



COACH LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



**THE
CAMOGIE
ASSOCIATION**
An Cumann Camógiaíochta

CONTENTS

The Coaching Bubble Podcast 3

Camogie Coaching Corner

Inspire to play, empower to stay	6
The Grip and Swing	8
The power of habits	10
The future is now	12
The balancing act of coaching	14
Scoring is the name of the game	16

Coaching

Coach Education & Continuous Learning	18
Ditch the Drills	20
"Let them Play"	22

Performance Analysis

Performance Analysis Hand Notation	24
Performance Indicators	27
What is Performance Analysis?	29

Sports Psychology

Performance Sport Psychology Mindset	32
Coaching the Mental Game - Motivation	35
The Mental Game	37

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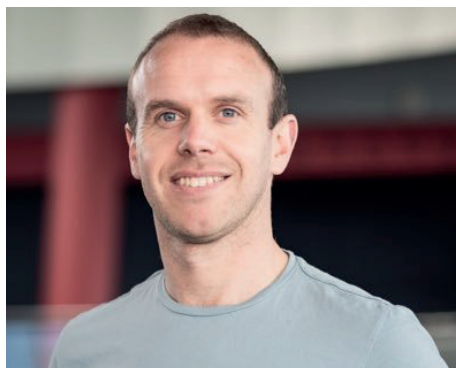


THE COACHING BUBBLE PODCAST

The idea for the podcast started as a conversation. The dialogue revolved around how to get high quality, relevant information to coaches. How could we get those nuggets of wisdom from the top coaches, and the top coach educators, to the coaches on the ground? Is there a way to simplify these messages so that even the least experienced coaches could take away some learnings? Through these discussions, the Coaching Bubble podcast was born.

What makes the Coaching Bubble different to other podcasts is that we try to make everything relatable to grass roots coaches. The host of the show, Stephen Behan, has plenty of experience as a coach himself. Stephen was a Games Promotion Officer for Dublin GAA for nearly a decade, has a MSc in Coaching and Exercise Science, and has recently completed his PhD in Dublin City University. His area of research revolves around physical literacy, which is defined as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.

The guests have varied across the two seasons, with representatives from GAA, camogie, LGFA, hockey, soccer, martial arts, rugby, athletics, and more. We also had experts in the areas of performance analysis, strength and conditioning, coaching science, and authors. We are hoping that this broad range of sports and expertise will expose our listeners to a wide array of knowledge and experiences that they may be able to relate in some way to their own coaching. Despite the wide range of guests, it is remarkable how many of these stories are so similar. It seems, as with many things in life, that mastering



Stephen Behan – Host of The Coaching Bubble Podcast

the basics is a foundation that many of the top coaches build upon. Another topic that is raised during almost every episode, is the power of self-reflection. As we write this, we think on our own experiences producing the podcast and reflect on ways we can improve for season 3.

The main aim of the show is to help people along their coaching journey, be they just starting out with kids, or working with older age groups, or even those that are trying to take the next step into a high performing environment. We hope we have achieved that up to now, and we look forward to bringing you more high-quality guests in the future. What started as a conversation, has resulted in the Coaching Bubble podcast, which has now two complete seasons available, free of charge, to anyone who wants to learn. We look forward to bringing you a third season in 2020.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our host Stephen Behan and all of our guests who give up their time freely to be on the show.

PODCAST GUEST SPEAKERS



PAUDIE BUTLER Coach Educator and Former National GAA Hurling Director chats about the steps of development for the person and the skills and talks passionately about releasing the potential in every person.



MARY O'CONNOR current CEO of the Federation of Irish Sport and former Cork ladies Dual star and holder of 12 All Ireland Medals. Mary chats about her experiences of been part of one of the most successful sports teams of all time and the influence her coaches have had on her life.



SEAN BOYLAN Meath GAA Legend and The 4 time All Ireland winning manager gives some wonderful insights and story's throughout his journey during his 23 years at the helm of Meath Football. A must listen for all coaches of all sports.



DR DAVE PASSMORE Coach Educator & Lecturer in Coaching Science & Education in Dublin City University chats about his own Coaching Philosophy and The Story of Irish Hockey before World Cup Finals.



MATTHEW WILKIE Head of Coach Development at Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) chats about the process for developing coaches and the importance of the Coach/Athlete relationship



NORA STAPLETON Women's and Girls Rugby Development Manager with the IRFU and former member of Ireland XV's squad and Donegal Ladies Football star talks about mastering the Fundamental skills and the Importance of developing your club.



DR. SEAMUS KELLY is a College Lecturer in the UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science. Seamus talks about the importance of organisational structure, reflective practice, and how the power of a coach's core beliefs can impact on a team.



CIARAN DEELY current London Senior Football manager and Sports Scientist with QPR FC Academy discusses coaching in both amateur and professional sports and gives some excellent practical tips for your coaching practice.



OWEN MOONEY National Coach & Sport Dev. Coordinator with Special Olympics chats about building relationships, developing coaches & the importance of learning from others



GER O'CONNOR Dublin GAA Coaching & Games Manager chats about the importance of Coach Development within clubs and coaches been open to learning.



SHANE KEEGAN former League of Ireland Manager with Galway United and Wexford Youths talks about Player Development on and off the field and shares insightful thoughts on over coming set backs as a professional football manager.



DENISE MARTIN Lecturer in Sports Performance Analysis in the Technological University Dublin. Denise outlines how all coaches can bring the elements of performance analysis to their coaching process and the Importance of Feedback and how it is delivered



NIAMH BUFFINI Performance Operations Manager with Paralympics Ireland and Ireland's Highest ranking female Taekwondo athlete gives insights to the key components for delivery in High Performance Sport and outlines the importance of developing a culture within clubs.



PAUL KILGANNON is a teacher, Coach, Sports Coach Educator and author of Coaching Children in Sport – The Carver Framework. Paul gives insights to The Carver Framework, outlines the importance of working together as a Coaching team, and how he believes coaching is all about relationships



DAVID HERITY 5 Time All Ireland Winner with Kilkenny chats about life under Brian Cody. His transition from Player to Coach while working with Dublin Camogie and the importance of Empowering Players.



LIAM MOGGAN The Coaches Coach talks about his own coaching journey, the importance of planning and reflection and coaching the person and not the sport.



COLIN GRIFFIN two-time Irish Olympian & strength and conditioning coach. Colin chats about how he is using his own experience as an athlete into his coaching style and on bridging the gap from academic research to practical application in a real-world setting.

CAMOGIE COACHING CORNER

By Peter Casey

INSPIRE TO PLAY, EMPOWER TO STAY

People form a lot of their opinions from the world of professional sports. They often become fascinated with the idea of finding the next Rory McIlroy, Tiger Woods, Lionel Messi, Angela Downey and Gemma O'Connor. In my job – coaching in primary schools – we are often asked “who the next superstar is going to be?” or “I bet you can really spot the talented children”. The truth is that there is no way of predicting the future. Not alone is it a wasted exercise it is also a dangerous exercise. It leads to two things – elitism and exclusion.

A lot of papers and books have been written on the idea of nature versus nurture. While some can argue the point that good genetics are important, most articles suggest that opportunity is far more important. When we coach we shouldn't discriminate between children. The primary school curriculum states that all activities must involve 100% of the children 100% of the time. This enables every child to participate in all classes including Physical Education, where they play and learn. In a Primary school all children should get an equal opportunity. That could happen but there are always ways of causing exclusion – competitions, teams, captains etc.

The things that cause exclusion to happen are usually really worthwhile activities that also cause so much good to happen. They often reward effort and hard work, promote practice and devotion to improvement and help a group of children to feel part of something special. In small schools, a team



can often consist of everyone in 5th and 6th class. That can be a really special where everyone is needed. However in larger schools, a team may only consist of a tiny percentage of the class. A lot of children are omitted because they are perceived not good enough.

Fear plays a big role in the growth of elitism. People are often afraid that their talented players won't develop properly if they are allowed to play with the “not so good ones”. Somehow, they feel it would be better to group these best players together so that they might improve at a faster rate. There is a logic in that opinion especially for a sport like Gymnastics where they peak around 16 years of age. Camogie players should still be improving in their mid to late 20's so there shouldn't be a hurry. So many other sports plan their futures around the goal of winning an Olympic medal. They set up high performance training programmes for an elite few in the hope that it may result in some success. Their values are based on winning.

The mission statement of the Camogie Association is ***“To provide opportunities to enjoy and play Camogie as a vibrant***

part of the Gaelic Games Family." One of the main values of the Association is to "maximise participation". We are an amateur organisation. We don't need to find the next superstar because that isn't part of our values system. Of all the children who join a GAA club an average 10% of those go on to play on their clubs first team. Of that 10%, 3% play senior inter county. It is a very small number and it will continue to be. If our main focus is on senior inter county, we exclude the vast majority of players. However when we commit ourselves to the development of the games in every school and club and endeavour to provide a games programme for all people who wish to play then we will fill our pitches the games will be healthier as a result.

Camogie has huge potential for growth and while there are vibrant Camogie areas, there are also vast regions where little or no hurling or camogie is played. It doesn't have to remain that way. In Co. Clare where I work a couple of new clubs like Kilkee/Belaha have established. While it is everyones dream in these clubs that one day they would become like Slaughtneil or Milford, there is a far bigger story being told because of the opportunity young children get from the existence of the club.

Young people need to belong more today than ever before in the worlds history. There is so much emphasis on the need to be famous in youth culture. Many teenagers don't care what they are famous for as long as they are noticed. Most sporting organisations only target the most talented players. In the USA nearly all people give up sport –American football, basketball, baseball, ice hockey- when they fail to reach a high level. The Camogie Association can offer an opportunity to all young people to belong, to be part of a group and to gain

recognition by wearing the colours of a club or school. Many clubs are playing their part in reducing exclusion by fielding extra teams in competitions. The youth of today need more of these outlets where they can feel comfortable playing without the pressure of having to be at the highest standard.

The Swedish Football Association have come up with the slogan "as many as possible for as long as possible". They, according to the head of one of their regions, have taken the decision to abolish their "district elite" teams. "When we took this decision for the sake of the children, it was a very easy decision. Our mission is not to exclude children and young people". They discovered that bringing players into elite squads at an early age wasn't always beneficial for that player. The same often applies to the GAA. Making a big deal about a 13 or 14 year old boy or girl, who still has a long way to go – physically, mentally and socially is a dangerous exercise. These players shouldn't be put up on a pedestal. We cannot predict what the future will hold for them.

Player develop at different rates. Development is non-linear. That is why we see so many players emerging in their 20's who may have missed out on county minor or county under 21. Kilkenny's Shane Prendergast got his first start in the 2015 All-Ireland final at the age of 29. Unfortunately many others have setbacks along the way, predict their own future and drop out from Sport completely. That is a choice that they are entitled to make. However as coaches we have a duty to minimise dropout by promoting inclusion wherever possible.

THE GRIP AND SWING

As the fastest field sport played by females in the world, Camogie can be an extremely challenging game to master. According to the learning.gaa.ie it is estimated that there are over 170 skills in hurling and camogie. As a coach it can be very daunting to get around to teaching multiple skills. In every squad (even inter county senior) one of the biggest challenges is to deal with players with varying levels of skill proficiency and athletic prowess. Often in coaching courses we get asked what is the best way of dealing with such a group.

Very often coaches believe that theirs is the only team that has a gulf between its strongest and weakest players. Thankfully the wider GAA family is making huge efforts to be far more inclusive than in the past - even though we still have a long way to go - and coaches want to be able to improve their weakest players while still challenging the strongest

players. We would all love to develop our players to their potential in the hope that one day some of them could play like Carrie Dolan, Aoife Donohue, Ann Dalton, Sarah Dervan and the other Galway and Kilkenny players who performed in Croke Park in the recent league final.

When trying to help coaches deal with their dilemma often as tutors we have to share our own experiences. One of the best things I ever learned is that development is non-linear. We like to think of things in terms of linear improvement but development is more a mishmash. Players develop at different rates and most likely your best players now will not be the best in the future and your weakest now could one day be your strongest. However to be one of the strongest in the future there are a few essential skills that players need, or else it will be very difficult for them to master the other skills.



The essential skills are often referred to as the basics or the basic skills and it really is an unfortunate term. Referring to them as basic demeans them in a sense with the result that coaches often fail to give them the care they require. The essential skills in hurling are the grip and the swing and if we get them right we will have loads of boys and girls able to play hurling and camogie but if we neglect these skills then it will be a struggle. The first few months of a child's hurling or camogie career is a really important time.

If all under 6 coaches said that by the end of the year, all players will grip and swing the hurley correctly, they will have done most of their job. I'm in the fortunate position of coaching my club under 6's every Sunday morning. One of the first things we do 3 or 4 times in every session is to sing the new song we are learning, sung to the air of Baby Shark.

Hurley hand doo doo doo doo doo doo
Hurley hand doo doo doo doo doo doo
Hurley hand doo doo doo doo doo doo
Hurley hand!

Catching hand doo doo doo doo doo doo
Catching hand doo doo doo doo doo doo
Catching hand doo doo doo doo doo doo
Catching hand!

C shaped swing doo doo doo doo doo doo
C shaped swing doo doo doo doo doo doo
C shaped swing doo doo doo doo doo doo
C shaped swing!

All children raise their dominant hand while singing the first verse, their non-dominant hand for the second verse (which was learned in week 3) and swing a very short hurley with one hand for verse 3 (learned in week 6).

The grip and swing are the skills that enable all other skills to happen. Striking from the hand, rising, hooking, blocking, first touch are all much easier to teach and learn when

players have learned a good grip and swing. By taking our time with the grip and swing and learning the 6 main points about the skill we can keep our group together far more easily and children are active agents in their own learning. Rome wasn't built a day but with careful repetition over the first while, young children should develop good habits that will stand to them over a long period of time.

The other major factor that effects a child learning the grip and swing is the size and weight of the hurley used. It is quite difficult to buy a hurley suitable for under 6's and unfortunately the ones sold in most supermarkets are much too long, thick and heavy. Most of the well known hurley makers however sell suitable child hurleys. The Camogie Association recently published a really useful guide for sizing a hurley correctly. In my experience this is the maximum size that children should use.

Children who are very tall for their age could go up a size and children who are shorter should go down a size but the main advise is that it is better to go for a shorter hurley when learning the grip and swing.

There are great strikers in our games now like Patrick Horgan, Aaron Gillane, Joe Canning, Chloe Morey, Denise Gaule and Gemma O'Connor. While they all have their individual differences they also have a lot of similarities. In order to be a good striker you need to have a good swing. Learning the hurley hand and its positions, the catching hand and its positions and a c-shaped swing and what that looks like over the first year of a child's camogie career can give them a better chance of also becoming a good striker and hurler.

THE POWER OF HABITS

I am your constant companion.

I am your greatest helper or heaviest burden.

I will push you onward or drag you down to failure. I am completely at your command.

Half of the things you do you might as well turn over to me and I will do them - quickly and correctly.

I am easily managed - you must be firm with me.

Show me exactly how you want something done and after a few lessons, I will do it automatically.

I am the servant of great people, and alas, of all failures as well.

Those who are great, I have made great.

Those who are failures, I have made failures.

I am not a machine though I work with the precision of a machine plus the intelligence of a person.

You may run me for profit or run me for ruin - it makes no difference to me.

Take me, train me, be firm with me, and I will place the world at your feet.

Be easy with me and I will destroy you.

Who am I? I am Habit".

This poem teaches us the power of habits. Everything we do is learned. From the way we stand and sit to the way we walk and talk, to how we run, jump, kick, strike, look, listen. The way we react to success and failure. Most people are distinguishable by their habits. We can recognise most singers on the radio by their voice, even when they sing a brand new song. We can recognise individual hurlers and camogie players by the way they carry themselves on a field. Even if they get a new hairstyle or wear a different helmet they are distinguishable by their own unique style and while some people can copy them, they can never be them.



One of the biggest coaching tasks is to help players form good habits. We get our best chance to do this when players are young. In order to help players form good habits we need to have good knowledge of technical, physical and the mental habits that players require to perform well. We help players identify what their habits are and why they may need to break old habits or form new ones. Our bad habits are generally what let us down when we come under pressure. As coaches we should be aware of our own habits and how we can change them when the need arises.

William Wordsworth said that "habits rule the unreflecting herd". We often hear that we are creatures of habit and that when we come under pressure we revert to type. That means we do the thing we have done previously. Great coaches can help players to replace harmful and wasteful habits with effective habits. So what are the harmful habits and what can we do to replace them? The most harmful habit in the world today is the idea that we are helpless. Martin Seligman the great American psychologist has coined the phrase "learned helplessness". Learned helplessness is when we get put off by early failures in our lives and we believe that there is nothing we can do when faced with challenges in the future.

The ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said that our thoughts become our words, our words become our actions and then our actions become our habits. What we think and how we think is vital to the formation of habits. Henry Ford said "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't – you're right," If a child thinks that they will never be able to master a skill of hurling, then they won't be able to master it. If they think they can they will. If a coach thinks a child will never be any good, it is likely that message will transmit to the child and the coach will be proven right. If a community believes that their area will never be good at camogie or hurling, it will be impossible for the games to thrive. However if a few people could think that their club could produce good hurlers, start saying it and then put it into action by organising training sessions, communicating with others in the parish and beyond, attending coaching courses and teaching good habits to children then hurling and camogie should succeed.

I recently had the pleasure of sitting down with a successful rugby coach in the hope of developing my own coaching. The thing that struck me very early in the conversation was that he was the complete opposite of helpless. He didn't utter a negative word. He only spoke about instilling belief in players and fellow coaches, making training an enjoyable and hardworking place and avoiding outdated practices that are not relevant to the game the players play.

In the GAA family we can easily be in a state of learned helplessness. We can believe that we are powerless and unable to fend for ourselves. We can live in the illusion that other people are to blame for our failures. Everyone can get it from the administrators in Croke Park, to the county boards, the media,

referees and umpires. Many of us devote a huge amount of time to blaming things that are way beyond our control. We often hear people complaining that "the coach doesn't like me, he never picks me", "the referee is biased" and "everyone hates us". Very often children receive feedback in their homes and communities that they are hard done by. This leads to learned helplessness. The child grows up with an excuse for everything.

The opposite of learned helplessness is resilience. Resilience is a great habit. Resilience means that when bad stuff happens I can cope. A referee can make a mistake and we can still win. A coach may decide not to pick me and I can use it as a learning opportunity. Resilient people do not need to be served. Coaches should do their utmost to help players learn resilience. This might start by always getting them to put out and pick up cones, count balls before and after training and provide opportunities for them to deal with success and small failures.

Coaches can have a huge impact on the lives of people in a community. The interaction between coaches and players can help these people to develop lifelong skills that they can use in all walks of life. The biggest skill we can teach our players is resilience. We teach them resilience by empowering them. We empower them by giving away some of our power. We teach them that we trust them to make decisions, to cope under pressure and not alone to survive but to flourish.

The final word to the coach I met recently – "sport doesn't build character, it tests it".

THE FUTURE IS NOW

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's
longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they
belong not to you.

Kahill Gibrain – On Children

As parents and coaches the future is always in our minds. We spend a lot of time worrying and wondering about life down the road. We fill our minds with questions and concerns like, how will our children turn out? Will they be ok? What school will we send them to? Where will they go to College? As coaches many of our thoughts are filled with hoping our players will be good at hurling and Camogie that we'll win championships and that our players will play for the county.

Thinking about the future is important but sometimes it causes us to lose sight of what's happening in front our eyes at the moment. We are blessed to have children

and it is so easy to take them for granted but it would be hard to envisage any vibrancy in a community without children. Some of the most committed GAA parents often find it very difficult to encourage their children to play hurling and Camogie. Even with all their persuasive skills and bribery ideas their children refuse point blank to play. It must be very distressing for a parent who has dreamed of big days in Croke Park and Thurles cheering on their sons and daughters to have to cope with a 6 or 7 year old child who won't even join the local club.

In the past children were owned by adults. Parents, teachers, priests and coaches often felt that they were superior to children and children had to do as they were told. Old sayings like "children should be seen and not heard" and "an empty vessel makes the most sound" come to mind. It's easy to judge other parents and say that they should make their children play sport. If that doesn't work then a clip around the ear or a kick in the backside would sort it all out. All that kind of advice was commonplace in many parishes



in a different time. However this type of talk also led to abuse where children were frightened to speak out. Thankfully children are seen and also heard in most places now. It is very healthy that children can now tell their parents "yes I'd like to go there" and "no I don't feel like doing that".

There is a great book that I sometimes use called *How to talk so kids will listen and listen so kids will talk*. It deals with the fundamental connection between how children feel and how they behave. It states "When children feel right, they'll behave right. How do we help them to feel right? By accepting their feelings?" The book deals with the problem that parents don't usually accept their children's feelings. For example "You don't really feel that way" "You're only saying that because you're tired", "There's no reason to be upset". In a GAA coaching context we could sometimes say "you couldn't be bored this is exciting" "you're not cold it's very hot" and "you don't hate Camogie, you love it". The big lesson is that we should never deny children's rights to express their feelings even if it means they disagree with us or tell us what we don't wish to hear.

Giving children a voice and allowing them to be part of the decision making process in a house or a team is really good for their development. It also causes us to see things from their point of view and it helps us develop good communication skills where we can get our point of view across. Instead of telling our children that they have to go training and they don't have a choice it is better to reason with them. "I'd really like if you joined the GAA club because Gaelic games are such a healthy pastime where you get to play with your friends. I can tell that you're worried that you mightn't be good enough but I'm sure you'll be fine and I'll have a word with your coach so he won't do stuff that's too hard. I'll

also stay close by so if you need a break you can come over to me". If after saying all that they are still adamant they don't want to play we should respect that right. When they go of their own free will they develop a greater love of the game.

Children provide adults with fantastic entertainment when they play sports. Some of the best sporting memories I have were of small matches I played as a child and underage games where I was a coach. These games may seem really insignificant in the greater scheme of things but there was nothing small or insignificant about the effort the children gave or the satisfaction that the parents derived from these games. Sometimes we get so caught up in the future that we fail to see the brilliance or beauty of our children as they are at the moment. We keep thinking it'll be great next year when he's bigger and stronger. A parent once said "when my child was 3 I couldn't wait for him to be six and when he was 6 I wished he was 12. When he was 12 I wished he was 16 and now that he's 16 I wish he was three"

Sometimes we dream about reaching the Holy Grail but there is no Holy Grail. The players who win the All-Ireland final have to play with their clubs a couple of weeks later and the following year they are back training and preparing as though they never won anything. There is great vibrancy in many club and county underage structures at present and we have never had as many people playing our games or seen the games at such a high standard. The work of a GAA or camogie club never stops though. In 10 years' time these clubs will still need people to start off their under 6's and 8's. Even if clubs are struggling there is always a chance of a fresh start with the 6's. The key is to try to stay in the moment.

THE BALANCING ACT OF COACHING

"A coach is a person who builds competencies by assisting and challenging players and self to achieve full potential"

I first saw a similar version of the above quote at a GAA coaching conference back in 2004 presented by Pat Daly. 15 years later and it plays such a huge part in my coaching life. Part of our coaching roles includes teaching hurling and camogie in primary schools. Every single child has unknown potential. As a coach we can suppress or release that potential by our thoughts, words, actions and behaviours. Our main job is to build competencies. Once we develop competencies, then we can gain a degree of confidence and with every competency comes higher levels of confidence.

Think about the small child like a smart phone. When the phone is new, in the box and the battery isn't charged there is very little it can do but it has lots of potential. Once it is charged then it is capable of so much. In primary schools and also in our club sessions we can charge the children by getting their hearts beating faster and their lungs moving during aerobic exercise. Competencies are like Apps on a smartphone. A phone can't do much without apps. If I get a new phone, the first apps I get are the social media ones. Then I feel my phone can function. Every time I install a new app I have more confidence in my phone. Instead of facebook, twitter and snapchat we can install apps to small children like the grip, running and agility skills. Mainly this is done through assisting. Assisting happens when we provide a really clear demonstration of a pretty easy skill and give children ample opportunity to practice and learn it. Apps are grown in children when connections are made in the



brain. The connections that are needed for reading, writing and maths are the same that are needed for rising, catching and soloing. Like the teacher in the classroom they are taught by assisting or challenging.

Children need lots of assistance in the first few years of sport. It is estimated that 20% of young children survive in a competitive environment. If we play a 10 a side match at under 6 or under 8 training, only 4 children will benefit from it. 80% is a huge failure rate and one that most clubs can ill afford to allow happen. However once children develop a range of athletic and skill competencies they can be gradually introduced to small sided games.

As children get older, getting the balance right between assistance and challenge is a key coaching skill. If we go for too much challenge we can cause incompetence, anxiety and resistance in players whereas if we assist too much we can still cause incompetence and boredom and very often players resent this form of approach. There is a term used when the level of challenge set by a coach matches the level of skill of the players. This often causes players to achieve “flow”. It is called the zone of proximal learning.

The zone of proximal learning or the zone of proximal development occurs when a challenge is pitched just on the outer reach of a person's current ability. It is a little outside what a child can currently do and often it requires the help of a coach. Most of us probably used this model unknowingly as children. If we tried to get a certain number of roll rises in 30 seconds and then tried to beat our score next time we were in this zone. If we tried to strike a ball through a small target or take a ball hit at pace on first touch or tried to get a certain amount of ball strikes off a wall in a time we were on the zone of proximal learning.

Using this coaching model can really help increase the level of effort and concentration from players. It also causes a level of excitement and is guaranteed to increase the speed at which players play. It helps players to think about mastery rather than winning, which they have no control over. Most video games use the zone of proximal learning to engage their audience. They start off playing and they aren't able to get very far, then they get competent at a certain level until the challenge increases and the process continues. American game designer, Raph Koster says *“Fun from games arises out of*

mastery. It arises out of comprehension. It is the act of solving puzzles that makes games fun. In other words, with games, learning is the drug”.

The assistance and challenge coaching model can be used from nursery children all the way up to county seniors. While county seniors will require the highest level of challenge, there are many occasions when they also need assistance. Like a professional golfer trying to tweak or restructure their swing or putting stroke, very often a top class camogie player or hurler often needs to develop a higher level of competency in a skill. This is not a time for challenge. This is a time for clear demonstration, explanation, observation and feedback. Very often the coach has to admit they don't have the answers but together with the player they will work it out and reflect on progress or lack of. Once the new skill is learned then the coach and player can increase the challenge.

Like other areas of coaching, getting the balance between assisting a challenging is vital to the environment. When right balances are struck between skill development and games, instruction and action, winning and mastery, praise and encouragement, patience and honesty and participation and excellence a very special bond can be formed in a team or coaching environment. When coaches reflect in the aftermath of training sessions and games, little tweaks can be made to maintain that balance.

SCORING IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

"I'm sure we're not going to get everything our own way in certain games and we may not hit 30 points on any given day, but that's our target every day."

Darragh Egan, Tipperary hurling coach.

There was a time in the mid 2000's when the Cork senior hurling team scored an average of 20 points in every big game. They won the All Irelands in 2004 and 2005 and they were pretty satisfied that 20 points would be enough to win them games. When Clare won the 1995 All Ireland final the final score was 1-13 to 2-8. Today in championship hurling that could easily be a half time score. In the recent Leinster final, Kilkenny led Wexford 0-15 to 0-14 at the half way mark. Wexford had 9 scorers in the game and Kilkenny had 8. In the Munster final between Limerick and Tipperary, Limerick hit 1-11 in the first half and 1-15 in the second period. They had 8 scorers in total while the defeated Tipperary had 9. On any given day a team who wins a championship

game will likely need at least two players to score 4 points from play while their free takers will have to have a 90% success rate from inside their range. The score required to win a match is constantly increasing.

In Camogie we're seeing similar trends. In recent championship matches, Waterford scored 2-14 against Tipperary but still lost the game. In a 60 minute game that would seem a very good total to hit and up to very recently should be enough to win most games. However the climate is changing as in the hurling championship and scoring is a big currency. Limerick hit 1-18 in their victory against Wexford while Kilkenny scored 2-17 against Offaly. Cork have scored 3-19 and 2-20 in their victories over Clare and Tipperary.

So what does this mean for Camogie coaches and coach developers?

There are a whole range of facets required to be a high scoring team. A really high degree of technical proficiency in a range of skills is a must. Brian Cody always said that a good first touch buys you time. Most players need a



certain amount of time and space to score and if possession can be gained directly by a catch or after a good first touch, the player has a better chance of having that time and space. Some players are good strikers from their favourite side which is a great start but players who are able to score from right or left have more options available to them. Habits that cause slowness are always punished by the good teams and all players need to have days when they learn that their habits need to change in order to be a more effective player. Being able to swing inside the body and to shorten the grip when space is reduced is vital to being a high scorer like Beth Carton, Niamh Mulcahy, Cait Devane, Ann Dalton and Denise Gaule.

Team play and decision making are two other essential elements to scoring. Very often when players are in possession there is a very low possibility of scoring and a player needs to get the ball to a team mate in a better position. Kilkenny's mantra under Brian Cody is always that the player in the best position gets the ball. This requires players to get to scoring positions before they gain possession and an awareness of team mates by the player in possession. Cian Lynch is the most consummate team players. In 2018 he assisted in so many of Limericks scores.

One of the biggest challenges facing coaches is to overcome the psychological barriers to scoring. Frequently we see players practicing shooting from outside their range and they end up in a constant pattern of missing scores. Coaches are often tempted to do the same thing. They set up scoring drills and activities in locations on their pitch where many players are unable to score from. The biggest negative factor about this type of set up is that players become accustomed to missing scores with no consequences and if this is allowed to go unnoticed or uncorrected, players will freely miss scoring opportunities in matches and believe it is ok. A far better outcome would be

where coaches set up scoring challenges from a range where players should score from and where a winner is rewarded and players strive to be good scorers. Some players will still miss due to the pressure of the challenge and that is where coaches can intervene.

Golf psychologists tell us that players should experience successes in every practice. A lot of top golfers spend hours practicing putting from inside 3 feet. Hurlers and camogie players would gain a lot more confidence scoring from inside 25 metres than missing from 65. Dave Alred who was Johnny Wilkinsons kicking coach and is now coach to 2018 Open Champion Francesco Molinari as well as the Queensland Rugby team has a number of really interesting online videos and podcasts about how he coaches kicking and putting. There is probably a real need for teams at the highest level to engage a striking coach and at lower levels a need for our coaches to develop their coaching of striking as well as all the other roles they have to carry out.

Players can make huge strides when they are given the right instruction and coaching or allowed to be free in themselves. Graeme Mulcahy from Limerick is one player who has transformed his game to now be a consistent high scorer for his team. It would be very interesting to learn what changes he has made to his training and practice in recent years. One thing is for certain. It is better to practice scoring than to practice shooting.



Peter Casey Coach Developer

COACHING

By Paul O'Brien

COACH EDUCATION & CONTINUOUS LEARNING

It is that time of the year where teams have put their plans in place for 2018 and hopefully a long season ahead. It is the time of good intentions and the best of ideas for what will unfold in the coming months before letting the excitement unfold over the summer. We lay out the best of plans and have great intentions but do we always follow them through to their culmination. We often hit stumbling blocks along the way and by god the stumbling blocks come in many forms.

"Improvise, Adapt, Overcome" is a much lauded mantra of the US Marines. Coaching and managing teams is very much a case of this. Over the course of the next few months, things will not always go as planned and you will be presented with problems that need addressing. As a coach or manager you will need to be able to deal with situations differently to how you previously dealt with them and the same problem dealt with the same way could equally result in a different outcome.

A mentor who is continuously looking to improve is likely to be best placed in dealing with the varying issues that present themselves in the coming months. Here are a few small ideas that could be beneficial to you in the next twelve months and could be the small percentages that we often hear are the difference between winning and losing.

1 Formal Coach Education. While we all think we have a good understanding of what is required to be a successful coach or manager, there are so many elements and the Camogie coaching pathway



provides the framework to get a solid understanding of the many aspects that are required to be a highly functional coach or manager.

- 2 Keep a diary.** It might sound very basic but it will help you in looking back at how things went during the year in training sessions or dealing with players. Be critical of yourself in it and challenge yourself on the smallest issues, thus allowing for their frequency to be reduced as the year progresses.
- 3 Read a book.** There are many great sports books and other books out there that can help you in the functioning of your set up. They don't have to be camogie or even GAA books. Look into other arenas to see how things that are working there can be transferred into the meeting rooms, dressing rooms or Camogie fields to enable you to improve.

- 4 Coaching workshops.** Get to one or more of these, they are becoming far more frequent and are often poorly attended. I know the Camogie association are looking to run a number of these during the year, with some great and varied topics which looking at the tutors will be excellent. There are also many others being run on the hurling side of things that can be easily transferable.
 - 5 Watching Games.** Many times we watch sport we often disengage and just watch for the pieces of brilliance or the moments of suspense and drama. There is often way more in watching a football, rugby or basketball match that can be transferable to our own code and can give us the chance to make a gain in a certain area by using a technique that has been successful in another sport, as primarily a lot of invasion team sports can learn massively of the thoughts of coaches in other codes.
 - 6 Training sessions.** If you can endeavour to go and coach another age group in the club or do a session for a friend in another club. There are certain differences within each team dynamic and being able to appreciate and understand these are critical to making subtle adjustments within your own team.
 - 7 Mentor Reviews.** These are often undertaken at the end of the year and are often shaped by the outcome of the last game of the season. Can you do them more regularly and at stages in the year when real substance can be taken from them? They can be invaluable if done in an open and honest format.
 - 8 Coach mentoring.** You would be surprised at the willingness of coaches within your club or even outside to come and assess what you are doing and give honest feedback on what they felt went well or not in a given match or training session. An open dialogue here is critical and massive learning can take place.
- So while at times we may just look to drive forward with our own ideas and personal views despite evidence that suggests it may not always be the best course of action. We are not dealing with the myriad of problems and struggles that the US Marines are dealing with but we can always look to use their mantra. *"Improvise, Adapt, Overcome."*



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'*

“LET THEM PLAY”

Remembering back to my primary school days, I cannot remember much of the specific Irish, English or Maths classes. I do remember after school hurling in the yard, lunch time hurling in the field, indoor hurling with a holey sliotar in the hall and then games we played at yard time that were of our own creation, playing with a half crushed drinks can or whatever was available to spark our imagination. That activity was all supervised by an adult but they allowed activity to flourish without interfering and putting adult constraints on them.

Kids play out on the road with not an adult in sight and they make up their own games, create rules, break rules and change the

rules. They laugh, they smile and they have fun playing the likes of heads & volleys, kerbs, kick the can, World Cup. Whatever the game, they play it, enjoy it, get better and learn. The point is that kids want to play and do activities which bring them joy by allowing them to explore their imagination and become something more than they might appear.

Now this isn't the case in every camogie session throughout the country but I've often watched “coaches” deliver sessions that could conceivably be completed by robots, following instructions as laid out by the “coach”. Go to point A and do activity X, then move to point B and do activity Y. Why are some coaches trying to quench the imagination of children by making them





follow dull instructions to conduct pointless drills, drills to improve skills in a manner that may never be transferable to a game situation.

Kids want to play, so why not let them play. Run your session in a manner that allows children to have fun and play. Allow them to carry out the skills of the game, the many wonderful skills of our great game. Girls are coming to camogie training for a number of reasons, two of the key ones are to enjoy the game of camogie and to play with their friends. So let them do that. Do activities with the girls that allow them to have fun.

Many of you are saying that if they just play games they will not improve as players and their skills will not develop. But here is where your role as a coach is important. The real duties of a coach is to enable the girls to improve as players so they can don the club colours and pit themselves against their counterparts from other parts of the county or country. The coach needs to create an environment where the girls are challenged

with a chaotic yet comfortable environment which allows them to develop their various skills; camogie specific skills and game sense skills. How do you do this? Can you just "let them play", set out games which allow them to use their capabilities to solve problems and scenarios. When they are struggling to deal with a scenario you need to point them in the right direction but allow them to steer themselves. Do not overburden them with adult language and restrictions.

Can you be a coach who understands when to give exact directions to the destination and when you can allow the girl to get lost and try a number of different routes to get to the destination? Can you assist them by identifying the problems in skill execution or making game decisions, then know how to impart this knowledge. And if you need to say nothing, then say nothing because the girls will play on their own without you. Let them do it, just "let them play".



Paul O'Brien DCU GAA Academy
Head of Gaelic Games

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

By Tomas Mount

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS HAND NOTATION

In this week's article I am going to go through the process of creating a basic match day hand notation template which any member of a management team can use. The template I am going to create will be easy to change and adapt to any team's philosophy. The main areas that will be tracked with this template are:

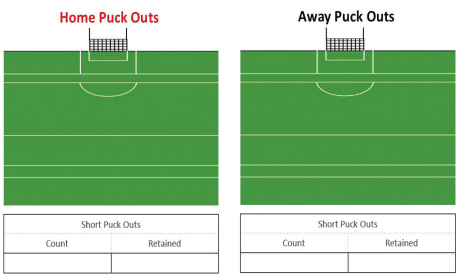
- Puck Outs
- Team Shooting
- Player Shooting
- Foul Counts
- Turnovers

I am going to use Microsoft Publisher to create this template but there are many other alternatives available to people. To add to the ease of use of the templates, it will only require the user to have a 4 colour pen and a clipboard for the users convenience.

Puck Outs

From my experience of working with teams, it is beneficial to know the count of both teams puck outs, which players are winning puck outs and finally, the areas where puck outs are being won or lost. For these reason I have added a two simple pitches for both the home team and away team.

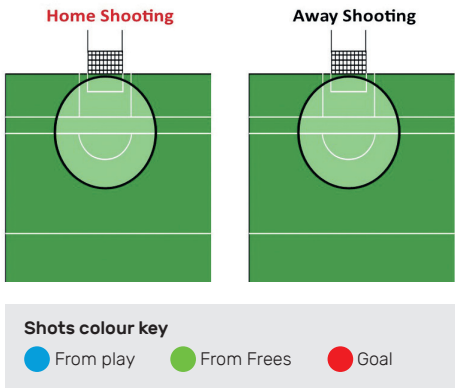
Each pitch will be used to mark the data separately from each team. When marking the puck outs I use red for the home team and black for the away team. I use a tick to notate a win on the location a puck out is won and if the home team lost a puck out I use an X to notate a loss again on the location its



lost. When marking the puck outs I also put the number of the player the puck out was intended for beside the X. This allows me to see if there are trends developing on who the opposition are aiming for from puck outs and also who is winning puck outs for my team. There is also a box underneath both teams puck out maps to notate if a team goes short from puck outs. If a team goes short a tick is added to the count box and if possession is retained to the oppositions half, a tick goes into the retained box. Some coaches define a short puck out as going to the full back line whereas other coaches define it by how far a puck out goes in metres. Make sure to clarify what the management is looking for before analysing the short puck out. In the finished template there is also a table for the user to complete at half time so that it is easy to read how each team have fared in the first half from puck outs.

Team Shooting

To analyse team shooting during a game I am going to look at the location from which shots are occurring and also how many times teams are having shots within a goal scoring area. Similarly to the puck out section of the template, I have added two separate pitches to look at each team individually. There is a white circle added to the pitch which would indicate a goal scoring area.



This can be adjusted depending on defensive set ups. Out of 54 All-Ireland and League finals, 81% of the games were decided by the team who scored more goals. This is why we have incorporated how many goal scoring opportunities teams are having.

I notate each shot, whether it was from play or a free, by using different colours. If a shot is from a free I use a green pen. If a shot is from play then I use blue to notate it and if there is a goal I use red. If a point from play is scored it is notated by using a blue tick. A wide is notated by a blue X on the location of the shot. A green tick notates a point from a free and green X notates a wide from a free. By notating the location and outcome of the shot, it allows management to see where their team or the opposition are finding success.

Individual Shooting

During a game it can be beneficial to see who is having an accurate day in front of the goal. To examine this, there is a box added which the user can add in the players number who had the shot and the outcome of the shot.

This should be done using the same colour coding system as the team shooting so that management can see if the free taker

is having a good day. If a player had a shot from play their number should be noted in blue and the outcome being a tick for a point and X for a wide. Similarly if it's a shot for a goal, mark in red the players number and the outcome of the shot. If it's a goal, use a red tick and if it's saved or goes wide, use a red X. There are several benefits of data like this being available to coaches. Firstly, when it comes to substitutes, management might be thinking of taking off a player who has not been involved in the game but when they look at the stats they could have 2 points out of 2 shots so instead of taking her off she might be moved to a position to have a greater impact on the game. Secondly, an opposition forward could have scored 3 points so it might be an opportunity to swap their marker. In some cases when tracking opposition shooting I have looked at who the score is coming from. However, I have found this to be tricky when play crosses over and the date isn't always reliable when you look over it with the DVD hence why I have moved away from that.

Home players shooting

Away players shooting

Turnovers

An area which coaches place importance on in games is turnovers. Within this template it looks at how teams are being turned over in possession. The 5 types of turnovers which are analysed using this template are:

- Forced turnovers
- From passes during play
- Passes from frees
- Fouls on the ball
- Short shots

By tracking these turnovers, coaches can see how much pressure their team is applying to the opposition by looking at the forced turnovers and how many times the opposition are being turned over from passes in play. Coaches can also have an indication on how they're using the ball if the turnover count from passes during play is high. By using a table it allows for a direct comparison of both teams during any period of the game. Some coaches might want turnovers tracked by location on the field and again this can be easily amended in this template

Foul Count

The last area this template looks at is foul count. Coaches put a huge emphasis on not conceding fouls inside the scoring area. This template looks at how many fouls team are

conceding inside and outside this area. This is just a simple box in which the user puts in a tick to notate that a free has been conceded inside or outside the scoring zone. This allows coaches to have information on how many frees they are conceding available at all times.

By using the foul count and forced turnover information, it can also provide coaches with an indication if their style of play is effective. If a team is playing a running game and they are not winning and fouls and have a high forced turnover rate, then coaches may get an indication that this style is not working for them on this given day.

Conclusion

This is just a simple template I have used in the past which I find easy to use and gives management information on areas of the game which they feel important. It's important when designing a template that it is based on the ethos and philosophy of the team. If anyone has any question about this template or would like any help designing a template do not hesitate to contact me at Tomasmount@hotmail.com. In the next article, we will explore how this template can be used to automate a match report in Microsoft excel.

Turnovers					
	Forced	Pass in Play	Pass from Free	Foul on ball	Short Shot
Home					
Away					

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

This week's article will focus on the foundation of all analysis-Performance indicators. Many coaches use these by setting targets for players/ teams to achieve in a performance, an example of which would be a coach asking for 1 hook and block from each player. Within this article I will discuss the process I have used to select performance indicators with teams I have worked with. Firstly a key performance indicator (KPI) is a quantifiable measure used to evaluate the success of a team. In my opinion it is hugely important that the KPIs monitored reflect the ethos of the team and the coach. If the KPIs reflect the team and manager I feel that all parties interact more with and gain knowledge from the process.

Selecting KPIs

There are many ways to decide what KPIs are monitored. In some cases the coach will have KPIs which they believe are important to the way their teams play, whereas in other cases, KPIs will be developed as a coach or manager might not be familiar to the analysis process. The latter is the process we are going to discuss today. I am going to go through what I do when I meet a management team who are new to the process of performance analysis and setting KPIs.

Step 1

The first step I take is to shadow the management team and listen to what they're saying to each other and the players. From these interactions you will usually find a couple of things which always are repeated so I take them as the principles of the management and team and start to work on developing KPIs from there. Asking questions during this period is hugely



beneficial as you can really gauge what is important to management and you can really learn to give more depth to your analysis.

Step 2

Step 2 consists of drawing up operational definitions. After getting an idea of what's important to management I would then draw up operational definitions and give them to the management so I can see if my definition of an action is the same as their definition, for example is my definition of a block the same as the management's definition of a block. Operational definitions are the definitions you use for your KPIs. An example of an operational definition is as follows:

Shot

Any strike that ends with a point, goal, wide, short to keeper, hit the post or is saved

Rob Carroll, Denise Martin, Colm Clear and Johnny Bradley have wrote operational definitions for hurling and football which can be used to guide people when defining their own operational definitions.

Step 3

Step 3 involves working with the players themselves and getting the players take on the performance indicators.

Players involvement

If players are involved in the process of creating there KPIs it can give them the opportunity to take ownership of the performance. It also can help players understand the game plan the management want to implement with them.

There are many advantages of players taking ownership of the performance indicators especially that it can allow a team to evaluate their performance based on facts. Coaches I have been involved with have based team debriefs around the players performance indicators which creates great dialogue and discussion between players and management. In the past I have created simple charts in Microsoft excel with teams KPIs from games and used them in debriefs. Players can see where they can directly improve or where they have improved.

During the debriefs, video footage can really emphasis the KPIs and can aid the players development, for an example if a team has chance conversion rate as a KPI and they are have a relatively low chance conversion rate after a performance the video can help to see if their striking let them or was if it was shot selection that let them. It can be really useful to mix both the performance indicators and video together to help the players develop.

Key Performance Indicators in Camogie

Since I started conducting analyses in Camogie I have used both simple and complex performance indicators. The simple indicators I would have used are:

- Chance Conversion Rate (amounts scores/ amount of shots)
- Puck outs won and lost
- Foul counts
- Possession

The more complex indicators would usually be specific to each team so in a case where usage of the ball is important a team might look at:

- The areas where the ball was lost
- Pass sequences (which pass was turned over)
- The retention % from frees inside a team owns half
- Direction of the pass

Conclusion

As I said earlier it is important to have each teams own performance indicators. There is very little to gain from using the example above of analysing pass sequences if the team in question is looking to get quick ball into forwards. Each team is unique and I believe that each team should set their KPIs based on their system of play and ethos and not use a KPI because another team are using it. Use KPIs specific to your team. What we are trying to get from KPIs is a way of measuring what is specific to the team we are involved with. If anyone has any questions on how to measure any aspect of performance let it be shooting or puck outs etc. drop me an email and we can bounce ideas off each other on how it might be done. Hope you enjoyed reading this. tomasmount@hotmail.com

WHAT IS PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS?

Performance analysis is a relatively new area of sports science which is being utilised. Although sport notational analysis dates back to dancing early in the 19th century, the concept didn't kick off until the early 2000's in GAA when Armagh won the All Ireland utilising hand notation systems. Since this many developments have occurred in performance analysis. "Stats" are now being databased giving managers more information on their own team. Analysis has seen a major shift from the use of hand notations to predominately computerised software such as Dartfish, Sportscore and my personal favourite, Nacsport.

Performance analysis can be used to analyse various aspects of sports ranging from basic details such as puck outs to intricate data such as expected points per game per player. One of my favourite things about Performance Analysis is that it can be utilised by every type of coach, from the underage camogie coach in the local club to the senior camogie manager looking to win an All-Ireland. Throughout my upcoming articles I will show how Performance Analysis can be utilised by all camogie managers by going into greater detail on all hand notation systems (paper stats) and computerised systems.

How Performance Analysis can impact camogie?

Performance analysis is part of the coaching process (see figure 1). After each game, whether it is done subliminally or deliberately, coaches analyse games. In some cases this analysis is done by replaying key events of the games or how an individual player performed. In a study carried out by Franks and Miller (1986) it was observed that



experienced coaches can only accurately recall events 59.2% of time. This is where performance analysis can aid the camogie coaches of all experience. Performance analysis can help fill the gap and enable coaches to give accurate feedback to players. As seen in the coaching process, analysis plays a key role in the process but how camogie coaches fully utilise it?

The first step is to decide how much data you are going to track. As a coach do you want all the information and stats recorded and presented to the management and the players or do you only want the key performance indicators (KPI's) relayed? I have found the latter way to work best in my experience, but as an analyst I still record as much data possible so I can investigate emerging trends. This allows management to give clear and concise feedback to players regarding familiar KPI's with the prospect of the players taking ownership of their KPI's.

The best advice I can give any coach in regards to analysis and feedback is to get games recorded. Even though it may appear that I am stating the obvious, I only experienced two opposition teams recording

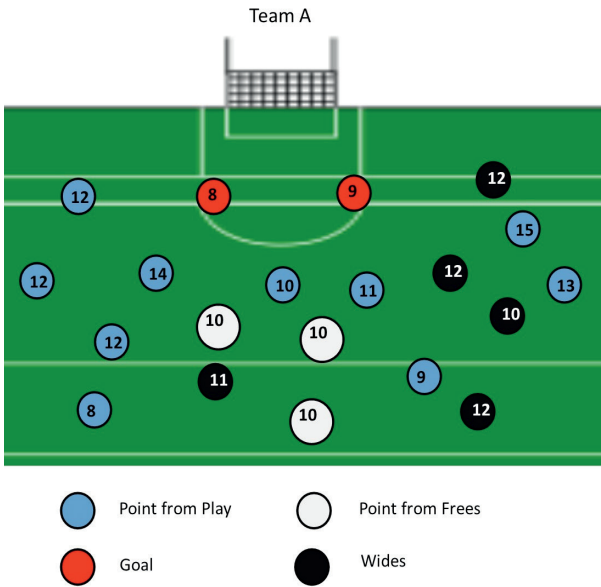
games his year. Video can give players very good feedback as they get to see the events for themselves. There have been several times when I have sat down with athletes and shown them clips of various aspects of their performance. Through viewing their video clips, the athletes have been able to identify areas for enhancement and skill development in their own personal performance.

For teams who can't get games recorded there is many other ways that information on the game can be recorded, which can aid coaches feedback. Simple hand notation templates can record many events/ stats from camogie games which can give coaches precise and informative information about an aspect or area of a team or individuals performance. Underneath is a simple hand notation template which records the outcome of the shots in a game. It is a very basic example of a hand notation template but it still provides a coach with accurate feedback to give to his players.

By changing the style of our hand notation template we can record much more information about shooting. For example if you use a pitch to notate a team's shots, we can notate the location of the shot, the outcome of the shot and who had the shot. This can give coaches some very good tactical data as well as feedback for players. For example we see

Team A Shots			
Goals	Points	Wide	Short
1	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	X x x X x x X x	X x X x X

Team B Shots			
Goals	Points	Wide	Short
1 1	1 1 1 1 1 1 1	X x x X	X x X x X x



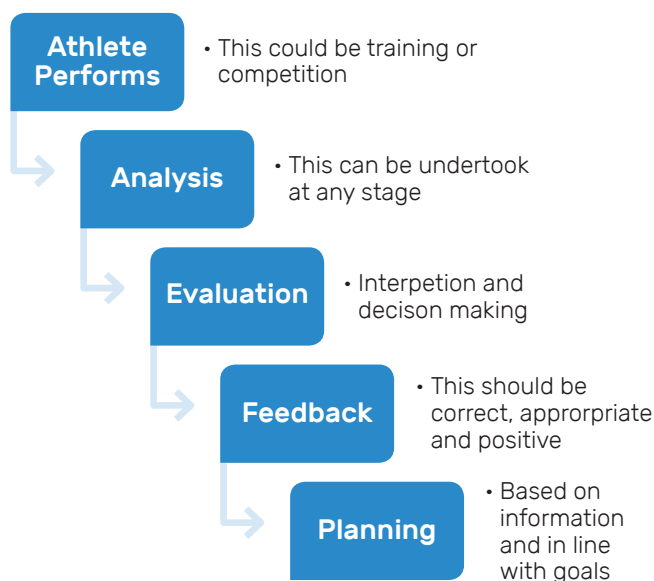


Figure 1 Coaching Process

player 12 scored 3 points from the left side but had 3 wides from the right side. This can be good tactical information for the coach but also can provide good feedback for the player and give her an area to focus on during training. By using the pitch map to record shots it gives us the previous data as before with some added player specific data. The great thing about this template is that it is easy to use and easy to interpreted.

I understand there is a cost related to recording games but when you have the video, the options available to you are endless. Programmes, such as Windows Movie maker which is free, allow you to cut clips and make separate videos (be warned it can be time consuming) which are great for providing players with feedback. Also Nacsport have a basic package which will allow you to record 25 actions a game, make presentations of these actions and create dashboards which

are very handy if you are going to track the same performance indicators each game, so there is value for money to be had with analysis software.



Tomas Mount Westmeath
Camogie Analysis

SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY

By Paul Ahern

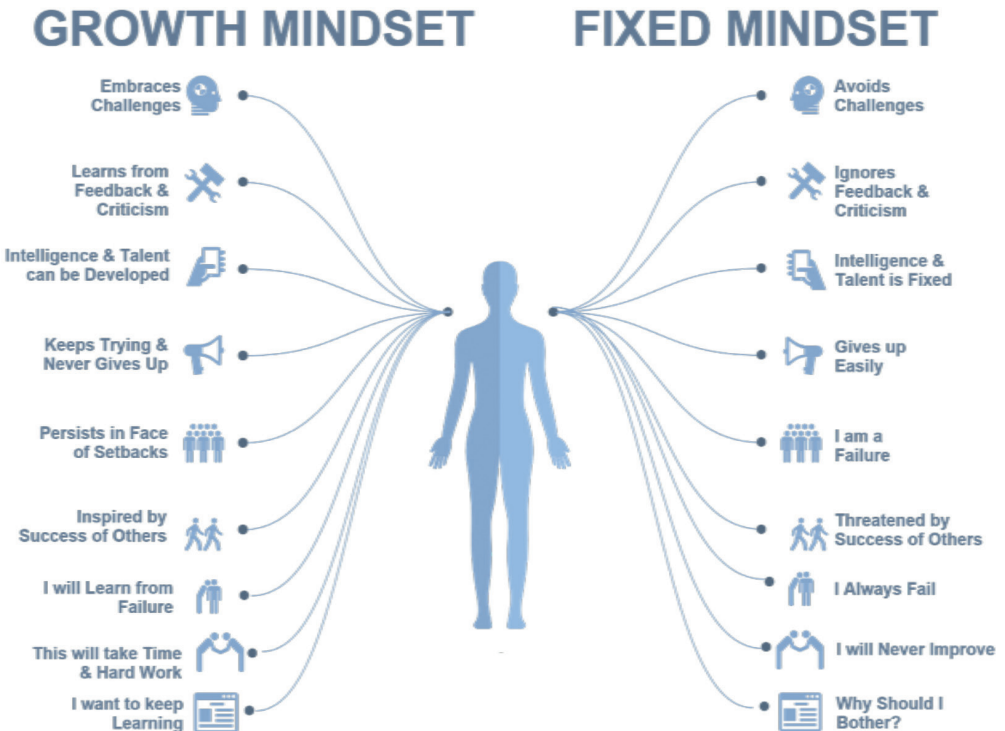
PERFORMANCE SPORT PSYCHOLOGY MINDSET

Use Mindset to Develop your Players and Yourself

As a coach you work with a variety of players who are all different and unique in their own ways. Over time you notice patterns, similarities and differences in players outlooks on developing their own skills and talent. In teams you work with you can identify: the talented player who can't be coached, the player who has talent but lacks the confidence to fulfil that talent, the player who works really hard to try to improve

their skills and abilities. Understanding each players mindset towards their own growth and development will enable you to coach and facilitate them to develop as players and a team. A tool which can help you do this effectively is understanding their mindset.

Mindset has been defined as the view you adopt for yourself about yourself. It can determine whether you become the person, player or coach you want to be and whether you accomplish it. This simple belief can determine these outcomes. Carol Dweck in her book "Mindset" identifies two types of mindset Growth Mindset and Fixed Mindset. Fixed mindset is the belief that your qualities



are carved in stone and ensures that you either believe you can't develop your qualities or don't want to look deficient in your qualities. Growth Mindset is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you cultivate through your efforts, it is the belief that everyone can change and grow through application and experience.

In sport this can be understood by looking at how a player's beliefs and motivations translate into how they deal with situations and can be summarised as:

Developing a Growth Mindset for your Players

Clearly, having players who have a growth mindset is ideal in any team as it allows them to be coached and develop their skills and gameplay. Ultimately, cultivating and developing a growth mindset in our players will enable us as coaches to help players to achieve their potential. Observing players and listening to what they say can highlight their mindset and allow you to understand them. This can help you figure out how best to coach and develop them. Successful players have a growth mindset and continuously seek to improve. Coaching players in a manner to enable a growth mindset can allow you to build their ability to put effort into working hard to improve.



Practical steps you could consider using to develop a growth mindset in your players:

- Ask Questions of your players which will develop a Growth Mindset
 - What did you learn from today's performance?
 - What steps did you take to make you successful today?
 - What are some different things you could have done in the game?
 - How did you keep going when things got tough?
 - What can you learn from the opposition today?
- Provide them with feedback which will develop a Growth Mindset
 - This will be a challenging skill/tactic to learn but I believe you can master it.
 - You haven't got it yet, but you will if you keep working & thinking about it.
 - I really appreciated your effort today.
 - Its ok to take risks that's how we learn.
 - Getting better takes time and I see you improving.

Developing a Growth Mindset for yourself

As Coaches we should seek to develop and emphasise a growth mindset for our players however, we should also consider ourselves and our own mindset. As a coach do I have a fixed or growth mindset? Do I believe I am perfectly formed as a coach or do I believe I need to continue develop my capabilities? Therefore, assessing your own mindset and asking yourself questions such as:

- As a coach can I change how effectively I coach?
- As a coach can I do things differently to achieve different results with my players?

- Do I always have to coach “my way” or can I do anything to change that approach?

If your answer to these questions is yes, you are on a growth mindset journey, if you answered no perhaps it is time to reflect on your beliefs as a coach and how you can develop. Some practical steps you can take to develop a growth mindset for yourself include:

- Actively reflect on your actions as a coach and consider how you can improve, what you could learn more about, what impact you have had.

- Observe other coaches and ask yourself what I can learn from their approach, what could I use from their approach.
- Ask other coaches you work with for feedback and suggestions, open yourself to the thoughts and ideas of others.
- Consider your own development as a coach as a journey and that every training session or game is an opportunity for you to learn.

Developing a growth mindset will enable you to continuously develop as a coach whilst developing the right qualities in your players to enable them to succeed.

Mindset behaviours in sport		
	FIXED mindset Players	GROWTH mindset Players
Believe...	..talent is something you are born with and you have it or you don't.	..talent is a process of learning and isn't set in stone.
Motivation...	...showing off (or hiding) your ability.	..learning how to develop your ability.
Effort Focus	Expect things to come easily because you have talent	Feel anything is possible IF you can understand where to focus your effort
Challenges	Avoid challenges you struggle with because you don't want to look less talented.	Embrace challenges as a chance to learn even if you can't achieve them <u>YET.</u>
Set backs	See setbacks as a confirmation that there are some things you will never be good at.	See setbacks as part of the learning process and <u>NOT</u> as a way of defining ability.
Negative feedback	Ignore useful negative feedback and keep the focus on what you are good at.	Learn from criticism and use it to understand how to improve.
Ownership	If things don't work out..it's not your fault.	Understand you need to drive things.
As a result...	...can plateau early and under achieve.	...maximise your potential.

COACHING THE MENTAL GAME - MOTIVATION

January and February are interesting months for Camogie players, the start of a new season full of hope for success followed by pre-season training. Many of us make New Year's resolutions and as coaches develop goals for our team for the year ahead, however it can be a struggle to get motivated to start training and maintaining that motivation through-out the year can be challenging. As a coach you have a lot of responsibilities from planning and executing training to making decisions in a game. However, being able to create the right environment for players to be motivated to give of their best is the lynchpin to success.

So, what is motivation and how can you as a coach create a motivational environment and develop the motivation of your players. We all may have experienced the motivational approach involving the highly emotionally charged dressing room speech accompanied by banging huris of tables and lots of shouting. Whilst that approach can certainly get the adrenaline flowing and create an instant emotional response in players, motivation and motivating players goes beyond this simplistic view. Motivation is the inner force players have that energises them to direct their behaviour in a certain way and direction. Simply put, it starts a player's engine to enable them to train and play, providing the ongoing momentum to continue to put effort into their Camogie. Motivation is different for different players, needs to be understood, should be continually developed and nurtured with individual players and teams throughout the season.

There are many theories which explain different types of motivation which players may have including: winning, gaining recognition, winning awards, continuously improving, playing for enjoyment and being



part of a team. Studies have found that players can have three main types of motivation (Amotivation, Extrinsic and Intrinsic) with research suggesting that intrinsic motivation is the most powerful and sustainable type for a player in the long term. Therefore, as a coach enabling players to discover and develop their intrinsic motivation can have the most impact on performance over the course of a season. Intrinsic Motivation can be developed by focussing on three elements.

1. Competence – improving a player's skills and abilities to play the game, which will improve their performance.
2. Autonomy – allowing players to have an influence or some control on team matters enables them to feel more responsibility and control over their development, ultimately being more self-motivated.
3. Relatedness – building relationships amongst the team and creating a sense of togetherness through teambuilding can enhance the personal connection between players and increase a player's personal commitment.

Ultimately motivation influences players in a continuous cycle.

As a coach you are seeking to build intrinsic motivation and whilst theoretically this can

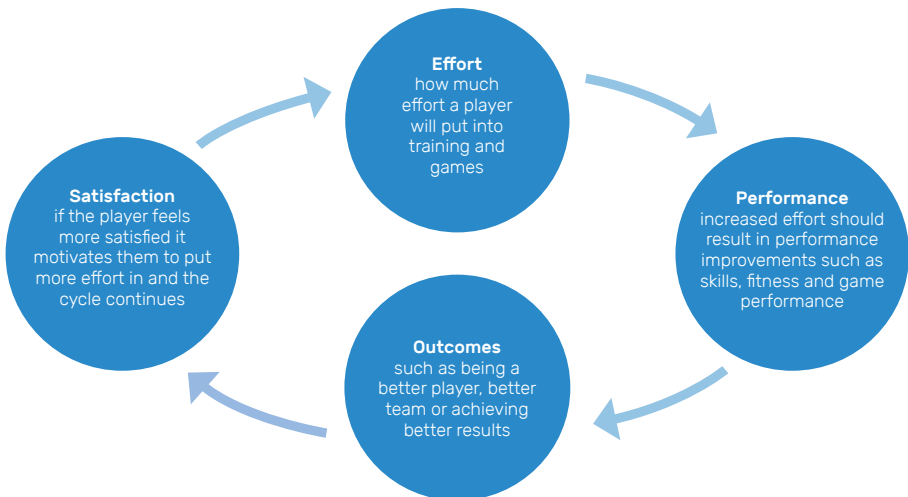
sound complex however, building several key principles and practices into your coaching approach can enable you to create a motivating environment.

1. Build relationships with your players through communication, listening and observing. Use your relationship to understand your players, what are they interested in, what is important to them, what they like. Use this information to figure out how best to communicate and relate to them.
2. Enable them to create their own team and individual goals (**for Goal-setting tips see last month's article**), this can help create autonomy. Goals themselves motivate players to achieve them. Be challenge oriented, set challenging but reachable goals and provide feedback on progress throughout the season.
3. Build players competence in Camogie through a focus on skills development, if they become more skilful they will become more motivated to put more effort in.
4. Use teambuilding to build a cohesive team environment and relatedness where all players feel part of the group.

5. Provide positive feedback both information and rewards (praise) to players regularly.
6. Relate effort to performance, players will only increase effort if they believe it will actually improve performance.
7. Reflect personally on your interactions and what impact you are having on a player. Adjust your style with individual players and the team.

The proper time to work on motivation is not just before a game but in every interaction, you have with a player and the team. Build these principles and actions into your coaching approach. A good team motivator will seek to know their players and develop their coaching style to motivate. Ask yourself regularly are the things I do motivating or demotivating for players? Challenge yourself to adapt to the needs of the players and the team.

Ultimately motivation is a very personal thing for each player but the more you can consciously think about how you are creating a training environment that is motivational and interact with players in a way that enables them to develop their motivation you can have significant impact.



THE MENTAL GAME

"Goal Setting"

Mentally preparing yourself and your team is becoming a key role of any coach in camogie. It is particularly relevant as one season finishes and another season another looms large on the horizon with the fast-approaching New Year. As a coach, you begin to dream of a successful season ahead, you can imagine that moment in late summer when your team puts together that perfect performance to finally win the championship. But how do we move from hopes and dreams to the reality of training a squad of camogie players in a soft mucky field under lights as the rain falls in January.

This requires some soul-searching, asking some fundamental questions of yourself and the team. What do we want to achieve? How

do we want to achieve it? How will we know we are getting there? These basic questions should be a fundamental part of a team's start to the season. Mentally planning the season ahead requires a focus, honesty and discipline to move from dreams to reality. An under-rated part of mentally preparing a team is goal setting with the focus of preparing them mentally for the season ahead. Effective goal setting and planning can help guide your coaching and enable your players to keep sight of what they should focus on. We are all familiar with the concept of goal setting and probably use it in some form in our daily lives, however moving from the goal of "winning the championship" to a more focussed and controlled approach to goal setting will help coaches and teams perform.

Goal-setting can help motivate as it directs coaches and players effort and energy to





focus on the things that will contribute to performance. Goals have been found to improve sporting performance by up to a third. The greatest effects found when goals were moderately difficult, were focussed on an outcome combined with elements of performance and were self-set by the players themselves. Goals enhance performance by directing attention towards relevant actions, help elicit effort and commitment from players, boost self-confidence, enhance team cohesion, help players break large problems into smaller components and develop action plans. Goals help you sustain your focus and have a sense of achievement whilst, reminding players what they are striving for collectively (especially when championship is a long time away). Achievement of goals (no matter how small) has been shown to develop self-confidence so realistic goal setting can also improve the confidence of your players and team.

So, what does effective goal setting look like? How should you approach this with your team?

1. Plan a training session with team focussed on discussing and developing goals for the coming season. You should try to facilitate and structure the session bearing in mind that it is better if the goals are developed by the players themselves, enabling them to take ownership of the goals and become more committed to them.
2. Look to structure your goals positively on three sequential levels:
 - a. **Outcome Goal** – based on the result or outcome of a specific event for example: “win the league, reach championship semi-final”.
 - b. **Performance Goals** – what standards do you want to attain in a game for example: “win 60% of your own puckouts, score more than 10 points from play, concede less than five frees in scoring zone”.
 - c. **Process Goals** – these are the goals you focus on in every training session which enable you to achieve your

performance goals such as: “practice shooting in every training session, players attend 80% of training sessions, work on first touch in every training session, practice 30 puck-outs in every session”

Write these goals down to re-enforce your and the team’s commitment to working on them.

3. Use these to plan your seasons training around specific “process and performance goals”, review progress in games with performance goals and enable players to set their own individual goals for their own performance and development.
4. Goals should be **Specific**, **Measurable**, **Achievable**, **Relevant** and **Timebound**, using this SMART logic will ensure the goals you develop are meaningful.
5. Regularly review goals and progress towards attaining them, this will enable you to keep everyone focussed and provide opportunity for review or modification based on progress, ensuring they stay current and relevant.
6. Encourage players to create their own individual goals, these can include all elements of the game such as: position, skills, conditioning, behaviour, mental preparation. Emphasise that they should be within their reach, relevant and attainable.
7. Review every training session and match to ensure that it has been focussed on making progress towards your performance and process goals. Exceptional players immerse themselves in process goals, guiding their training. Use goals and progress to provide constructive feedback to your team.
8. Be creative to keep goals top of mind and in focus for example: posters in dressing room, customised wristbands.

9. Celebrate the attainment of goals, provide positive re-enforcement and feedback to players on their progress.

Remember goals relate to performance and progress not an individual’s self-worth, not achieving a goal does not mean you are a failure, you just haven’t got there yet. Using goals to develop a growth mindset as highlighted in “Mindset” by Carol Dweck will enable players to find success in learning and improving their camogie skills through continually seeking to achieve their goals. Those who develop a growth mindset were found to thrive during challenging times and continually develop and progress.

You may not achieve an outcome goal such as winning the championship, only one team can do this, however making sustainable progress towards achieving performance and process goals will enable you to focus on building capability, skills, motivation and confidence in your players which can support their development as players over the long term and enable them to remain committed to camogie in the long term. The most successful players are known to be goal setters, goal-setting is a fundamental psychological skill that you can help your team and players to develop, to maximise their potential.



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NOTES

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CHOOSING THE CORRECT HURLEY SIZE

Choosing the correct size hurley will increase a player's success at mastering the skills of the game. A shorter, lighter hurley is especially recommended for children and those new to the game.

HOW TO MEASURE THE CORRECT SIZE:

- Player stands nice and relaxed with their hands down by their sides.
- The distance from the ground to their wrist is the correct length.
- Player should be able to hold the hurley at the top and the hurley should be just touching the ground.
- If a player is between sizes it is still better to have the hurley too small rather than too big.

TOP TIP!

With the correct size, your finger should align with/touch the player's wrist bone.

Place your finger horizontally just underneath the grip as shown.

WHAT ABOUT THE WEIGHT?

Players should hold hurl in their dominant hand and be able to make ever increasing larger circles for 30 seconds comfortably. Then this is correct weight.



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