How to improve player retention in camogie players age 12-19

Coláiste an Chraoibhín

Fermoy

Co. Cork

By

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Introduction

We chose this topic because as we’ve gotten older and have started playing at a higher and more competitive level that there has been a significant increase in girls dropping out from under 14 to minor level. Once we saw a pattern of what was happening between the different clubs, we then realised that something had to change.

 From our own personal experience, we saw it first hand as our friends started to drop out but we never really understood why, this is the main reason why we decided to take part in this competition. We wanted to find out what the main reason was that girls were dropping out and how we could help to prevent that happening in our own clubs in the future.

We proceeded to come up with questions for our survey and came up with a variety of different questions on Survey Monkey to ask the students in the school. We then spent the day emailing the survey out to the girls who play and also quit camogie. We took into account the recommendation that the girls who took the survey made when thinking of our ideas. we came up with ideas on our own and then discussed as a group which ones we thought were the best suited.

We found that game time was a very common reason for girls dropping out of Camogie and looked at ways to address this issue.

Methods that could be used to put our idea into practice.

We conducted a survey in compliance with the Covid-19 regulations within the school grounds and found all the girls who played, and used to play, camogie within the school and got them to answer eight questions. The questions were:

1. When did you first start playing camogie?
2. If you have siblings did or do, they play camogie or any other forms of GAA?
3. Do you still play camogie?
4. If you answered no to the question above why did you stop playing?
5. What do or did you enjoy while you were playing?
6. What do you dislike about playing camogie?
7. Would you consider rejoining if things improved?
8. Have you any suggestions as to how we can keep more girls playing camogie?

From our discussions with players we found that the following were important issues for players:

* Respectful and encouraging coaches in training sessions and on the sidelines during matches.
* More of a focus on enjoyment and participation instead of pressure to win
* The creation of a friendly and positive environment in training and matches with a focus on enjoying games and developing skills.
* Varied training sessions by qualified coaches aimed at developing the skills of the game and more game time for players.

**The 40 Minute Rule**

As lack of game time was proving to be a common problem, we came up with the following solution.

The main idea of this rule to make sure that every girl gets at least 40 minutes of game time in each game. We were inspired by a rule in our school basketball games where every player must play at least one quarter. The rule is as follows:

* After 20 minutes a team must make changes up to a maximum of 5 substitutions. This is then repeated after 40 minutes.
* By dividing up the game into three thirds it would ensure that each player plays a minimum of 40 minutes or two thirds of the game.
* This gives players a lot of game time to enjoy the game and develop their skills.
* For example, a team has 20 players.
* After 20 minutes the manager replaces 5 players, those that come on cannot be subbed of unless injured, giving them the remaining 40 minutes
* After 40 minutes the 5 players who came off originally come back on and replace 5 new players.
* If there are more than 5 subs, the times can be changed to every 15 minutes so every player would be guaranteed 30 minutes.

Results/Recommendations

After we conducted our survey, we reviewed the results and here is the information we gathered:

**Question 1:**

**Question 2:**

 **Question 3:**

**Question 4:**

* We can see here that 13% of players stopped because they lost interest. We feel that playing more games would give them more confidence and give them a more positive attitude towards the game.

**Question 5:**

* 42% of players enjoyed playing the game the most, by giving them more guaranteed game time this would lead to more people keeping the game on.



**Question 6:**

* 15% of players said that a lack of game time was the reason to dislike Camogie, our solution would improve this.



Question 7:

* 35% of players said they would rejoin if things improved, we think our rule would attract more players back.



Question 8:

* 25% of players said that more training and matches would keep them playing, our rule would give them more game time.



**Conclusion**

Looking at these statistics and seeing other peoples opinions on how to keep teenage girls playing camogie we concluded that our ideas are very relevant as to how we can keep girls playing. With our different ideas we hope to retain more players in the future in our own clubs and clubs across the other 32 countys including our native county of Cork.

We believe that our idea is the most effective way to keep girls playing as everyone is guaranteed at least 40 minutes of game time every match, leaving all girls satisfied that they got to be apart of the team.

We think this idea could be implemented in all underage games ranging from u6/8 as far as minor. Basically our idea is so that you won’t finish the game with the same fifteen players you started with, this also gives the girls confidence and more experience on and off the pitch. They will develop more skills and become more adaptable which will be beneficial to them as they progress to adult sport.

 This could also be used at inter divisional and inter county level, this would give girls playing at this level a broader experience than playing with club and it also gives them a chance to see what it’s like to play at a higher standard then club.

With our idea we hope that girls mindsets towards camogie and other sports will be more positive and encourage those same girls to continue playing camogie and other sports for as long as possible. We hope girls will be happier coming to training and matches knowing they will get game time no matter what.

 We hope clubs would be open to this idea especially smaller clubs that might not have numbers anyway and struggling to keep girls playing. We hope to create a positive environment and atmosphere at training and matches.