

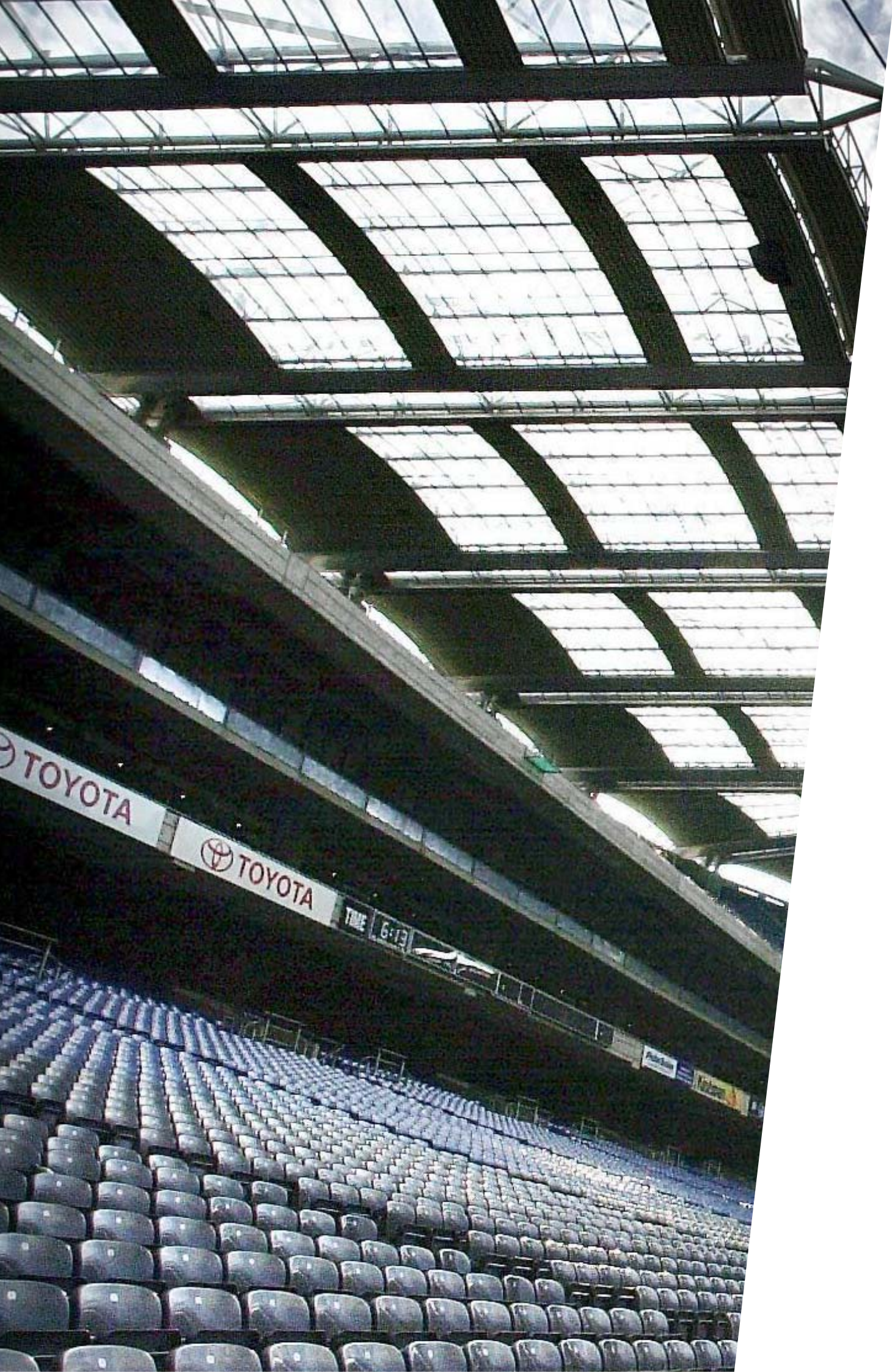


ALIGN AND COMBINE

from Within and Without

Underpinning the GAA Grassroots to National Programme (GNP)







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***“Excellence is a simple by-product
of an effective sports system.”***

Produced by the GAA Games Development Committee
Designed by Sportsbrand Media Ltd
Further information available at www.gaa.ie

An introduction to the GAA



The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) was established in 1884. It is the largest sporting organization in Ireland, and has made a significant contribution to community well being, and to the development of Irish sport and the cultural heritage.



This is reflected in the fact that:

- ➔ There are in excess of 20,000 underage and adult club teams affiliated to play Hurling and Gaelic football.
- ➔ Playing facilities (currently valued at €6 billion) have been developed, by units of the Association, in almost every parish in Ireland. The provision of playing facilities has, for the most part, been self-funded by generations of volunteers.
- ➔ Membership of the organisation affords individuals the opportunity to develop their physical, psychological and social skills through their involvement in games/competitions, which are organised across a range of ages and grades at parish/club, divisional, county, provincial, national and international level.

There are over 20,000 underage and adult club teams affiliated with the GAA to play Hurling and Gaelic football.



The GAA Grassroots to National Programme (GNP)

The Association, as a key service provider, is committed to maintaining a vibrant contribution to Lifelong Involvement in Sport and Physical Activity through the implementation of the GAA Grassroots to National Programme (GNP). This also provides the basis for maximising participation in Gaelic games and optimising playing standards.

The Programme is underpinned by the principles of fair play, an understanding of the inevitability of success and failure, and a recognition that increased effort and incremental improvement are required if players are to achieve their full potential. It will also focus increased attention on:

- ➔ Providing attractive alternatives to sedentary lifestyles
- ➔ Supplementing the work of voluntary officials
- ➔ Increasing involvement in urban and/or non-traditional playing areas
- ➔ Providing a blueprint for sports development in an international context – the constructs, which underpin the Programme can be applied on a universal basis.



OTú Games Development Model



The OTú Games Development Model provides a framework for ensuring that the core elements, which underpin the GNP Programme are delivered on an integrated basis, and in a holistic manner.



The following core elements give practical expression to this:

1. Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP)
2. Sport Through Education Programme (STEP) and
3. Coach, Administrator, Referee Education (CARE) with provision for Applied Lifelong Learning (ALL)



OTÚ GAMES DEVELOPMENT MODEL

- ➔ ***PEP***
- ➔ ***STEP***
- ➔ ***CARE FOR ALL***
- ➔ ***SCAN***



“PEP in your STEP with CARE for ALL”

The term OTú – the O as in oxygen and Tú, the Irish term for you – has its origins in the fact that a system will be most effective when all elements are aligned and combined from within and without.

1 PEP

PATHWAY TO ELITE PERFORMANCE

2 STEP

SPORT THROUGH EDUCATION PROGRAMME

3 CARE

*COACH ADMINISTRATOR REFEREE EDUCATION
WITH APPLIED LIFELONG LEARNING (ALL)*

4 SCAN

SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR/ADMINISTRATOR NETWORK

PEEP



PATHWAY TO ELITE PERFORMANCE

1

- ➔ *FUN DO*
- ➔ *CAN DO*
- ➔ *WANT TO*
- ➔ *WILL DO*



PATHWAY TO ELITE PERFORMANCE

FUN DO <i>Play Gaelic Games</i>	CAN DO <i>Talent Identification</i>	WANT TO <i>Development</i>	WILL DO <i>Elite Performance</i>
<i>Reserve/Social/ Veteran</i>	<i>U-21 Club</i>	<i>Adult Club</i>	<i>Senior County International</i>
<i>Club/Primary School Games</i>	<i>Minor/Club 2nd Level</i>	<i>Minor County International</i>	<i>U-21 County International</i>
<i>Féilles/Fun Blitzes/ Class Leagues/ Street Leagues</i>	<i>U-14/U-15 Schools of Excellence</i>	<i>U-16/U-17 Development Squads</i>	<i>3rd Level Elite Squads U-18 +</i>

PLAY TO LEARN ➡ LEARN TO COMPETE ➡ COMPETE TO WIN

Figure 1 Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP)

Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP)

Participation in Gaelic games provides participants with the opportunity to make friends, be part of a group, have fun and experience success. Individuals who continue to play into adulthood do so for a variety of reasons. Some may simply wish to participate at a recreational level, while others may be motivated by the desire to play and achieve success at the highest level. While players will drop-out for a variety of reasons, some may decide to return at a later stage as a player or official. The Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP) provides a framework for the holistic development of each player i.e., one which has due regard for maturation, ability levels and the competitive needs of players (Figure 1).

It is designed to provide regular games which:

1. Cater for differing levels of development and varying competitive abilities/needs
2. Guarantee full participation, fair play and frequent prospects of success
3. Encourage Players to deliver on their full potential i.e. make the effort required to improve individual and team performance.

"It's essential that kids experience a sense of achievement, fun and fair play when playing games. The Go Games - First, Quick and Smart Touch - in Hurling and Gaelic football are a revelation in this regard."

Pat O'Neill (Chairman Irish Sports Council)

PEP comprises of 4 interdependent stages:
These are:

- 1 The Recreation Stage ➔ **FUN DO**
- 2 The Development Stage ➔ **CAN DO**
- 3 The Talent Transfer Stage ➔ **WANT TO**
- 4 The Elite Performance Stage ➔ **WILL DO**



The principle reason cited by children for participating in sport is to have fun. The Recreation (Fun Do) Stage is structured so that young participants can play to learn i.e. develop the underlying techniques of Hurling and Gaelic football through activities that are 'Fun to Do'. The acquisition of technical proficiency during the 'Fun Do' Stage will enable them progress to the Development (Can Do) Stage with a sense of belief in their own ability i.e. where they feel they 'Can Do' what's required of them when learning to compete. By the time individuals reach the Talent Transfer (Want To) Stage, they will have decided whether they 'Want To' commit the time and/or make the effort required to participate at a higher level of competition. At the Elite Performance (Will Do) Stage, Players will be expected to display the mental toughness and focus required so that they 'Will Do' justice to themselves when competing to win.

The Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP) seeks to provide players with:

- ➔ *Full participation*
- ➔ *Fair play*
- ➔ *Frequent prospects of success and enables them to achieve their*
- ➔ *Full potential*

1 The Recreation Stage ➔ **FUN DO**

The Recreation (Fun Do) Stage provides children with the opportunity to develop technical proficiency through the provision of appropriate practice drills, and involvement in Go Games. These mini-games are underpinned by spontaneous play activities. Studies have shown that a significant component of the early experiences of both recreational, and elite sports performers is major involvement in spontaneous play activities. Such activities are designed to maximise enjoyment by adopting modified rules in a conditioned games context. This approach contrasts with deliberate practice where structured training is undertaken to achieve specific goals, using



standardised rules. The deliberate practice approach has been shown to lead to significantly higher dropout rates when introduced too early in the development of young players.

Three different GO Games in hurling and Gaelic football – known as First Touch, Quick Touch and Smart Touch - have been developed based on principles associated with spontaneous play or what is known within the GAA as the FP Index – i.e. geared to provide full participation, fair play, frequent prospects of success and provide a basis for players to develop their full potential.

Each game reflects best practice in terms of utilising modified rules and equipment that is appropriate for each child's stage of maturation. The games are designed to ensure that all participants experience a sense of achievement and enjoyment through involvement. Ideally, this should come about through the provision of fun blitzes/leagues, which are organised on a coordinated basis at Underage Club and Primary School level.

At the top end of the Recreation (Fun Do) Stage, young players may also participate in games that are organised on a representative, and more competitive basis e.g. County/Provincial/All-Ireland Féiles and Exhibition games such as the Primary Game and INTO Mini Sevens. These are incentive rather than development based.



Enjoyment is an essential ingredient for kids. The GO Games in Hurling and Gaelic Football have been devised with this in mind as specifically for:

- ➔ 7/8 yrs– First Touch
- ➔ 9/10 yrs– Quick Touch
- ➔ 11/12 yrs – Smart Touch

2 The Development Stage ➔ **CAN DO**

The Development (Can Do) Stage provides advanced coaching and games for players at Club and Post-Primary School level in order to refine their technical skills, and develop the tactical and team play attributes of Hurling and Gaelic football.

Provision is made for players who are not selected for competitive teams, and who wish to develop tactical and team play attributes, through games known as Super 7/9 and 11's. These games may be organised on an internal or external club and/or school basis.

Schools of Excellence at U-14/15 level provide an opportunity for technically talented players, selected on an inclusive rather than exclusive basis at divisional or county level, to further develop their skill in an appropriate environment. Individual players may be selected to represent their County on at least 4 occasions each year.

3 The Talent Transfer Stage → **WANT TO**

Players who progress to the Talent Transfer (Want To) Stage are accommodated with games across School and Club competitions ranging from underage to adult level. These games provide for further development of technical, tactical and team play skills.

Those involved with the U-16/17 Development Squads (more exclusively based than Schools of Excellence), or with County teams will have the opportunity to compete at Inter-County level, and be provided with quality coaching support.

A small number will also compete in the Schoolboy International Rules series against Australia.



Elite performers have a range of competitive outlets:

- ➔ *Third level*
- ➔ *County U.-21 and senior*
- ➔ *Senior International Rules*
- ➔ *U-21 and Senior Hurling/Shinty Internationals*

4 The Elite Performance Stage → **WILL DO**

Players at the Elite (Will Do) Stage have the opportunity to participate in a variety of competitions. These include: Third Level, County U-21, County Senior, Senior International Rules or U-21 and Senior Shinty/Hurling competitions. Consistently high levels of performance will enable certain players to compete to win at the highest level.



Related Matters

- Biological age, rather than chronological age largely determines an individual's rate of progress, particularly during pre-pubescence/adolescence.

The likelihood of dropout/burnout, or impeded development is greatly increased if the nature and context of the activity is inappropriate for the stage of maturation, e.g., too much emphasis on competition at too early an age or stage of development.

An over emphasis on winning, not getting the opportunity to participate, fear of failure, not having fun, the severity of training, and poor coaching are among the reasons why people leave sport, particularly at a young age.

The PEP programme is designed to accommodate players who are late developers (mature at a slower rate), and/or individuals who are motivated (for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons) to achieve their full competitive potential later than expected.

- Despite the best efforts of coaches and administrators, there will always be a number of players who, for a variety of reasons, will still dropout at different stages along the Pathway. However, PEP is also designed to afford players the opportunity to re-enter they Pathway irrespective of the age or ability of the individual.

Another design feature of the Pathway is that it provides games - these focus on the recreational and social benefits of sport - for all age groups in the Recreation (Fun Do) Stage e.g. veterans/master competitions. This inclusive participation policy is one of the principle reasons why the GAA has played a major role in the development of a healthy and active society.

Providing players with a sense of identity, belonging and community involvement are also significant factors in this regard.

- The Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP) is subject to ongoing review and refinement to ensure that all players are provided with a balanced programme of meaningful games.



Reasons why kids leave sport are:

- ➔ *winning at all costs*
- ➔ *fear of failure*
- ➔ *not having fun*
- ➔ *severity of training*
- ➔ *poor coaching*

STEP



SPORT THROUGH EDUCATION PROGRAMME

2

- PRIMARY
- SECONDARY
- THIRD LEVEL
- UNDERAGE CLUBS



SPORT THROUGH EDUCATION PROGRAMME

PRIMARY Teachers/ Coaches	SECONDARY Teachers/ Coaches/Students	THIRD LEVEL Level 1 & 2 Coaches	UNDERAGE CLUBS Coaches
Catch & Kick Lift & Strike	Club School Support Group	Rookie Panels 18+	Underage Clubs
Go Hurling/ Go Gaelic Games Coaching Inputs	Young Referee/ Lifeskills Courses	Development Squads U-16/17	Summer Camps
U-Can Awards	Team Preparation/ Club Organisation	Schools of Excellence U-14/15	Skills Star Challenge
ABC Programme		Academy	Have-A-Ball

PRIMARY ➡ SECONDARY ➡ THIRD LEVEL ➡ UNDERAGE CLUBS

Figure 2 Sport Through Education Programme (STEP)

Sport Through Education Programme (STEP)

The Sport Through Education Programme (STEP) involves a series of projects that are implemented within primary schools, 2nd level schools and 3rd level colleges. These projects serve to nurture strong links between clubs and schools (Figure 2).

Specifically, they

1. Assist players develop playing, leadership and team building skills
2. Provide understanding of the inevitability of success and failure
3. Encourage players to maintain lifelong involvement in Gaelic games.

"The integration of sport and education is definitely the way forward."

Sean Kelly
(President of the GAA)

STEP comprises of 4 interdependent elements:

- 1 Primary Schools
- 2 Second Level Schools
- 3 Third Level Colleges
- 4 Underage Clubs



The provision of games – as set out in PEP - is complimented by projects, which are implemented at four interdependent stages – Underage Clubs, Primary Schools, 2nd Level Schools and Third Level Colleges. These projects – known collectively as the Sport Through Education Programme - primarily serve to ensure that strong links are maintained between Schools and Underage Clubs, and to ensure that the Clubs and 2nd Level Schools act as a feeder system for the GAA Coaching Academy i.e. Schools of Excellence, Development Squads and Rookie Panels.

The Catch & Kick/Lift & Strike Programmes involve the following projects:

- ➔ ABC/Have-a-Ball
- ➔ U-Can Awards/Skills Star Challenge
- ➔ GO Games – Coaching Inputs
- ➔ Summer Camps

1 Primary Schools

The Catch & Kick/ Lift & Strike Programme involves a number of projects, designed to compliment the Recreation (Fun Do) Stage. These are implemented through the Primary School network. The projects involved are as follows:

1. ABC Programme (Acquiring Bilateral Coordination)

A series of exercises adapted to Gaelic games, for Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st Class / P1 – P3 in N.I. (4,5,6,7 year olds), in order to facilitate the development of fundamental motor skills using a positive and fun approach. Locomotor, manipulative and stability skills are developed including the ABCs (Agility, Balance, Co-ordination) and RJTs (Running, Jumping, Throwing) of athleticism.

2. First/Quick/Smart Touch Coaching Lessons:

A series of coaching sessions that focus on the development of the basic skills of Hurling and Gaelic football



through progressive exercises and drills appropriate for 2nd to 6th Classes/ P4 – P8 in N.I. (8-12 year olds).

3. U-Can (Skill) Awards

A series of tasks designed to encourage young players from 8-12 years to practice the basic skills of Hurling and Gaelic football. Awards are made the basis of playing proficiency in specific challenges.

4. Teacher Training

Coach Education courses organised on a national basis for trainee and practicing primary school teachers. These use key elements of the Foundation and Level 1 Coach Education Courses and provide an opportunity for Teachers to practice and apply existing skills in a Gaelic games coaching context.

The U-Can Awards will assist and challenge players to spend time practicing the basic skills of the game.

2 Second Level Schools

Projects implemented in 2nd level Schools that are designed to compliment the Development (Can Do) Stage. These are as follows:

1. Life Skills Course

This is a course developed to educate transition year/5th year and 6th year students on communication/leadership and team building skills through the medium of Gaelic games. The importance of Health, Fitness and Wellness will also be explored. The programme operates on a national basis having commenced with a pilot programme in the 2004/2005 school year.

2. Foundation Level Coaching/Transition Year Course

This variation on the standard Foundation Level Coach Education Course aims to provide students with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills to assist in the provision of coaching to primary school-age children, (in the primary school and/or underage club context).

3. Young Referees Transition Year Course

This course aims to provide participants with an understanding of the principles of fair play, and enable them to undertake refereeing assignments within (a) their local club/primary school, and/or (b) in



conjunction with first year leagues/blitzes that are organised within their own school and/or in conjunction with the Life Skills course. This course serves as a follow up to the Young Whistlers Course, which is organised at primary school level.

4. Teacher Training

Coach Education courses provided to H.Dip. and/or practicing post-primary school teachers. Focus on the skills required for active involvement in the preparation of school teams.

Fixture co-ordinators who assist with the organisation of fixture programmes at county/provincial level, and are involved in the appointment of match officials and associated games administration are also appointed.

3 Third Level Colleges

Coaching Academy projects designed to compliment the Development (Can Do) Stage and the Talent Transfer (Want To) Stage are implemented in association with the Third Level Colleges. These projects are as follows.

1. Schools of Excellence (U-14/15)

A maximum of 8 coaching sessions are provided each year in Hurling and Gaelic football. These are offered on a county or divisional basis. Squads are selected on an inclusive basis and are exposed to quality coaching tuition aimed at developing technical proficiency, tactical prowess and team play.

2. Development Squads (U-16/17)

A maximum of 8 coaching sessions are provided each year in Hurling and Gaelic football. These are offered on a county or divisional basis. Criteria used to select squad members are more exclusive than those for the Schools of Excellence. This reflects the high level of technique and skill required to progress to the Talent Transfer (Want To) Stage.

3. Rookie Panels (18+)

Rookie Panels in Hurling and Gaelic football are organised to assist players to progress from Underage Inter-County squads to U.21/Adult level. Players are provided with the coaching/training inputs in respect



Promising young Hurlers and Gaelic footballers are provided with quality inputs by way of:

- ➔ *Schools of Excellence (U-14/15)*
- ➔ *Development Squads (U-16/17)*
- ➔ *Rookie Panels (18+)*



of physiology, psychology, diet and nutrition etc. that will enable them to deliver on their full playing potential.

It is proposed to establish formal links with 3rd Level Colleges with a view to ensuring that these inputs are provided in a systematic and streamlined way. An increasing number of coaches are currently making use of the expertise that exists at this level, with a view to ensuring that players are provided with advice and assistance on lifestyle management skills.

Underage Clubs can nurture effective links with local Primary Schools through the provision of:

- ➔ *Coaching personnel*
- ➔ *Equipment*
- ➔ *Finance*
- ➔ *Attire*

4 Underage Clubs

There are a number of projects relating to the Recreation (Fun Do) Stage, which are implemented through the Underage Club network. These compliment STEPS 1 – 3 outlined above. The projects involved are as follows:

1. 'Have-a-Ball' Programme

The 'Have-A-Ball' Programme is designed to ensure that participants derive maximum enjoyment from the use of balls/beanbags etc. It compliments the school-based ABC (Acquiring Bilateral Coordination) Programme.

2. 'Skill Star Challenge

This project is the extension of the U-Can Awards implemented through Primary Schools, and provides an opportunity for the most technically proficient players to perform at a club, county, provincial and national level.

3. Summer Camp

Summer Camps, organised during the months of July and August, are vital in terms of increasing participation and maximising retention. The Camps are structured to cater for a range of age groups. They consolidate (in a fun environment) the various projects, which are organised within primary schools and underage clubs.

4. Homework/Mentor Groups

An increasing number of clubs – particularly in designated urban areas – are complimenting school activity by organising homework/mentor groups to further strengthen the club-school link and develop a more holistic based learning environment for their juvenile members.



CARE



COACH ADMINISTRATOR REFEREE EDUCATION

3

- ➔ *COACH*
- ➔ *ADMINISTRATOR*
- ➔ *REFEREE*



COACH ADMINISTRATOR REFEREE EDUCATION

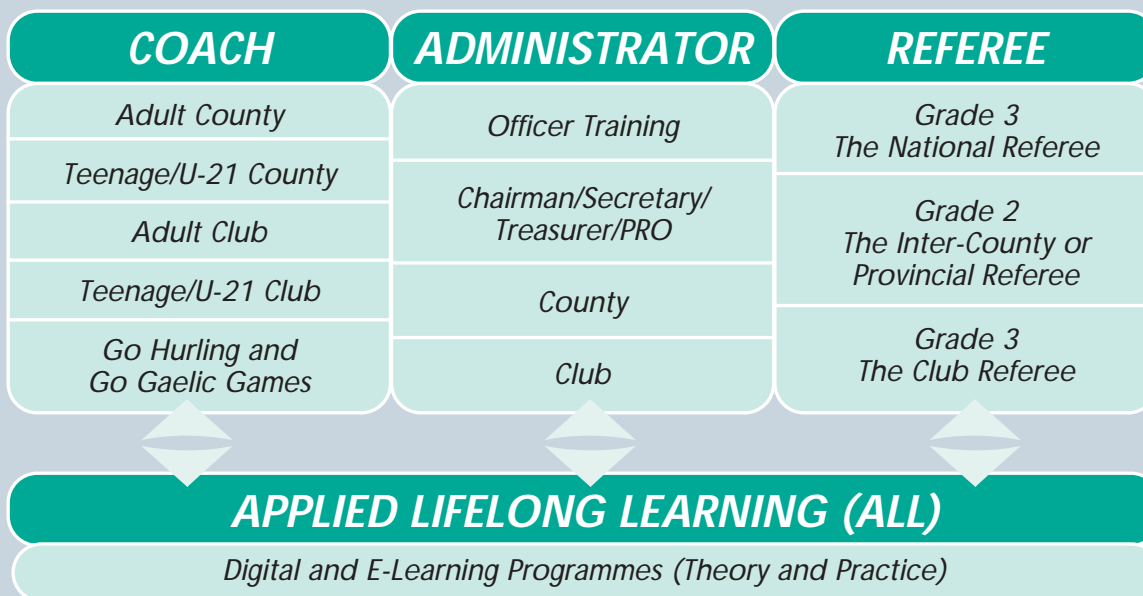


Figure 3 Coach Administrator Referee Education (CARE)

Coach Administrator Referee Education (CARE) with provision for Applied Lifelong Learning (ALL)

The PEP and STEP Programmes have most impact when they are supported by a programme of Coach, Administrator and Referee Education (CARE). Making adequate provision for Applied Lifelong Learning (ALL) will ensure that Coach, Administrator and Referee Education programmes are even more effective.

Coach, Administrator and Referee Education (CARE) are delivered through specifically designed courses, workshops, and conferences incorporating recognised principles of best practice. These include a combination of theoretical and practical inputs, and allow for (and encourage) the use of digital and e-learning modalities.

These programmes are designed to:

1. Educate Coaches, Administrators and Referees in a progressive manner from Club through to National Level.
2. Continually improve the quality of Coaches, Administrators and Referees through the incorporation of recognised principles of best practice.
3. Ensure an appropriate and high standard of support is available to Players as they progress through PEP and STEP.

"Having an effective system in place for the training of coaches, administrators and referees is essential for the future development of Gaelic games."

*Paraic Duffy
(Chairman National Games Development Committee)*

CARE caters individually and specifically for 3 distinct areas:-

- 1 Coach Education
- 2 Administrator Education
- 3 Referee Education



Coach, Administrator and Referee Education (CARE) is delivered through specifically designed courses, workshops, and conferences incorporating recognised principles of best practice. Each progressive course across each of the 3 disciplines caters for a greater level of specialisation and expertise based on the qualification and experience of the participants and aligned to the level of the Association at which they are operating. These courses include a combination of theoretical and practical inputs, and allow for (and encourage) the use of digital and e-learning modalities.

The effective Coach will possess a combination of attributes:

- ➔ *Enthusiasm*
- ➔ *Experience*
- ➔ *Expertise*

Coach Education

The core structure of the Coach Education Programme is a coaching ladder which is organised across five levels (for both Hurling and Football) beginning with Foundation Level (Juvenile Coach) and culminating at Level 4 (Advanced Inter-County Coach). While each level is aligned to coaching at a particular grade, the courses are designed to provide a greater level of knowledge applicable to each grade as a Coach progresses up the ladder.

The Coaching Ladder is as follows:

1. Foundation Level

Primarily geared to cater for people coaching from Under-12 downwards, all coaches, provided they are over the age of 16, are obliged to commence by taking the Foundation Level course. Run over approximately 8 hours the course is primarily practical and introduces the participants to the organisation and drills, games and activities for juvenile players. A modified version is geared towards post-primary school students.



2. Level 1

Geared to cater for people coaching from U-14 through to adult teams at club level, the Level 1 course provides an opportunity for participants to increase their theoretical knowledge and apply this knowledge through a series of drills, games and activities aimed at developing Technical Proficiency, Tactical Prowess, Team Play, Physical Fitness, Psychological Focus and Performance Analysis. Course contact time is 20 – 40 hours with completion of a Logbook detailing training sessions over a season compulsory.

2. Level 2

Geared to cater for the underage inter-county coach the Level 2 course provides a further opportunity for participants to increase their theoretical knowledge and develop coaching capacities appropriate to the development of players who have been identified as having the potential to progress to Inter-County level. Course contact time is 40 – 60 hours with completion of a Logbook and a Practical Coaching Assessment compulsory.

3. Level 3

Geared to cater for the inter-county adult coach the Level 3 course is a further development on the Level 2 course, focusing to a greater extent on the development of coaching capacities related to the development of Team Play and Psychological Focus in Elite Players with the aid of appropriate Performance Analysis methods. In order to achieve certification at Level 3 a series of course inputs must be combined with adequate experience at Inter-County Level. Distance Learning, In-service Training, Practical Coaching Assignments plus Logbook completion are central elements.

4. Level 4

Geared to cater for the advanced inter-county adult coach the Level 4 course will provide a series of specialised inputs relating to various aspects of the coaching and sport and exercise disciplines. Allowing for a variety of options of expertise, the course will serve to provide further developmental opportunities for experienced coaches at inter-county level. Distance Learning, In-service Training, Practical Coaching Assignments plus Logbook completion are central elements.

The effective Coach will:

- ➔ *Believe in doing 80% of his/her work with the ball*
- ➔ *Provide adequate recovery time*
- ➔ *Ensure that players do not train – on a collective basis – more than 3 times per week*



The Coach Education programme also includes the Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport programme, which all coaches of juvenile players are expected to complete.

2 Administrator Education

The voluntary worker, committed to the promotion and development of our games, is the source of richness that sets us apart in the sporting world. It is vital, that as an Association, we continually assess our resources, structures and future direction. As such the Chomhairle Training programme supports the work of Club and County Officers in the organisation and development of our Games and facilitates a planning process to develop a short, medium and long term plan suited to the individual needs of each unit.

The programme consists of the following inputs:

1. Club Officer Programme

The Club Officer Programme includes a series of inputs on the roles and functions of the Officers of a GAA Club.

2. Club Planning and Development Programme

This course provides information and expertise for Club Officers in evaluating the status of their Club in relation to infrastructure, facilities, and player development amongst others, enabling members to take ownership of their clubs by taking part in a process of planning for the club's future. The course includes setting realistic aims and goals for development in a systematic and feasible manner.

3. Pre-AGM Course

The Pre-AGM course is designed to assist Clubs in structuring a successful Annual General Meeting to encourage more members to become actively involved in the running of their club.

4. Club na nÓg programme

This course provides an opportunity for individuals involved in the organisation of juvenile games within a Club to increase their knowledge in relation to the



The Comhairle Programme will provide leadership and assistance to Clubs through

- ➔ *Planning and Development Courses*
- ➔ *Pre AGM Courses*
- ➔ *Training for specific Offices*



Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport, juvenile games structures and development related issues.

5. Bord na nÓg Programme

Providing an opportunity for those involved in organising juvenile games at Divisional and County Board level, the Bórd na nÓg Programme again includes inputs on the Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport, juvenile games structures and development related issues.

6. Board Officer Programme

The Board Officer Programme includes a series of inputs on the roles and functions of the Officers of a Divisional or County Board.

Effective Refereeing will mean that Referees:

- ➔ *Know the Playing Rules*
- ➔ *Apply them on an impartial basis*
- ➔ *Are consistent in their decision making*
- ➔ *Communicate well with players*

3 Referee Education

The Referee Education programme is organised across Club, County and National levels of the Association (for both Hurling and Football) aimed at providing Referees who can facilitate the proper conduct of our games at all stages of the Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP).

The Referee Education programme consists of the following inputs:

1. Foundation Course

As the basic course required to Referee at official level within the Association completion of the Foundation Course certifies participants as Club Referees. Including inputs on the practical elements of Refereeing, the spirit of our Games and a detailed study of the Rules of the code the Foundation Course provides a fundamental introduction to the application of the Rules of Gaelic Games. Participants must be 17 years of age or older. A Conversion Course provides an opportunity for those active Referees who have never achieved certification to enter the system. A modified version of the Foundation Course is geared towards post-primary school students, while a number of introductory initiatives are available at Primary School And Underage Club level.

2. Serving Referees Course

The Serving Referees Course is an annual refresher course for active Club Referees. The Course again looks at basics of Refereeing and also



includes a more in-depth look at the role of the Umpires and Linesmen, and adaptations or clarifications of Rule that occur year to year.

3. Provincial Referees Course

A series of 3 seminars for Referees identified as having the potential to officiate at Inter-County Level the Provincial Referees Course provides an opportunity for Referees to study a wider variety of elements required for Refereeing at an advanced level, including Role, Player Management, Physical Fitness for Refereeing and Team Work for Officials among others.

4. National Referees Seminars

These are a series of seminars held over the course of the playing season which cater for Referees who officiate at Senior grades at National Level. Including specialised inputs relating to various aspects of Referee performance the seminars focus on issues of interpretation and clarification in an open and interactive environment.



Referees fulfill a very important function and will continue to do so provided:

- ➔ *Mentors treat them with respect*
- ➔ *Players accept their decisions and get on with the game*
- ➔ *Spectators know the playing rules and do not become obsessed with winning*



Applied Lifelong Learning (ALL)

The Programme of Applied Lifelong Learning (ALL) is a series of Workshops, Clinics, Ancillary Courses, and Conferences on various topics and disciplines related to the role and performance of Coaches, Administrators and Referees. Applied Lifelong Learning also creates a link to Diploma and Degree courses in Third Level Institutions which serve to further the knowledge of the participants and which may provide credits towards progression as Coaches, Administrators and Referees within the Association.

The Programme of Applied Lifelong Learning (ALL) makes provision for Coaches, Administrators and Referees to:

1. Continually develop their vocational skills
2. Progress at a rate suited to their own development, and
3. Ensure that as players progress through PEP and STEP, they are provided with the proper CARE for ALL. This explains why the following maxim/aphorism “align and combine PEP and STEP with CARE for AL” is the key challenge facing the GAA, and why it is so central to the successful implementation of the OTú Games Development Model.



Administrators do much unseen work to ensure that players are provided with:

- ➡ *Regular games*
- ➡ *Decent facilities*
- ➡ *Medical and first aid assistance*
- ➡ *High quality coaching*





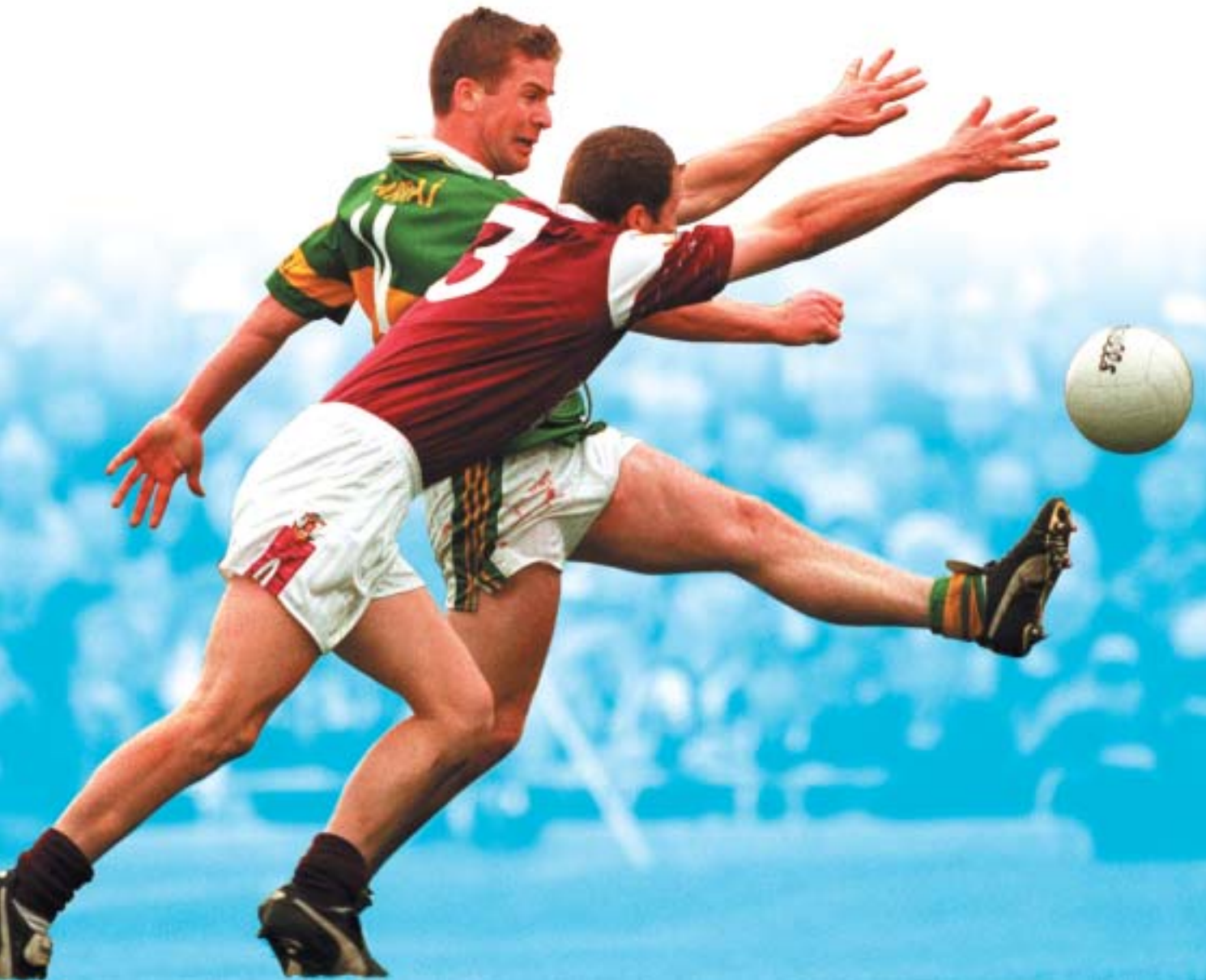
SCAN



SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR/ADMINISTRATOR NETWORK

4

- ➔ CLUBS
- ➔ COUNTIES
- ➔ PROVINCES
- ➔ CROKE PARK



SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR/ADMINISTRATOR NETWORK

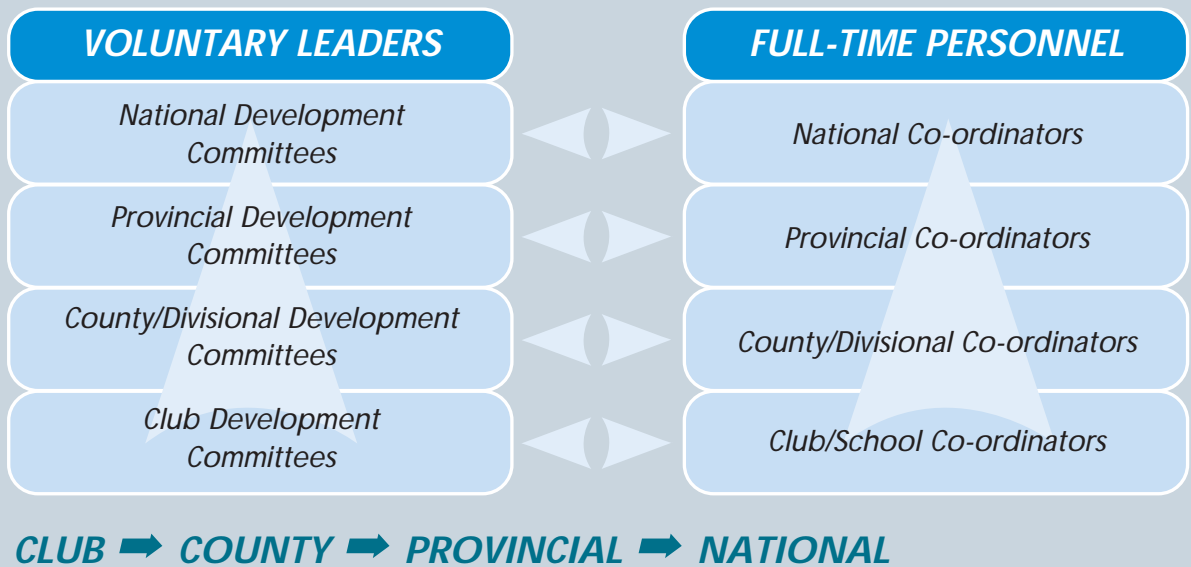


Figure 4 Support Co-ordinator/Administrator Network (SCAN)

Support Co-ordinator/Administrator Network (SCAN)

The successful implementation of the OTú Games Development Model requires that a Support Co-ordinator and Administrator Network (SCAN) is in place, which links all of the key stakeholders - Clubs, Counties, Provinces and Croke Park (Figure 4) - in a coordinated fashion, i.e., where all personnel are working in tandem and in pursuit of common objectives. This Network serves as a springboard for the implementation of the OTú Games Development Model and as a mechanism for evaluating its effectiveness.

“The more people within the Association are prepared to work in pursuit of common objectives, the greater the contribution the GAA will make to the promotion and development of Irish sport”

*Liam Mulvihill
(Director General of the GAA)*

SCAN comprises of 4 interdependent levels:

These are:

- 1 Clubs
- 2 Counties
- 3 Provinces
- 4 Croke Park



The Support Coordinator Administrator Network (SCAN) involves developing links between key stakeholders at four levels to ensure that the plans and projects etc set out in the Grassroots to National Programme (GNP) are implemented in the most effective and efficient way possible. The four levels involved are as follows:

1 Clubs

The designated Club/School Coordinator is pivotal in that he/she has a key responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the GO Games and Coaching, the organisation of the Ú-Can Awards and the promotion of Summer Camps in conjunction with the Games Development Committees within the Club and County.

2 Counties

The County Coaching Officer along with the Games Development Committee and the County/Divisional Bord na nÓg and Games Promotion Officers, are responsible for ensuring that the programme of games is backed up with effective Coach, Administrator and Referee Education (CARE) programmes. This ensures that as players progress through the Pathway to Elite Performance that they are provided with inputs appropriate to their needs and abilities.

The Grassroots to National Programme (GNP) will help to ensure that all personnel are attempting to achieve:

- ➔ *Common objectives*
- ➔ *Avoid overlap / duplication*
- ➔ *Are primed to maximise participation in Gaelic games and optimise playing standards*



2 Provincial

Regional Games Managers are responsible for the management of these projects on a Provincial basis, in cooperation with the appropriate Provincial and County Games Development Committees.

4 National

PEP, STEP and CARE for ALL projects are developed nationally under the auspices of National Games Development Committees, in conjunction with Regional Games Managers. Resources are developed for each stage within the Games Section in Croke Park which have regard for internationally recognised best practice in the relevant areas.

Evaluation

Processes are put in place that ensure that progress is monitored and areas requiring attention are identified – urbanised and/or non-traditional hurling areas are the current priorities in this regard. Thus funding, which had accrued from changes in the All Ireland Championships e.g. introduction of quarter – finals, is channelled into worthwhile and cost effective games development projects, as is funding which is provided by the Irish Sports Council (ISC).



The Grassroots to National Programme (GNP) will enable the GAA to:

- ➔ *Promote Gaelic Games in a positive and progressive manner*
- ➔ *Counter the challenge posed by sedentary lifestyles*
- ➔ *Assist to counter increasing levels of obesity*
- ➔ *Provide a model for best practice which can be applied on an international basis*

Summary

The OTU Games Development Model can be viewed as the DNA of the GAA on the basis that the more the core elements – PEP and STEP with CARE for ALL – are aligned and combined, the more they intertwine to form what is effectively the essential blueprint of the GAA (Figure 5). The more that this can be successfully replicated, the more successful the Grassroots to National Policy (GNP) will be i.e. the greater the impact it will have in terms of maximising the numbers playing Gaelic games and optimising playing standards.

Pat Daly

GAA Head of Games



***PEP, STEP and CARE for ALL
are central to the current
and future well being of
Gaelic games.***

Definitions

GAA Grassroots to National Programme (GNP)

Strategy geared to maximising participation in Gaelic games and optimising playing standards. Involves the organisation of a integrated activities, which provide for the development of sporting acumen and general well-being.

Is underpinned by the Otú Games Development Model which operates on the basis of the following maxim (aphorism) "Align and Combine PEP and STEP - incorporating CUSP – with CARE for ALL. SCAN to evaluate."

Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP)

Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP). Tiered structure which serves to provide players with a range of games appropriate to their needs and abilities. Comprises of four key stages.

Is underpinned by a range of inter-disciplinary principles and constructs (physiological, psychosocial, and sociological), which provide for the total (holistic) development of players at all levels e.g. children/teenagers/adults.

Sport Through Education Programme (STEP)

A series of projects – implemented in Primary, Post Primary Schools and 3rd Level Colleges – to nurture vibrant club and school links and provide a continuous stream of players for the Coaching Academy i.e. Schools of Excellence (U-14/U-15), Development Squads (U-16/17) and Rookie Panels (18+) in Hurling and Gaelic football.

Coach, Administrator and Referee Education (CARE)

Training courses and tuition etc. provided by the GAA with a view to ensuring that high standards of Coaching, Administration and Refereeing prevail at all levels.

Applied Lifelong Learning (ALL)

Process of acquiring knowledge and enhancing vocational competency while keeping up - to - date with the latest research and development in a given field of expertise.

Core Underage Strategic Plan (CUSP)

Collective title used for those elements of the Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP), the Sport Through Education Programme (STEP), and the programme of Coach,

Administrator and Referee Education (CARE) which deal specifically with the development of underage players.

Support Coordinator and Administrator Network (SCAN)

Overarching structure linking key stakeholders at all levels i.e. Clubs, Counties, Provinces and Croke Park. Provides a springboard for the implementation of the Grassroots to National Programme (GNP) and ensures that all personnel are working in tandem and in pursuit of common objectives.

Otú Games Development Model

Conceptualised framework, which provides for the integrated development of PEP and STEP – incorporating CUSP - with CARE for ALL. (The term Otú – the O as in oxygen and tú, the Irish for you – has its origins in the fact that a system will be most effective when all elements are aligned and combined - from within and without).

DNA of the GAA

The Otú Games Development Model is also known as the DNA of the GAA on the basis that the core elements – PEP, STEP and CARE for ALL – intertwine to reflect what is effectively the essential blueprint of the GAA. The more that this can be successfully replicated, the more successful the GAA Grassroots to National Programme (GNP) will be in terms of maximising participation in Gaelic games and optimising playing standards.

Schools of Excellence (U.14/15)

Part of the Coaching Academy, which caters for players at under 14 and 15 level. Players are provided with eight quality coaching sessions each year in Hurling and Gaelic football on either a county or, where population is adequate, a divisional basis. Squads are selected on an inclusive basis.

Development Squads (U-16/17)

Part of the Coaching Academy structure catering for players at under 16 and 17 level. Players are provided with eight quality coaching sessions each year in hurling and Gaelic football on a county or, where the talent pool is adequate, a divisional basis. More exclusive criteria are utilised to select these squads as the choices and sacrifices necessary reflect progression into the Talent Transfer –'Want To' Stage - and the

Definitions

capacities required to progress to the Elite Performance Stage.

Rookie Panels (18+)

Part of the Coaching Academy structure catering for players aged 18+ which aims to aid their progression from minor county teams to U.21/Adult level. These panels, in both Hurling and Gaelic Football, are provided with inputs in respect of physiology, psychology, diet and nutrition etc. that will enable players to achieve their full playing potential. Formal links are established with 3rd Level Colleges so that these inputs are provided in a systematic and streamlined way.

Summer (Cul) Camps

Activities organised during the school holidays for children between the ages of 6 and 13. These provide a range of recreational and playing outlets appropriate to the needs of those participating.

ABC Programme (Acquiring Bilateral Coordination)

Programme of exercises for Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st Class / P1 – P3 in N.I. (4,5,6,7 year olds), which aims to develop fundamental movement skills using a positive and fun approach.

Have-a-Ball Programme

Fun training programme for 4-8 year olds which aims to compliment the ABC Programme through the use of balloons, beanbags and balls of different sizes and weights.

Catch & Kick/Lift & Strike Programmes

Training activities which compliment the ABC and Have-a-Ball programmes, which assist players to develop sports specific skills (technical, tactical and team play). Enable players to derive maximum satisfaction and enjoyment from their involvement in Gaelic games and provide them with an incentive to achieve their full potential.





Otú Games Development Model

Produced by the GAA Games Development Committee