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STEERING GROUP ON INTEGRATION ANNOUNCES RESEARCH STUDY

THE GAELIC GAMES ASSOCIATIONS' STEERING GROUP ON INTEGRATION (SGI) HAS COMMISSIONED A LANDMARK RESEARCH STUDY TO GAUGE THE OPINIONS OF MEMBERS TO ASSIST IN DEVELOPING THE PATHWAY TO INTEGRATION.

The Steering Group is working towards the establishment of this pathway by February 2024.

Chaired by Iar-Uachtarán na hÉireann, Mary McAleese, the SGI has commissioned this independent research study which will canvass the views of the Camogie Association, LGFA and GAA members aged 18+.

The study has the potential to be one of the largest of its kind ever carried out in Irish sport.

The purpose of the research will be to seek opinions on the implications of the integration from regular club members. Among other questions it seeks to establish:

- **what benefits do members feel will arise out of this project from an organisational point of view and an individual and personal perspective?**
- **what challenges or issues are members concerned about?**
- **what priorities should be the focus after integration?**

SGI Chair Mary McAleese said: "This is a momentous and historic time for all



involved, and one that we have all been working on for some time. As part of this process, we are seeking the views of all adult members on this initiative, both in Ireland and abroad. This will help us understand what is important to our members.

"The SGI are conducting this research as part of the journey to One Association for all Gaelic Games. This information will guide us to an ambitious new future model for the development of the female codes, and it is very important that the membership has its say as part of the consultative process."

The listening process to date has enabled us to consult with Governing Bodies, Provinces, Counties and Clubs – and now we seek the views of individual members. The discussions and survey development has been informed by the consultation process to date.

The SGI has commissioned an independent market research agency, Behaviour and Attitudes, to conduct this research on our behalf, and provide an independent assessment of the results. This vital piece of research will help shape our future, so we would ask you to take 15 minutes to

contribute to its success.

All information will be aggregated by B&A, and no responses will be directly attributed to any one individual, guaranteeing absolute confidentiality.

The survey will be circulated from next week and will be accessible through Foireann. Members should check their email to know when the invite to participate through Foireann arrives.

Members of all three organisations will be kept informed of progress.

TOBAR – GAELIC GAMES LEARNING: THE NEW CROSS ASSOCIATION SOURCE FOR LEARNING IN GAELIC GAMES



TOBAR IS THE NEW NAME FOR GAA LEARNING AND IT PROVIDES ACCESS TO ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCES FOR ANYONE INVOLVED IN GAELIC GAMES INCLUDING COACHING, PLAYING, REFEREEING OR PROVIDING ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AT CLUB OR COUNTY LEVEL.

Why Tobar?

The hazel tree (crann coill) is a very important tree in Irish mythology and is associated with wisdom. Tobar is the Irish word for well (or spring). Legend has it that nine hazel trees grew around the 'Well of Wisdom' (Tobar Segais) located at the heart of the world, and within this well lived a great speckled salmon. Hazel nuts from the trees fell into the well and upon eating these hazel nuts, the salmon acquired all the wisdom of the universe. It was believed that the first person to catch and eat the salmon would then gain this knowledge. Our vision for learning in Gaelic Games is that Tobar becomes the place where our members and volunteers go in their thirst for knowledge. Tobar is the source of learning in Gaelic Games.

What's New?

Tobar is a comprehensive and immersive platform that enhances the learning experience for all our members. Tobar allows for dynamic content creation, individual learning pathways and seamless navigation. Gaelic Games members can access a wide range of resources, conveniently categorised into:

- Courses
- Webinars
- Podcasts
- Videos
- Guides
- Events

to enable members find what they need with ease.



Personalised and Scalable Learning: The aim of Tobar is to empower Gaelic Games members to embark on personalised learning journeys tailored to their specific needs. Tobar will allow for the creation of adaptive learning paths & personalised content recommendations. Learners can access individual progress tracking and explore supplementary resources to support their learning goals. We have introduced a new Personal Dashboard for logged in users with new features including:

- My Playlist of saved content
- Recently accessed content
- My Courses
- My Achievements
- Recommended Learning



Engaging Users through Gamification:

Tobar leverages gamification techniques to foster user engagement and motivation. With a Moodle LMS as the foundation, learners can access interactive modules, and multimedia content. Through gamified elements such as badges, leaderboards, progress tracking, and rewards, the aim is to incentivise participation and create a sense of achievement for learners. More gamification features will be included in phase II of Tobar to be launched in late August 2023.

Integration with Foireann:

Members will now have the ability to sync their Tobar account with their Foireann account and push their learning achievements such as safeguarding and coaching qualifications to the Games Management System. Along with the information already gathered in Foireann, Clubs can now have a clearer picture of the status of their members across a spectrum of areas, assisting those club volunteer officers carry out their role more effectively.



Activity Planner Upgrade:

The highly popular Activity Planner has also received a facelift, making it more mobile-friendly than before to facilitate use out on the field, and it has also been aligned to the new Gaelic Games Player Pathway. This upgrade is part of the continuous efforts across all Associations to collaborate and align learning resource development.



LifeLong Learning:

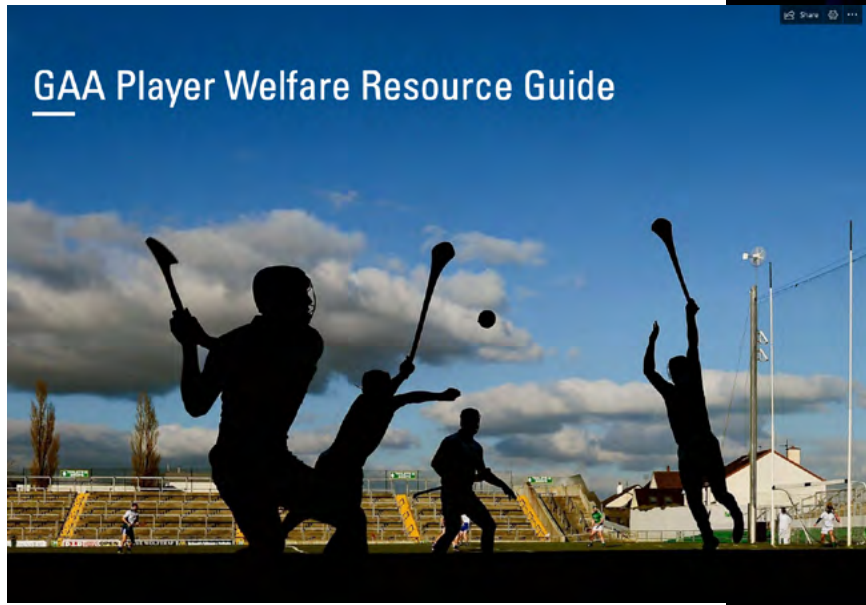
The GAA, LGFA and Camogie Associations are committed to nurturing a culture of lifelong learning among their members, enabling personal growth and the continuous development of skills. Tobar represents the next step in utilising technology to support lifelong learning. We will continue to refine and expand the Learning Portal, in order to advance educational initiatives, strengthen the lifelong learning culture within the Gaelic Games family, and empower our members to thrive in their personal and sporting endeavours.



PLAYER WELFARE RESOURCES

A BRIEF GUIDE HAS BEEN PRODUCED BY THE GAA'S PLAYER, CLUB & GAMES ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT TO ASSIST PLAYERS, PARENTS/GUARDIANS, CLUB VOLUNTEERS, MATCH OFFICIALS AND COACHES IN LOCATING EXISTING RESOURCES RELATING TO THE MAIN PILLARS OF PLAYER WELFARE WITHIN GAELIC GAMES – CONCUSSION, CARDIAC SCREENING & DEFIBRILLATORS, ANTI-DOPING, INJURY PREVENTION & EQUIPMENT, TRAINING & LIFESTYLE.

Should you require further information on a specific area relating to welfare, please contact the GAA's Player Welfare Manager, Eoghan Tuohey, at eoghan.tuohey@gaa.ie



GAA Player Welfare Resource Guide

ULSTER GAA YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH AWARD

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD AOIFE QUINN FROM COALISLAND NA FIANNA CLUB IN CO. TYRONE HAS BEEN AWARDED THE TRANSLINK ULSTER GAA YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH.

The award is presented each month to one young volunteer whose efforts best demonstrate the volunteering ethos and community spirit of the GAA. Last year, Aoife successfully completed Ulster GAA Young Leaders Programme and attained her GAA Safeguarding and Foundation Coaching Award, which she put to good use this summer by volunteering at Tyrone Club Summer Camps.

In June, she volunteered at a joint event by Ulster GAA, Irish FA and Ulster Rugby which brought together teams from each sport to play an inclusive 'Game of Three Halves', where she played a pivotal role on the events team.

Speaking after volunteering at the Inclusive Game of Three Halves, Aoife said: "I thoroughly enjoyed getting involved in this event, which was a very new experience for me working closely with people with disabilities. It was brilliant to see the inclusivity across different sports within one venue, as well as the enthusiasm and strong personalities of the participants at the event. I was amazed by the strong support and community ethos within the clubs and I am delighted to have been involved in a project which provided so much enjoyment and enrichment for everyone involved."

Applications for the August Young Volunteer of the Month award are now open. To nominate a young person aged 14-24 for the accolade, visit ulster.gaa.ie/youngvolunteeraward



From left: Ashelene Flanagan, Ulster GAA Volunteer Development & Policy Officer, Aoife Quinn, Coalisland Na Fianna GAC, and Dermot McGirr, Translink

INSPIRATIONAL CLUB & COUNTY OFFICERS FEATURE IN NEW SERIES

THE GAA AND LGFA RECENTLY LAUNCHED A NEW VIDEO PODCAST SERIES WHICH SHARES CASE STUDIES OF EXCELLENT WORK BEING DONE BY CLUB AND COUNTY OFFICERS. THIS SERIES WILL EXPLORE STORIES OF HOW CLUB AND COUNTY OFFICERS SUCCESSFULLY UNDERTOOK INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE THEIR UNITS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

Episode one features Aidan Murray (Chairperson of Caltra GAA) and Mattie Kilroy (Central Council Delegate for Galway and member of the Club) discussing how a small rural Club, who have previously achieved All-Ireland Senior Football Club success, have strategically developed their playing and community facilities over the past 10 years through innovative community-based fundraising initiatives.

This video podcast series will aim to provide Club and County Officers with inspiration and ideas that will hopefully benefit their units and the community for years to come. Aidan and Mattie discuss how this project embeds both elements of history in the Club but also how it looks to the future.

Episode two sees Paddy Flood (Chairperson of the Officer Development Committee)

discuss the Rebel County initiative with Kevin O'Donovan (Cork GAA), Suzanne O'Sullivan (Bishopstown) and Steven O'Brien (Blarney). They discuss how the initiative provides sustainable funding for both Clubs and the County.

Episode three of the Officer Development Podcast Series sees Paddy Flood (Chairperson of the Officer Development Committee) chat with Lauri McCusker from the Belnaleck Art McMurrough's Club in County Fermanagh. Lauri is the Club Treasurer but is also the Director at The Fermanagh Trust.

To access these episodes visit - <https://learning.gaa.ie/videopodcast>

This initiative has been developed by the GAA's Officer Development Committee and led by Alan Mongey (Planning and Training Officer, Galway), Michelle Healy (PRO, Galway), Gerard Bradley (IT Officer, Tyrone) and Jack McCarney (Planning and Training Officer, GAA).

There are more episodes in the pipeline, and these will be released in the coming weeks. Stay tuned to the GAA Learning Twitter page for further episodes and resources.



The screenshot shows the GAA Learning website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Log in', 'Register', and a search bar. Below this is a blue header with the 'TOBAR' logo and 'Classic Games Learning' text, along with 'Planner' and 'ePortfolio' buttons. On the right side of the header, there are buttons for 'GAA.ie', 'Camogie', and 'LGFA'. The main content area features a green background with the text 'VIDEO PODCAST SERIES'. Below this, there is a navigation menu with links for 'Coach Ed', 'Referee', 'Administrator', 'Player Education', 'Schools', 'Community & Health', 'Safeguarding', and 'Club Education'. The main heading reads 'Welcome to the Officer Development Video Podcast Series' with a sub-note: 'Please see below information on the episodes recorded to date with more scheduled to come in the future.' A list of 'Video Podcast Episodes' is shown with three items: 'Episode 1: The Caltra Wall', 'Episode 2: Rebel's Bounty', and 'Episode 3: Nurturing Volunteerism', each with a dropdown arrow.

GAELIC GAMES ASSOCIATIONS COMMITTED TO GO GAMES TO GIVE EVERY CHILD A GO

THE GAA, THE CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION AND LADIES GAELIC FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION ARE LAUNCHING THE UPDATED GO GAMES POLICY AS A REAFFIRMATION OF OUR COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO NURTURE A PASSION FOR GAELIC GAMES IN YOUNG BOYS AND GIRLS AND TO DO THIS THROUGH A POSITIVE COACHING ENVIRONMENT OF INCLUSION AND TO ENSURE EVERY CHILD HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AND DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS.

Go Games are Camogie, Hurling and Gaelic Football for children up to and including 12 years of age, where every child gets to play (a Go) in every game, for the full game and since has been responsible for significant growth in participation levels since its introduction in 2010. It is estimated that Juvenile membership in Gaelic Games is in the region of 250,000 young people

As part of this relaunch we are delighted to launch the Go Games Workshop which is aimed at coaches and parents of children involved in Go Games. The short online workshop will ensure that participants will be able to apply the new Gaelic Games Go Games model effectively in coaching sessions and in running blitzes in line with national policy where games and pitch sizes can be modified to maximise full participation in the games.

From our experience, Children participate in Gaelic Games for a number of reasons – to have fun, to play with friends, parental encouragement, etc. However, a lack of fun, lack of perceived competence and an



over-emphasis on competitive outcomes (which usually come from coaches and parents) are major reasons for dropout.

Players can generally learn the basic skills of Camogie, Hurling and Gaelic Football with relative ease. The better players who practise more often, come on faster than those who only participate in collective coaching sessions. However, players find it more difficult to develop the ability to make the right decisions – when to pass, whom to pass to, where to run, etc. – in full-sided

games. However, through small-sided games the aim is to optimise their decision-making and at the same time enhance their technical development.

The original Go Games policy outlined that there was no provision made to publish scores, to play on a knock-out basis nor to include finals, or to present trophies, cups, etc. Through the relaunch/update of the policy, alongside the GAA, Camogie Association and LGFA are working to ensure there is a greater understanding and

compliance in relation to elements of the policy including the non-competitive nature of Go Games. Putting ALL children at the centre of what we do is paramount for the three Associations.

Clubs who want to run a blitz/festival of activity outside of their own county Go Games programme can now use the online application process. This can be found on the dedicated Go Games page.

Uachtarán CLG Larry McCarthy said:

“We all know there are lots of benefits to children who take part in sport. But what should always be at the top of that is the fun and enjoyment that they get out of their involvement. Go Games has been central to the successful rise in participation in Gaelic Games and develops young people and teaches them the skills of hurling and football and camogie. It is the first step in what we want to be a lifelong participation in Gaelic games and ensuring that every child gets a go and that no one is made to feel excluded or unwanted is at the heart of that philosophy.”

Camogie Association President Hilda Breslin said:

“It gives me great pleasure to see the launch of the Gaelic Games Policy and the rebranding of Go Games to include all four codes of Camogie, Hurling, Ladies Football, and Gaelic Football and is a significant step towards inclusivity and universal experiences for children involved in Gaelic Games.

The focus on age appropriateness and development in the Gaelic Games Go Games policy is commendable. The use of small-sided games and the phased approach to altering pitch dimensions and rules provides young players with the best opportunity to practice and enhance their skills. This player-centred and skill-focused approach aligns with the Gaelic Games Player Pathway, ensuring a cohesive and progressive development for players as they grow.”

Ladies Gaelic Football Association President Mícheál Naughton said:

“Our young and emerging players are the future of our sports and it’s vital that they are shown the right path for long-term development. In their young years, and as they develop a love for Gaelic Games, we

should ensure that our young boys and girls are given as many chances as possible to participate and play.

For so many players, Go Games affords them the opportunity to improve and hone their skills in a nurturing environment. The long-term benefits of competing in our sports are endless but players will only remain with us and stay committed if they are immersed in a welcoming environment from a young age. It is imperative that we facilitate this and Go Games plays such a key role. Every child gets a Go and this will enhance the feeling of being included and having the opportunity to grow and develop at an appropriate pace.”

WHY GO GAMES?

To support the participation and development of the Under-12 player, the following principles underpin Go Games:

- All participants play in the full game.
- Participant needs are catered for at U7, U8, U9, U10, U11, U12.
- Activities are structured in a manner which optimises the level of fun, friendship, fair play and achievement derived by participants.
- Participants train and play in a safe, supportive and stimulating environment where they are encouraged to risk error, to learn and to derive maximum enjoyment from their involvement.

- Players master the basic skills of Camogie, Hurling and Gaelic Football and experience the sense of accomplishment, which derives from acquiring playing proficiency on the left and right hand side of the body.
- 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 GAA ‘Give Respect, Get Respect’ and the LGFA’s ‘Take a second’ initiative.

The Go Games policy, principles and resources can all be found [here](#).

APPLICATIONS SOUGHT FOR HURLING PHD



THE GAA HURLEY & SLIOTAR REGULATION WORK GROUP IS CURRENTLY WORKING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING IN DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY (DCU) ON A PROJECT WHICH PROVIDES FOR INTEGRATION OF RESEARCH AROUND HURLEY & SLIOTAR PERFORMANCE.

The aim of this project is to develop new characterisation systems for the Hurley & Sliotar. This will include a robotic system

for testing the interaction between the Hurley & Sliotar which will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanical properties relating to the Hurley/Sliotar interaction.

Performance characteristics apart, this research will facilitate the development of Hurley specifications and pave the way for the development of Hurley standards. At a time when Ash Dieback Disease poses an existential threat to the supply of Ash, this is now an important future proofing

requirement in relation to the use of alternative materials and new production processes around the manufacture of Hurleys.

The robotic system for imparting a Hurley to Sliotar impact will be developed to match the human body with the simultaneous measurement of the Coefficient of Restitution for the Sliotar - that is to quantify how the Sliotar performs/travels when struck with a consistent level of force.

The mechanical testing of Hurleys - this will include performance measures in relation to the flexure strength and impact resistance - and these will be examined to ensure that the manufacture of Hurleys is regulated in a manner where safety is a key desired outcome.

For those interested in working on this PhD project over the coming years, please send your CV and cover letter to the following email address:

joan.kelly@dcu.ie

NEW BRONZE BUST OF CUSACK UNVEILED

DR. MARY McALEESE UNVEILED A BRONZE BUST OF MICHAEL CUSACK AT THE BIRTHPLACE OF ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE GAA IN CARRON, COUNTY CLARE.

The former President of Ireland (1997-2011) was joined at the Michael Cusack Centre in the heart of the Burren by representatives of Clare GAA, Munster GAA, Clare County Council, the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark, Elected Members, and members of the local community.

The Cusack Bronze Head Bust is designed by Bray artist Paul Flynn and has been donated to the Michael Cusack Centre by Mick McCarthy, a former producer of RTE's "Up for the Match" programme and a native of Parteen in County Clare. Mounted and inscribed to a plinth by Tubber-based Irish Natural Stone, the bust is available for public viewing at the visitor attraction which relates Cusack's remarkable story through an audio-visual exhibit set in the original Irish Famine era thatched cottage where he was born in September 1847.

The unveiling of the Michael Cusack bust forms part of 'Cusack 175', a yearlong celebration of the Clare man's love for education, Irish culture and sport that led to the foundation of the world's largest amateur sporting organisation.

Speaking at the unveiling ceremony, Dr. Mary McAleese said, "Who would have given tuppence for a child, any child born in Ireland in Black 47, the worst year of the Irish famine. Mass deaths and



mass immigration left clouds of bleak depression and grief hanging over our country for generations. Yet in that very year a child was born here in Carron who would help our people at home and abroad navigate a remarkable pathway to hope and light. We call that pathway the GAA and that child was Michael Cusack."

"Through a unique meld of sport, community, culture and a fierce belief

in unselfish service to the nation Cusack introduced Ireland to its best self and to the sheer sporting exuberance Gaelic games generate wherever in the world they are played. His legacy simply gets better year on year," added Dr. McAleese. Visitors to the Michael Cusack Centre more than doubled in 2022 with 4,100 visiting the attraction.

Guided tours of the Michael Cusack

Centre are available each day from 10.00am. Located in the centre of the award-winning Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark, the visitor attraction features the original Cusack Famine era cottage, the 6km Cusack Way Walk, a recently developed Fairy Trail and the Púca artwork. The attraction also hosts team building weekends, wedding ceremonies and school tours. Visit www.michaelcusack.ie

By **Cian O'Connell**

KILLANNIN ALL-STARS SUCCESS STORY

“IT HAS BEEN ELECTRIC,” RORY MURPHY SAYS ABOUT THE RESPONSE SINCE THE KILLANNIN GAA ALL-STARS COMMENCED.

Killannin GAA club and the local community have embraced the initiative ensuring training every Tuesday evening is time very well spent. Last week a GAA4All Cúl Camp was held, simply adding to the feel good factor.

That so many are ready, willing, and able to contribute is heartening for Murphy, who has helped to spearhead the project. “We couldn’t have had more support from the club,” he says. “Everything we have ever needed, they have been there for us.

“Some of the parents had children, who were involved in a mixed ability rugby group in Galway with Corinthians Raptors. We said why can’t we try to replicate something similar out here. That is when we did a bit of digging into the GAA4All and the All-Stars programme.”

So the planning and plotting started. “It was essentially a few parents coming together to get a socially inclusive group going with GAA4All,” he adds. “Not just for our parish, but for connecting parishes too.

“That was the germ of the idea, a couple of parents coming together. We knew we would need to navigate it by doing it the right way.

“We got Pat Queally involved, we also had great support from the Connacht Council Inclusion Officer, Denis O’Boyle. That is

essentially how we kicked it off, by just trying to do something for kids with mixed ability with a GAA focus.”

It has been a hectic spell too with a couple of Croke Park trips bringing plenty of nice memories too. “Ger McTavish in GAA headquarters, the diversity and inclusion officer, she has been a real help for us,” Murphy explains.

“We had a super day out at the All-Star day in August last year. We are the only Galway football all-inclusion team, so we are getting great coverage. I know there are some hurling teams too, but we had a great day in Croke Park. We great support from sponsors and Galway GAA players.

“Anything we have ever needed the club has been there for us and Connacht GAA, in fairness to them.

“We also were at one of the football quarter-finals this year, we got to play at half-time in the Derry versus Cork game. So that was outstanding.”

Every Tuesday young players gather in Killannin to train with fun on the agenda. “We have about 15 children with nine adults and five volunteers,” Murphy says.

“So we nearly have one to one, we train every Tuesday at six o’clock. We go for an hour. Hail, rain or sunshine we are always training outdoors on the community pitch. We’ve had great support from Killannin GAA, they have given us the full GAA pitch to use.

“I’d say we get about eight to 10 kids each



Killannin GAA hosted a GAA4All camp

week, they are free to come and go as they wish. The support of the parents is great, they stay to help. It is really just about having fun, just to get them exercising and having fun.”

A successful Cúl Camp was also held this month. “The Cúl Camps are great, they’ve always had access for people with special needs,” Murphy says.

“The only thing they don’t do is tailor the games to them so that was the idea of having the camp for our team or anybody around that wanted to have a look. We were having a Cúl Camp for the kids, tailored to their needs, playing games, sports, and activities that they could do.

“When the kids go back to school they see all of the other children with their Cúl Camps gear, maybe they haven’t been able to get it because they weren’t comfortable going to the main Cúl Camp.

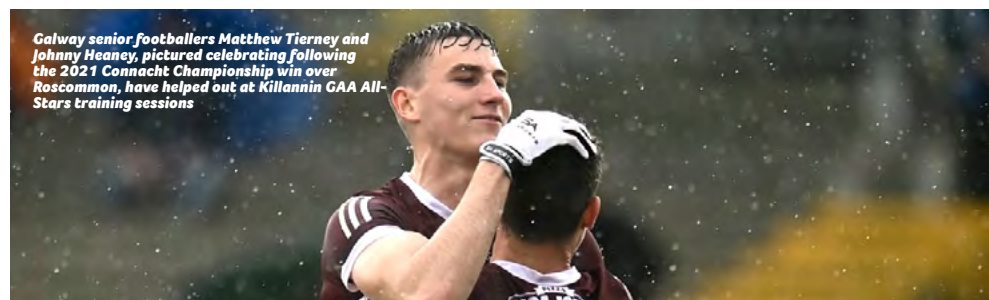
“So that was the idea we’d be purely

focused on simple games, non competitive, and that they’d all get the Cúl Camps gear. That is what they were most excited about really.”

Galway senior footballers Johnny Heaney (Killannin) and Matthew Tierney (Oughterard) have attended some of the training sessions too with Murphy encouraged about how it is all unfolding. “We are really only a few years into it,” he says. “We started it in May of last year. We wanted to take small steps before we went into our stride.

“We are going to push it out for neighbouring parishes. We hope to be the team for around the parishes, we get great support. Local lads like Johnny Heaney and Matthew Tierney, they come down to get involved in the sessions. We couldn’t be more grateful to the community.”

A rewarding sporting story continues in Killannin.



Galway senior footballers Matthew Tierney and Johnny Heaney, pictured celebrating following the 2021 Connacht Championship win over Roscommon, have helped out at Killannin GAA All-Stars training sessions

By **Cian O'Connell**

UNESCO CERTIFICATE PRESENTED AT CROKE PARK MUSEUM



In 2018 UNESCO inscribed hurling and camogie onto its distinguished list of Intangible Cultural Heritage status. Pictured at the presentation of an official certificate of recognition to mark this landmark event are Pat Daly, GAA Director of Organisational Culture, Planning, and Development, Uachtarán Camogie, Hilda Breslin, Uachtarán CLG Larry McCarthy, and Niamh McCoy, Director of the GAA Museum at Croke Park where the certificate will be housed.

IN 2018 HURLING AND CAMOGIE SECURED UNESCO INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE STATUS.

Pat Daly, GAA Director of Organisational Culture, Planning, and Development occupied a central role in the process.

Back in October 2018 a delegation from the GAA, including former Cork hurler John Fenton, travelled to Paris for the presentation. A certificate to mark hurling and camogie's Intangible Cultural Heritage status will now be housed at the GAA Museum at Croke Park.

"Hurling is one of the defining features of Ireland," Daly says.

"It is unique, it goes back into antiquity, and it is embedded in communities. The recognition from UNESCO is verification of that fact.

"Intangible Cultural Heritage can be somewhat abstract for people to get their heads around, but it is recognition of the fact that hurling is a living reality, it has been for a long time. It is a defining feature of Ireland."

By **Cian O'Connell**

SUCCESSFUL FRS RECRUITMENT GAA WORLD GAMES STAGED LAST MONTH



The Cairde Khmer Cambodia and Cuenca del Plata teams during day two of the FRS Recruitment GAA World Games

LAST MONTH'S FRS RECRUITMENT GAA WORLD GAMES IN DERRY PROVED TO BE A HUGE SUCCESSFUL EVENT.

A hectic schedule of matches took place, while important connections were forged between international units and local clubs in Derry.

Celtic Park and Derry GAA's Centre of Excellence in Owenbeg provided an ideal backdrop for the action.

Micky Quigg, Emigrant Support Programme Grant Administrator for the GAA, and part of the organising committee as Communications Officer, was delighted how the tournament unfolded. "With this competition we want to get better and better every time it comes about," Quigg remarks.

"So from the general feedback people are saying it was bigger and better than 2019 which is what we wanted to achieve from the start.

"What was nice to see, though, was the effort and contribution put in by the Derry County Board and the Derry clubs, specifically. People in clubs were washing jerseys, offering up their pitches to train and supporting them long before they arrived in Derry".

"You had clubs there supporting the international teams on the Friday at Celtic Park. That part was just heartwarming to see. We are seeing lasting friendships which is an added bonus."

Clubs in Derry fully embraced the venture according to Quigg. "They just really saw the benefit and I suppose they saw it as a cultural exchange," he adds.

"Overall they went above and beyond. So we were delighted that with."

The high volume of native teams involved in the competitions brought another layer of satisfaction. "Long before it started

people were asking about it being just all ex pats, but 70 per cent of the 93 teams were actually international," Quigg reveals.

"You had teams from Europe, South America, the Middle East, Asia, Canada, America and Australia. Not to pick a team, in particular, but the Cambodians brought such vibrancy to the whole competition too".

"For many this was their All-Ireland. When all of the teams went up to get their commemorative medals on the Thursday, it was just class. They all had picked a song, they were dancing and singing getting their medals - celebrating their passion for Gaelic Games".

Quigg, who spent a significant spell working for New York, is fully aware of the relevance of GAA clubs throughout the world. "From an international perspective you have to understand that it is harder to recruit, it is harder to get pitches," he says about some of the difficulties encountered.

"Gaelic Games aren't as widely known or as available on media outlets too. You work that little bit harder, especially when you are competing against other sports.

"So when you get an opportunity like this, to play back home in Ireland or on Irish soil, for a lot of these teams it might have been their first time in Ireland too.

"The GAA World Games is a lot of different things to a lot of different people. It is a celebration. It is a coming together of all

of the units. Some use it as a pathway, up through the ranks, for others it is their All Ireland - but for everyone it is an experience - a celebration of World GAA.

"We have more than 500 GAA clubs across the globe, the increase in numbers just reflects that. It is why in 2026 we will be looking for more teams, to go bigger and better, to bring it up another level once again."

The hard work doesn't stop.

FRS RECRUITMENT GAA WORLD GAMES FINAL RESULTS

Men's Football Open Cup Final Oakleaf Cup –
Australasia 3-7 Middle East 1-5
Hurling international Cup Final Seamus Howlin Cup –
New York 3-14 St Joe's San Francisco 1-8
Camogie Open Cup Final Mary Gavin Cup –
Australasia 4-9 Middle East 1-4
LGFA Open Cup Final Rachel Kenneally Cup –
Australasia 3-10 Parnells, London 0-5
Camogie International Cup Final ETTY Kelly Cup –
South-East 1-5 Coastal Virginia 1-4
Men's Football International Division 2 Cup Final
Sperrin Cup –
Gasconha 1-7 defeated Siróc 1-0
LGFA International Cup Final Rebecca Dowling Cup –
**Charlotte James Connolly's defeated Canada 1-8
to 2-4 in Golden Score** – after drawing at full-time and
extra-time.
Hurling Open Cup Final Owenbeg Cup –
Middle East 1-23 defeated Australasia 3-14
Men's Division 1 International Cup Final
Liam Hegarty Cup –
Seán McDermotts, Warwickshire 1-7 France Blue 1-4

NEW NATIONAL HANDBALL AND CROKE PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE OFFICIALLY OPENED

THE GAA AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES IN THE COMPANY OF MINISTER OF STATE, THOMAS BYRNE OFFICIALLY OPENED THE NEW NATIONAL HANDBALL AND CROKE PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE.

The new state-of-the-art home for GAA Handball which will also host a wide range of different community activities, was first granted planning permission in 2017 and was built by the GAA at a cost of €11.3m with Government support.

Located behind Croke Park's Cusack Stand on Sackville Avenue, its facilities include a large community hall, café/bar, changing rooms and office space on the ground floor, which will be occupied by GAA Handball.

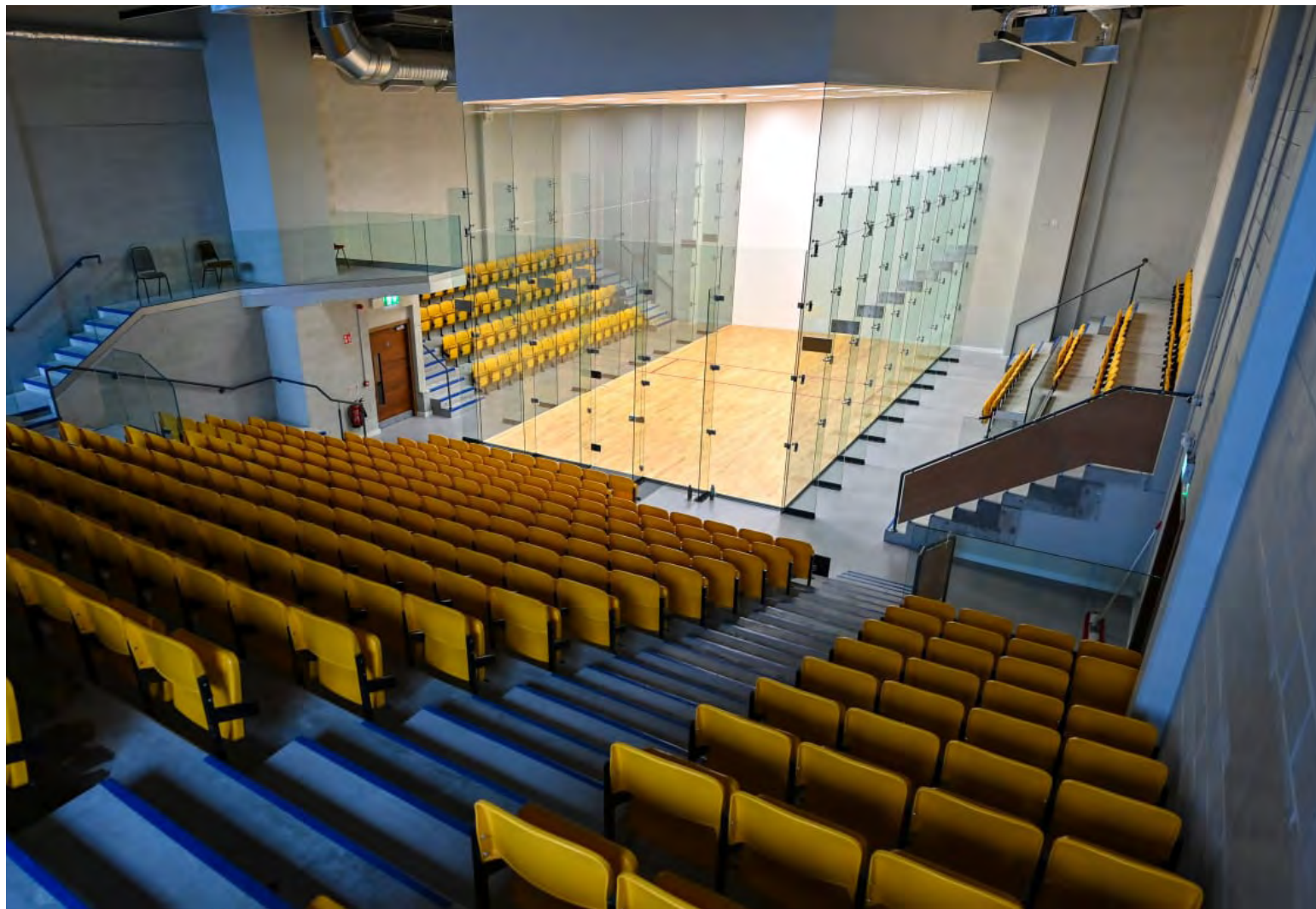
It is also home to three 40x20 handball courts and one 60x30 court and includes seating for 200 on the first floor along with two additional one wall courts in the large upstairs hall.

The show court is one of the 40x20 courts with amphitheatre seating for 500.

The building was commissioned early in 2020 to facilitate the HSE as a Covid testing centre and its total area is circa 3,100 sqm.

It is currently hosting special needs groups, prayer groups, children's dancing groups, as well as All-Ireland handball finals and countless recreational handball players from the locality and further afield.

Thomas Byrne TD, Minister of State at the



Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (Sport and Physical Education) commented: "It is a privilege to be asked to officially open the new National Handball and Community Centre at Croke Park.

"As we mark this significant moment, I want to acknowledge the proud and longstanding tradition of handball within the Irish sporting community.

"Community and sport go hand-in-hand and I am delighted to note the links shared between the National Handball and Community Centre and the local community. The redevelopment of the Handball and Community Centre, partly supported by Government funding under the Sports Capital Programme, is to be greatly welcomed and I want to commend everyone involved in this project."

GAA President Larry McCarthy said: "We are delighted to officially open what is a superb facility, both for GAA Handball but crucially for the local Croke Park community as well.

"The new centre is a fantastic structure and one I hope will invigorate the GAA

Handball scene and play host to many national and indeed international tournaments.

"Our investment in it underlines our commitment to both Handball and the local community and I look forward to many years of beneficial use for all parties concerned.

Pat Leahy, Chairperson of the National Handball and Croke Park Community Centre added: "The opening of this superb centre represents the next step in a very positive journey for the Community and Handball in Ireland.

"It will facilitate community-oriented activities and events, alongside world class competitive handball in our country's new handball centre of excellence. Situated within the community but also on the doorstep of another great centre of excellence in Croke Park, I have no doubt that it will develop over time to meet the needs of all its users and I am very happy to have been part of this journey".

Malachy Steenson, one of two community representatives on the board of directors said: "On behalf of the Community

In attendance during the official opening ceremony of the National Handball & Croke Park Community Centre at Sackville Avenue in Dublin are, from left, Community Director Malachy Steenson, Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael Larry McCarthy, Minister of State for Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Thomas Byrne TD, Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, Chairperson of the National Handball and Croke Park Community Centre Pat Leahy and GAA Handball President Conor McDonnell.



Sophie Floyd, aged 11, from Blanchardstown, Dublin, in attendance during the official opening ceremony of the National Handball & Croke Park Community Centre at Sackville Avenue in Dublin

Directors I welcome the long-awaited official opening of the new Handball and Social Club.

"I want to thank all of those who have played a part in getting us to this point.

"This building was due to open a number of years ago but was delayed due to COVID. I would now encourage all the members of the old Club, to renew their membership and to come into the club and use the facilities.

"This Community now has a building of world class standard at its disposal, and as we strive to make the bricks and mortar here a lively entertaining venue for all the people in the area to use, I would encourage all local people to renew their memberships and encourage non-members to apply.

"We have the prospect of turning this long-awaited building into the hub of the Community and using it to its maximum.

"The Community Directors would welcome suggestions and proposals from members and locals as we drive this magnificent project forward."

GAA Handball President Conor McDonnell added: "GAA Handball is delighted that the National Handball and Croke Park Community Centre has arrived at its official opening. The state-of-the-art building gives GAA Handball a world class base from which to host national and international finals and events.

"The Centre is a facility of which all within the GAA Handball family can be proud of, and one which provides the sport with a platform to grow and develop the game for future generations. GAA Handball would like to thank the GAA and local community for all their hard work and look forward to a bright future in our new home."

Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern who was instrumental in devising plans between the GAA and the Community for the new facility added: "The National Handball & Croke Park Community Centre official opening represents the culmination of many years of discussion and planning to build this superb centre.

"It is a tribute to the Gaelic Athletic Association and the local community, and I wish it success for the decades ahead."

GAA AND GPA COLLABORATE FOR A CAMPAIGN TO TACKLE ONLINE ABUSE OF PLAYERS AND OFFICIALS

THE GAELIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION AND THE GAELIC PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION HAVE TODAY LAUNCHED A MAJOR NEW CAMPAIGN THAT SEEKS TO TARGET AND TACKLE THE ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE OF PLAYERS, REFEREES, MANAGERS AND OFFICIALS.

The 'In their Boots' campaign is a series of specially commissioned videos which over the coming weeks will heighten awareness around the damage caused by vitriolic targeting and abuse of players, referees, managers and officials online in an effort to create a better online sideline.

Uachtarán CLG Larry McCarthy said: "As members of the GAA it is up to us to insist on the type of culture that we want to exist, and the Association is adamant that it is one where respect is paramount.

"This campaign, produced in collaboration with the GPA, is a critically important initiative that targets the culture of online abuse and the use of social media to attack players, coaches, referees and officials.

"The campaign asks people who are trigger-happy to spew bile online to stop and think and put themselves in the boots of those they are looking to castigate. Our supporters are passionate and our games feed on that passion, but that passion must exist in a way that does not accept a culture where that is an excuse to target and abuse people on or offline."

Tom Parsons, CEO of the GPA said: "Inter-county players know that criticism comes with the territory of playing the game at

the highest level. Criticism is part and parcel of the debates and conversations that are had the length and breadth of the country. However, it is when criticism veers into abuse that we must draw a line.

"Social media and the online world can be a positive way of communicating and staying in touch but unfortunately, there are those who want to hijack it and use it to say things they would be very unlikely to say face to face. This campaign asks supporters of our games to turn your back on those who share abuse and instead to be real supporters. Real supporters get behind their teams in good times and bad.

"Let's show other parts of our society how, in Gaelic games, we can critique, debate and even argue without getting drawn into personal attacks and abuse."

Niamh Boyle, GAA Digital Manager, added: "We live in a digital world where so many people interact online, and it is a place of possibility. But it can be undermined and become detrimental when it is a place that is hijacked by those looking to target individuals after matches. It doesn't stay on the pitch, it goes beyond the final whistle, coming home to families and friends. This is an issue that goes against what we hold dear in the GAA and sport. For referees, coaches, volunteers, and amateur players the vitriol that can be directed at them after matches is simply unacceptable and this campaign is about tackling that culture.

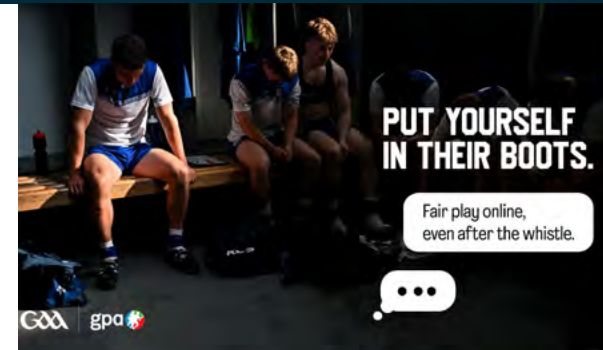
"The true value of our games is in the people involved and the culture around it, and this behaviour would not be accepted

in the GAA community offline so it should not be tolerated online."

Tommy Doyle, GPA Digital Media Manager added: "As part of my masters in digital marketing I looked at the whole area of online abuse of inter-county players. Through this work and as a current player I know the negative impact it can have. It was from here that this project emerged. I am delighted to see it come to fruition and want to say thank you to Niamh Boyle and the team at the GAA for their partnership.

"I would encourage all of us in the Gaelic games' community and more generally in Irish society to consider the language we use online and the material we share."

In his address to Seanad Éireann last April, Uachtarán McCarthy sought the



**PUT YOURSELF
IN THEIR BOOTS.**

Fair play online,
even after the whistle.

GAA | GPA

assistance of politicians and requested that they consider legislation that will make it harder for a culture of online abuse and the ability of individuals to anonymously wage personal attacks online to be permitted.

The GPA has proactively provided social media guidelines to players in recent years, encouraging positive online behaviour. As role models, players know what they say and do has an impact far beyond just themselves.

The GAA/GPA 'In their Boots' campaign can be found on the Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts of both bodies.

The content for the campaign was produced by the Fifty-Three Six Sports Marketing Agency.

BY COLLETTE COADY

GAA DADS & LADS MOVE INTO THE FAST LANE

GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS OUR SOCIAL FOOTBALL AND HURLING INITIATIVE GAA DADS & LADS HAS BEEN STEADILY MOTORING ALONG AND IN 2023 HAS MOVED INTO THE FAST LANE. GROWING FROM 20 TEAMS IN 2019 TO 163 TEAMS ACROSS ALL PROVINCES.

The Dads & Lads scene has been a hive of activity throughout 2023. Teams have created connections, formed friendships, taken road trips, have had banter and craic, with some hurling and football thrown in, through organising challenge games and local blitzes. The Association has delivered two regional blitzes with a National Blitz planned for this September.

The Dads & Lads Blitzes are played with a focus on fun, enjoyment and participation and provide an opportunity for Dads & Lads to broaden their connections and play games against teams they ordinarily wouldn't get to play against. At the recent Midlands Blitz hosted in Athlone, 80 Dads & Lads from Athlone GAA, Bohola Moy Davitts (Mayo), Erin's Isle and Thomas Davis (Dublin) got a great run out, playing a total of 12 games throughout the day.

Dads & Lads offers the opportunity for males aged 40ish and older to keep physically active, keep in touch with old friends, make new friends and have an outlet to let off steam. A few of the Dads & lads participating in the Midlands Blitz gave some insight on why they're involved:

Morgan, Athlone GAA, reconnected with GAA when living in Madrid.



"I played a little football when in National school but didn't really have a great connection with the game or the GAA growing up. When I lived in Madrid I joined the Madrid Harps GAA club and have looked back since. When I returned home I joined Athlone Dads & Lads and it's been brilliant. It's great to have Dads & Lads and be part of the team and the club, and just to play football for enjoyment."

Baz, Erin's Isle GAA, Dublin, joined his local club.

"I'm from the Netherlands, and my daughter started playing with Erin's Isle our local club. I'd never heard of GAA and wasn't at all familiar with the games. I volunteer in the club and help with my daughter's team. I heard about the Dads & Lads team and just wanted to give it a go. It's great craic."

Alan, Bohola Moy Davitts, Mayo, got involved when the Dads & Lads team was formed in the club.

"It's great just to get out with the lads. Everyone has so much going on in life, you can get caught up in a rut. Playing Dads & Lads is a great outlet, just to clear the mind, get up and out and just play. We travelled from Mayo to Athlone for the Blitz, we have had fantastic craic in the car, which is all part of it too."



Stuart, Thomas Davis, Dublin is new to Football.

“I’d never played football before, my partner plays Gaelic for Mothers & Others with the club, and I heard about the Dads & Lads team. I went down one evening it was on and have been going back since. It’s great to be involved, you have great fun with the lads and we look out for each other as well.”

Thomas Davis, Dublin has been involved in a few of the Dads & Lads blitzes and were the recipients of the Na Lochra Award at the Midlands Blitz. The Na Lochra Award, is presented to the team that best espouse the playing ethos of fun, enjoyment and participation, which Thomas David Dads & Lads exemplified all throughout the day. David Maguire, Thomas Davis Dads & Lads

Coordinator and player was delighted they got the award and explained

“Dads & Lads in the club has been a real boost, it keeps us engaged with the club and many of us are involved because our children play, they see us still playing, we know we’re being positive role models for them and they see that being involved in the club doesn’t have to end because or when you’ve stopped playing competitively”.

Croke Park matches

GAA Dads & Lads offers something for everyone, it’s for those who never played and want to give it a go, those who’ve retired and want stay involved playing for the social interaction and in some cases for those who want to realise childhood

dreams. Four Dads & Lads teams, Halfpacehurlers, Antrim; Naomh Olaf Social Hurlers, Dublin; Bohola Moy Davitts, Mayo; and The Killeedy Boys, Limerick were invited to play in Croke Park at half-time last Sunday.

Naomh Olaf Social Hurler, Seán Wilson said: “I hadn’t lifted a hurley in over 35 years and joined the Dads & Lads about two years ago. I saw that some of the mentors in the group really enjoyed it. My sons have been coached by a few of the mentors that play Dads & Lads and I thought a nice way to show my appreciation of their work, effort and to thank them would be to organise a Social Hurling Blitz. We’ve hosted two now, one in 2022 and one in 2023, they created a great buzz around the club and with the Dads & Lads. Social Hurling has been

great, it’s become a rock within my life.

“It’s the one activity that I do during the week that is mine, time away from the stresses of everyday. It’s my time for friendship, for craic, banter, and enjoyment. It’s something I choose to do, somewhere I choose to be and people I choose to be with. It’s something I treasure and miss if I’m not there.

“When I became involved, little did I think that we’d have the opportunity and the honour to be representing our club and Social Hurling by playing on Croke Park’s hallowed pitch. It’s a dream come true for all of us.”

If you want to know more about GAA Dads & Lads visit gaa.ie/dadsandlads

MÍLE BUÍOCHAS

Thank you to all of those who have contributed to this month's edition of the GAA Club Newsletter. Your feedback is welcome and any comments, suggestions or queries should be directed to clubnewsletter@gaa.ie.

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