



Ditch the Drills

A quick google search for the definition of the term “drill” comes up with the following;

1. *‘Instruction or training in military exercises’*
2. *‘Intensive instruction or training in something, typically by means of repeated exercises’*
3. *‘A rehearsal of the procedure to be followed in an emergency’*

Now for years the language around training has been about drills, drills, drills. I do not see why a GAA field in the country needs to be doing anything with the above definitions. Camogie is an expressive, free and exciting game. We do not want to completely curb the creativity of our sport, we want to be able to allow our players to fully express themselves and showcase their craft and skill.

Drills do not help to build creativity and they actually curtail decision making capabilities as the decision making process is removed from them as the coach (I use that term loosely in this instance) is making all of the decisions for them with the regimented exercise. We need a situation where exercises are laid out and at various stages in an exercise that the player is faced with a choice to make and she chooses one or the other, it might even be that she is faced with a myriad of choices and decides to go with one that leads her down a specific path.

Drills look nice and they can appear slick, as the skills are being performed in a format which is uncontested and is purely about skill execution. Many coaches pride themselves



on elaborate drills which are like choreographed ballet sets but this isn't camogie, camogie is about making mistakes and recovering from them. As a coach if you are comfortable in your own skin and you believe in what you are doing, don't be fooled by flashy drills, be comfortable with mistakes galore occurring in your training session and phases of play breaking down, with the players ending up learning something different to what you originally intended.

You are probably tired of hearing about the requirement for games based training and that drills are outdated. I would provide the following as a possible manner in which to approach a training session which will cater for the skills of the game and any amount of games based activities.

- **Warm Up** – Ball based, ball to a player, focus on exploration of the skills and trying new things, multiple touches and warming the body for the game of camogie (10 mins)
- **Game** – Limited rules just playing the game, small sided with possibly two games going ahead, which means four teams, so opportunity for three different games playing each of the other teams. (10 mins)
- **Skill Performance Exercise** – based on the way the game goes give players the chance to try out a skill they did not perform well in the game. (10 mins)
- **Game** – with a condition which tries to get the skill that was originally lacking to be performed better. (10 mins)
- **Skill Performance Exercise** – what was lacking the second time around in the game is focused on here. (10 mins)
- **Game** – The game is played again and hopefully the two areas which were focused on in the skill performance exercises have seen improvement. (10 mins)

That is a simple way of running a session but it does require you to be able to think on your feet and set up a skill performance exercise in limited time based on what is not going well in the game situations.

You may well feel uncomfortable with this manner of a training session as it puts yourself out there for ridicule if you make up an exercise on the spot and it doesn't work as intended. DON'T WORRY!!!! In a society where we are often tricked by the flashy new edition or the automated activities, we are starting to put ourselves out there less in terms of creativity and taking a chance. The training field should be place where you feel comfortable to try things and provide a way for girls to try things in an environment that welcomes mistakes and cherishes them. We can't do this with drills which are, *‘Intensive instruction or training in something, typically by means of repeated exercises’*