

AN INTRODUCTION TO  
THE GAA RESPECT INITIATIVE

**GIVE**  
**RESPECT**  
**GET**  
**RESPECT**

Our Games, Our Choice







## Réamhrá ó Christóir Ó Cuana, Uachtarán CLG

A chairde,

Is cúis mór áthais dom réamhrá a scríobh don tionscnamh seo agus muid ag déanamh iarracht dearcadh nua bunaithe ar 'Meas' a chruthú in ár gcluichí.

This year we will launch many significant initiatives and pilot projects as part of our ongoing work in the area of games promotion.

Few if any will out-rank this one in terms of significance or importance. We justifiably take great pride in the work we do in clubs across the country and overseas but that should never disguise the challenge that we face in our attempts to create an environment and atmosphere where the involvement of all participants is valued and they are afforded the respect they deserve.

We as an Association have a responsibility to foster an approach to our games that is based on goodwill and mutual respect and this initiative will underpin our approach.

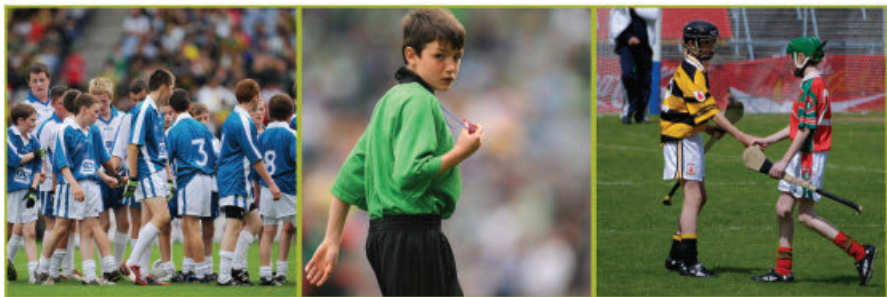
Everyone who takes an interest or plays a role in our games has a part to play from players, coaches, mentors to match officials, parents and spectators.

Our games are great games. However there is no reason why we should not strive for further excellence in this area and I trust that this user guide will be a valuable resource in the roll out and implementation of this initiative.

Ar aghaidh len ár gcluichí,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Criostóir Ó Cuana'.

Criostóir Ó Cuana  
Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael



The **GAA Respect Initiative** has been developed in order to ensure that Gaelic games are promoted in a positive manner and within an environment which is conducive to ensuring that all participants achieve their full potential. This underlying approach will help to underpin the values of the association and to consolidate the three core principles which underpin these i.e. player centered, family orientated and community based.

#### What does the GAA Respect Initiative involve?

- Implementing the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport
- Club information evenings for parents and mentors
- Coach & Referee Education Programmes
- Designated spectators` area
- Implementing GAA Go Games Policy
- Strong Club Leadership
- Respect Awareness Programme for all
- Recognition and Merit Awards

#### How does it work?

- ✓ Players and coaches line up behind their coaches before and after the game to shake hands with the referee, opposing players and coaches
- ✓ Referees communicate decisions to players in an effective manner
- ✓ A merit award- based on sporting endeavour and fair play- is awarded to a players/teams at the end of each season/blitz
- ✓ A line of cones/tape should mark out a designated spectators area (non-segregated) two metres from the playing area
- ✓ Supporters remain in designated areas at the side of the pitch for the full duration of each game.
- ✓ Team coaches (a maximum of five) should wear designated bibs and are the only personnel allowed along the sideline area
- ✓ Each unit must strive to achieve maximum participation for all players
- ✓ Referees to be welcomed to the GAA club.
- ✓ Clubs should endeavour to offer participants the opportunity to socialise after the game through providing snacks and light refreshments where possible





For more on the

GAA OTú Coaching Model

visit [www.gaa.ie/gamesdevelopment](http://www.gaa.ie/gamesdevelopment)



## COACHES

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of each person and treat each one equally regardless of ability, age, cultural or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, or religious belief
- Use a “fun at all costs” approach rather than “win at all costs”
- Develop an understanding of the GAA OTú Coaching Model and use this to design game based training programmes
- Do not question the referee’s integrity or allow him/her to be subjected to unsporting language or behaviour
- Set realistic goals, lead by example and emphasise the basic skills of the game
- Ensure maximum participation for all players
- Ensure that injured players are not encouraged or forced to play



### Questions to ask your child after a game:

Did you have fun?

How did you play?

Did you learn anything new?

Did you try your best?

Did you play as a team?



## PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND SPECTATORS

- Respect officials' decisions and encourage children to do likewise
- Appreciate everybody on the team regardless of ability, age, cultural or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, or religious belief
- Show approval for effort, not just results
- Don't force players to live or act out the ambitions or expectations of others
- Safeguard your child's well-being by ensuring that he/she plays within their own age group
- Commend team mentors and match officials on a regular basis
- Relay genuine concerns and ensure that these are processed properly
- Remain in designated spectator areas for the full duration of the game





**Enjoy the game,**

**make lots of mistakes**

**because that's how you learn**



## PLAYERS

- Respect fellow players regardless of ability, age, cultural or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, or religious belief
- Respect all coaches, mentors and officials
- Play by the rules and take responsibility for one's own behaviour
- Always concentrate on playing the ball
- Accept decisions of match officials and do not use foul language or behave in an unsporting manner
- The captain will always model good behaviour
- Shake hands with all opponents and the referee after each game regardless of the result



## CLUBS

- Select a designated representative for each team to oversee the GAA Respect Initiative
- Adopt the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport and joint Code of Behaviour as a basic level agreement between the club and players, coaches, parents, guardians and supporters
- Welcome referees to the club for each game
- Implement a player-centered and achievement-oriented programme of games
- Promote fair play through the provision of "merit awards" based on sportsmanship
- Set out integrated training and playing schedules
- Seek and accept feedback from young players, Ask "What is your favourite thing about playing Gaelic games?" "What five things would make training and games more fun?"



## REFEREES

- Apply the playing rules on an impartial and consistent basis
- Communicate decisions to players and team officials in an effective manner
- Deal with dissent firmly and fairly
- Work as a team with other match officials
- Maintain composure regardless of the circumstances
- Use assessments to improve performance and achieve excellence



## MANAGING PLAYERS

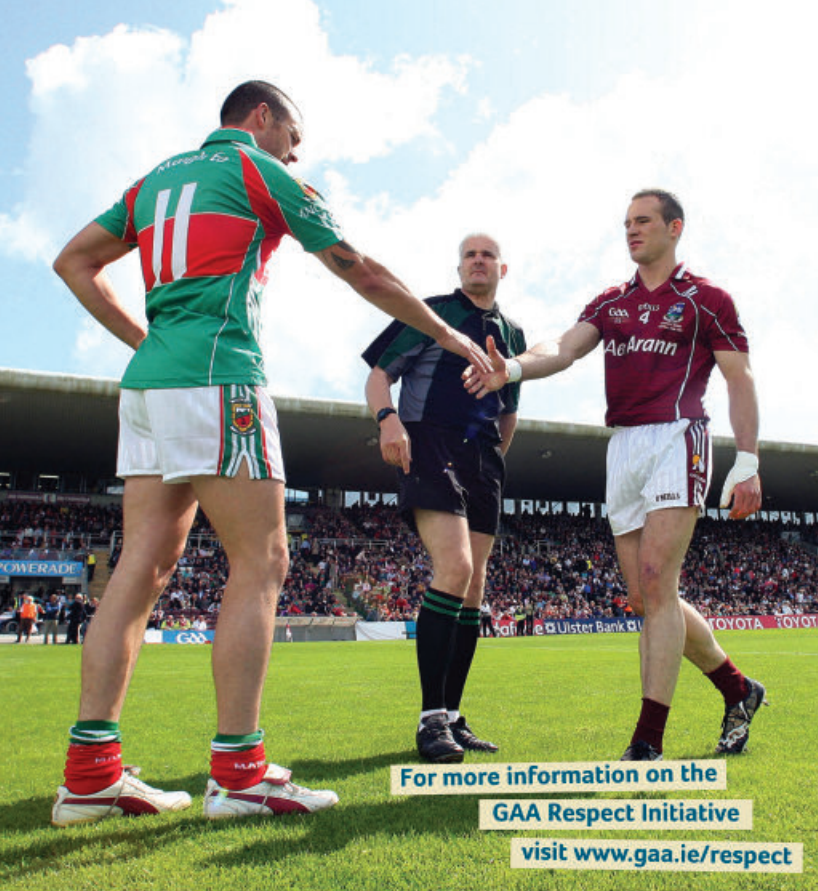
The referee will work with the captain and coaches to manage all games effectively. Referees will control a game by applying the rules and by dealing effectively with any instances of dissent. In the event of a player behaving in an unsporting manner or using foul language it is recommended that:

1. A free is awarded to the opposition and the player is informed that he will be asked to leave the game in the event of repeat behaviour
2. In the event of repeated abusive language or unsporting behaviour, the referee instructs the coach to replace the offending player and the game is re-commenced after this.

## MANAGING THE SIDELINE

In the event of a person –other than a player–behaving in an unsporting manner or using foul language it is recommended that:

1. The matter is brought to the attention of the designated team representative
2. The representative reminds the person concerned of his/her responsibilities
3. Where the behaviour continues, the game may be terminated
4. A full report is provided-by the referee to the committee with responsibility for the fixture.



For more information on the  
GAA Respect Initiative  
visit [www.gaa.ie/respect](http://www.gaa.ie/respect)



## A CHECKLIST FOR BEHAVIOUR

- **Responsible**
- **Encouraging**
- **Supportive**
- **Positive**
- **Enabling**
- **Considerate**
- **Tolerant**





GAA, Páirc an Chrócaigh,  
Baile Átha Cliath 3

Guthán: +353 (0) 1 836 3222  
Faics: +353 (0) 1 865 8650  
gamesdevelopment@gaa.ie  
www.gaa.ie

GAA, Croke Park,  
Dublin 3

Tel: +353 (0) 1 836 3222  
Fax: +353 (0) 1 865 8650  
gamesdevelopment@gaa.ie  
www.gaa.ie

Produced by  
**GAA Games Development**  
January 2010

