-minute blocks up to 50 Minutes	10-minute blocks up to 50 Minutes	20-minute Blocks up to 60 Minutes	20-minute Blocks up to 60 Minutes	20-minute Blocks up to 60 Minutes
Restarts	Side-line free from halfway to team that concedes score. Puck/Kick outs from the hand on wide ball	Side-line free from halfway to team that concedes score. Puck/Kick outs from the hand on wide ball	Puck/Kick outs from the hand	Puck/Kick outs from the hand	Puck/Kick outs from the hand	Puck/Kick outs from the hand
Frees & Side-lines Hurling & Camogie	All taken off ground. Players 10m away. Player fouled or nearest player to take	Frees - Strike from the hand or lift and strike. Side-lines taken off the ground. Player fouled or nearest player to take all. Players must be 10m away from player taking.	Frees - Strike from the hand or lift and strike. Side-lines taken off the ground. Player fouled or nearest player to take all. Players must be 10m away from player taking.	Frees/ Side-lines – Normal rules. Players must be 10m away from player taking. Modified 45/65 taken from the centre point of the halfway line	Frees/ Side-lines – Normal rules. Players must be 10m away from player taking. Modified 45/65 taken from the centre point of the halfway line	Frees/ Side-lines – Normal rules. Players must be 10m away from player taking. Modified 45/65 taken from the centre point of the halfway line

		Modified 45/65 taken from the centre point of the halfway line	Modified 45/65 taken from the centre point of the halfway line			
Frees and Side-lines Football	All taken from the hands. Players 10m away. Player fouled or nearest player to take	All taken from the hands. Players 10m away. Player fouled or nearest player to take	All taken from the hands. Players 10m away. Player fouled or nearest player to take	Frees/45's/ Side-lines – Normal rules. Players must be 10m away from player taking.	Frees/45's/ Side-lines – Normal rules. Players must be 10m away from player taking.	Frees/ Side-lines – Normal rules. Players must be 10m away from player taking.
Festivals per year (One or both codes)	<u>(Not blitz weeks):</u> Max. 4 (Hosting or travelling)	<u>(Not blitz weeks):</u> Max. 4 (Hosting or travelling)	<u>(Not blitz weeks):</u> Max. 4 (Hosting or travelling)	<u>(Not blitz weeks):</u> Max. 4 (Hosting or travelling)	<u>(Not blitz weeks):</u> Max. 4 (Hosting or travelling)	
Blitz / Festival Referee	*Certified Coach or Go Games Referee	*Certified Coach or Go Games Referee	*Certified Coach or Go Games Referee	*Certified Coach or Go Games Referee	*Certified Coach or Go Games Referee	
<p>All blitzes and festivals need to be approved in advanced of being played. Where a festival takes place the week of a blitz (i.e. the County Go Games programmes), the club is only permitted to participate in the blitz. For festivals (one-off events), an officer from the host club with an official Gaelic Games email address (i.e., @gaa.ie/@camogie.ie/@lgfa.ie) can apply. For details, see gaa.ie/gogames</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A blitz or a festival must include a minimum of three clubs or multiple teams from two clubs • Where teams numbers are uneven, players from opposing teams can be mixed, play 'fly-goalie', change at half-time, etc. • No scores recorded as there is no seeding, grading, promotion, relegation etc. • Where team sizes are smaller to the max. stated, pitch sizes can be reduced relative to this. • There are no knock-out rounds (e.g. semi-finals, finals) in any type of Go Games. • There are no cups or trophies to be presented to any teams playing Go Games including tournaments and commemorative events • Where prizes (e.g. medals, certificates etc.) are being given out, every child participating should receive the same. 						

