



# *The Wexford Way*

**GAA RETURN TO PLAY  
SUMMER 2021**



**ZURICH**

# GAA Return to Play

## Health & Safety Measures

Prior to our return to training and games beginning with our underage on April 26th, every club in Wexford must ensure they have all of the following Health & Safety measures in place:

- Hand sanitation stations around the GAA pitch and facilities.
- Return to Play Health Questionnaires are filled out prior to training or games.
- All Covid Supervisors/Club Officers/Players/Team Personnel and the Parents/Guardians of Underage Players must also complete the GAA's Covid-19 Club Education eLearning Module.
- All signage, posters, guidance documents, etc... must be displayed in clear view of all.
- No facilities (i.e. dressing rooms) are to be open. Toilet facilities may be open if none available outside the building.
- No congregation of people in club carparks at any stage.
- Maintain a 2 metre social distance between people at all times if not from the same family or bubble.

Please follow the weblink below for all documentation and Health & Safety measures for the return to play:

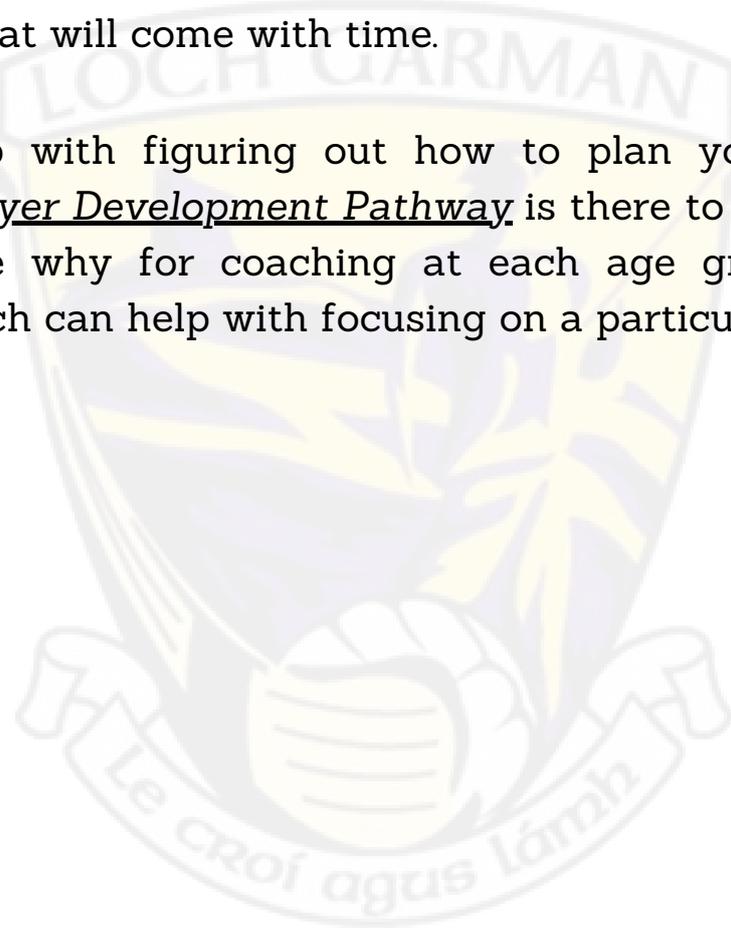
<https://learning.gaa.ie/covid19>

# GAA Return to Play

## Getting Our Children Back Playing:

Prior to our return to training and games beginning with our underage on April 26th, coaches, parents and mentors are encouraged to focus on skill development and ensuring sessions are fun and enjoyable for all children involved. Do not worry about the physical/fitness aspect for the first few weeks that will come with time.

If you need help with figuring out how to plan your sessions, the [Wexford Way Player Development Pathway](#) is there to help you achieve the how and the why for coaching at each age group. Games are included also which can help with focusing on a particular skill.



# GAA Return to Play

## Nursery & U7:

-At the Nursery level, we should focus on developing the fundamental movement skills of the children (i.e. catching, running, throwing), build confidence in themselves and develop the movement patterns for GAA.

-Ensure each station is set up with enough coaches to give attention to the children that are there. Rotate through the stations, engage children in games to keep them interested. With U7's, it allows the coach the opportunity to 'Spot' and 'Fix' any incorrect techniques.

-How we coach the Nursery & U7's is by keeping it Fun and matching their energy with yours. Have loads of fun games to keep them active. They respond best to target games and races (hitting, throwing & running). Have lots of equipment for the session (e.g. ball each). Do not over complicate it, one step at a time and keep the instructions to a minimum. Kids at this age love being asked questions and it allows you to check for understanding. If playing a match, keep the teams small (e.g. 3v3) so that all players are involved all of the time and getting lots of touches of the ball.

## Sample Games for Nursery & U7:

### Hook A Duck

#### How to Play

- Players line up in teams with no more than 2/3 per team.
- Coach scatters the cones 10m away.
- Player must run & hook up a cone with the butt of hurl.
- For best results, use the mini-hurls.

#### Progression

- Players must hop on one leg when moving to cones.

#### What it Develops

- Fundamentals of the pick up.

### Clean The Yard

#### How to Play

- 2 Teams either side of the cones.
- Loads of balls on either side.
- Players strike ball to opposite side.
- Cleanest side wins.

#### Progression

- Make only 1 pass.
- Only use opposite side.

#### What it Develops

- Striking or kicking
- Awareness.

# GAA Return to Play

## U9 & U11:

-At the U9 & U11 level, we should focus on developing a more well-rounded player by playing them in a variety of positions on the field. Continue to work on their fundamental movement skills as they are still young children & need to continually work on their movement skills for confidence & overall health.

-At U11, use a games-based coaching approach to ensure players are able to work on their specific skills and the principles of play. Incorporate decision-making, reactions & game scenarios into training to help them learn the principles of defence, attack and team play.

-How we coach the U9's & U11's is by keeping it Fun and be energetic and organised and the kids will respond to you favourably. Leave some time in the session for free play. Allows players to experiment with the skills of the game. Small-sided games ensure everyone is involved and get lots of touches of the ball. Coaches need to focus on positive feedback. Know the component parts of each skill and know-how to coach the skill. They will also begin to understand the need to change the direction of a run or a pass to be more effective. Use drills and games to encourage attacking the ball and movement on and off the ball. Challenge players with overloaded situations, e.g., 5 v 3, 3 v 2 etc. and see how they react.

## Sample Games for U9 & U11:

### 3 and In

#### How to Play

- Players set up small goal with two cones.
- Goalie plays the ball out with other players competing to score a goal.
- First player to 3 goals wins.
- Winner becomes goalie for next game.

#### Progression

- Add in an extra player.  
i.e. 3 players all competing against each other.

#### What it Develops

- Attacking and defending.
- Contesting Possession.
- Game awareness.

### Keep it Moving

#### How to Play

- *Conditioned Game*: 5 v 5 - Players can only strike from hand if caught clean in air.
- No lifting all ground hurling if the ball is on the deck.
- Puck outs, line balls & frees taken from hand.
- A score after catch is worth double.

#### Progression

- Introduce a jab lift once everybody is comfortable attacking the ball.

#### What it Develops

- Agility, evasion, accuracy, moving to the ball.

# GAA Return to Play

## U13 & U15:

-At U13 & U15 level, we should be coaching in a fun way, where children can put in greater effort without even realising. Ask what they want to do in training. Ask them how school is going. Allow them to have a giggle and a joke with teammates. Tell them thank you for coming to training. Provide match opportunities to players, you are preventing them the opportunity to develop. Proper use of tournaments, challenge games, and rising stars is of huge benefit at this age.

No Player ever got better sitting on the bench!

-Factor in a more structured warm-up for injury prevention, athletic development & building of good habits. introduce body resistance exercises so players can learn the correct movement patterns of exercises such as the squat, the lunge, and the push up. Use body resistance exercises such as this to enhance coordination, strength and movement technique

-How we coach the U13's & U15's is by using all games, challenge games, Rising Stars and tournaments to ensure all players get adequate game time/opportunities. Have a good intensity to your sessions and allow for mistakes. This can be achieved with well-planned sessions with progressions of games included. Do not waste time between games. Include at least one Fun activity in each session. Build players awareness through training scenarios: how to break down a defence, how to cut out short or long ball or how to stretch an opposition etc. Include a team bonding or a team-building activity in every training session. Give players tips on how to lead a positive lifestyle. Give players skills challenges and tests. Encourage players to master skills under pressure.

## Sample Games for U13 & U15:

### Backs & Forwards

#### How to Play

- Line players out in their positions as shown.
- Coach delivers the ball in with the forwards trying to work a score with the backs defending.

#### Progression

- Give defenders & opportunity to work ball out somewhere to play ball too.
- Allow the goalie to practice short puck outs.
- Forwards must defend.

#### What it Develops

- Game Sense, positional sense, attacking defending.

### Defend the Goals

#### How to Play

- Each team has two goals to defend.
- Aim is to score as many goals as possible.

#### Progression

- Players must work balls through the two goals as shown and then can shoot into big goal.

#### What it Develops

- Expansive play, heads up play, team play, off the ball shadowing.

# GAA Return to Play

## U17:

-At the U17 level, as players get older, they are going to be faced with many different challenges on the pitch. We want them to have the skills to adapt on match day. It is a guided discovery for players. Encourage practice at home. Players also only need to fine-tune their skills. Test player skills and give them tips and feedback on how to improve. Every great player is built in a ball alley or at the gable end of their house.

-We need to ensure that at this age, the player learns that GAA can go hand in hand with other commitments and not be an extra source of stress. Make sure we are not forcing the player to attend training when they have other commitments. Training should be a release as extra responsibility comes to the player

-How we coach the U17's is by having lots of fun and team building can create friendships that will stay within the club forever. Incorporate match day scenarios into your training sessions such as defending a sweeper, how to break down the sweeper, deploying a target man, creating space and closing space, etc. Give players a platform to engage with their role models by inviting senior players to take parts in training sessions or to talk to your players. Drills in training must be done at a high intensity as players need to master skills in a game situation. Ensure players do not feel under pressure with other commitments such as school, other sports, etc. Ask players lots of questions about match scenarios and show players options of what they might do. Plan a schedule for players so they can organize themselves. Introduce time management practices and give players an Athletic Development program (see Wexford Coaching and Games for professional advice). Encourage players to take ownership over their nutrition and hydration. For example, get players to bring water to training and eat healthy meals in advance of training and matches. Ensure training sessions are planned and energetic.

## Sample Games for U17:

### Shot Clock

#### How to Play

- Any amount of players can be on any size pitch.
- One team starts with the ball in hand & are given a time to get their shot in. e.g 20 seconds to get a shot.
- If no shot is taken in 20 seconds, the other team gets possession of the ball.

#### Progression

- Lengthen or shorten the shot clock.
- Change the shot clock to maximum pass count before shot.

#### What it Develops

- Playing with intensity, delaying the opposition, vision, use of the ball, clinical play, shooting, tackling, work-rate.

### Restart Mayhem

#### How to Play

- Split 2 teams into 2 groups & put them in a square on either side of a pitch.
- Goalies both kick/puck out a ball at the same time to opposite sides. The team who wins the ball must try & work a score.
- First square to work a score gets double points.
- Goalies play the ball to opposite sides following each round.
- Players get opportunities to both attack & defend restarts.

#### Progression

- Bigger Square for goalie to try pick out players.
- Tactical runs.

#### What it Develops

- Competition in air, working scores, restarts.