



ON THE BALL

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION
Winter 2020



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ASSOCIATION**



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Welcome: Uachtarán an Cumann Camógaíochta Kathleen Woods

Kathleen Woods Foreword

I would like to welcome you to our Winter Edition of the On the Ball magazine after what has been a testing year for all our members both on and off the field. with big changes both on and off the pitch.

It was certainly a year that made us realise that sport is only secondary in importance, but none the less it is still a vital aspect of our wellbeing and enjoyment during difficult times.

While it looked like we may have no sport at all in the early months of the

pandemic, it is a testament to the work of our staff and all our units to see our games back in action and our members and players back doing what they do best.

2020 has brought so many challenges to our lives and it has been a massive



source of pride that we have been able to pull together in this difficult time to see all our matches reach the heights they have been able to reach this season.

The streaming element of our games has been a massive success, allowing our members an opportunity to witness our games as restrictions could not permit us to be there in person. We will return to the pitches in support one day, but for now we continue to look on and support from our homes.

The club season started us back during the Summer months after a long lay off without training or competitions. On behalf of our Association I want to thank each and every club for their support of our games and for providing a safe environment for everyone who returned to action after the postponement of Camogie.

The safety of our members was first and foremost the only importance in getting our games back up and running, so to all our COVID-19 Officers and members who took it upon themselves to ensure grounds were safely sanitised and cleaned,

that members had complied with the various regulations and completed their Return to Play forms and to the parents who completed the forms on behalf of their children, I say thank you.

To our players, referee's, coaches and volunteers I wish to express my gratitude to you all, for your commitment, dedication and compliance with all the added safety guidelines. Without your cooperation, we would not have been able to return to action so I thank you all for your efforts this year.

With a return of the county action I wish to express my congratulations to Cavan on winning the Nancy Murray Cup competition after many years away from adult Championship Camogie. It is a testament to the development taking place within your county to see you back in action and already claiming the silverware to show for your efforts. Two All-Ireland final appearances is a super effort by you all and I wish you every success in your future Camogie journey.

I would also like to congratulate Armagh, Down, Antrim, Galway and Kilkenny on their successes of reaching

their respective All-Ireland deciders. While there can only be one winner, it takes serious commitment and hard work to make it to an All-Ireland final and I want to thank all our counties that took part in Championship action for the excellent games they have provided this year.

As the year draws to a close we quickly turn our attention to the upcoming 2021 season. In April we will have our Annual Congress once more, which will see the Playing Rules up for discussion. The Trial Playing Rules have been a success throughout this year and we look forward to further developments in our game that will benefit our players.

While we are back in action, the pandemic is very much still a part of our communities and our daily lives. I hope you all continue to remain safe and well over the Winter period and continue to follow the Government guidelines to ensure a safe Christmas and New Year.

I look forward to seeing you all again for the 2021 season.



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LORRAINE RYAN

Galway

By Sarah Stanley

Lorraine, what were your feelings on the situation we found ourselves in? How have you found this year with lockdowns and restrictions?

I suppose the last few months we have just kept to ourselves as a family and made the most of our time together. I just kept thinking everyone is in the same boat and we all have to do our little bit in order for things to come back to some type of normality for us all. We are lucky to be living in the countryside and have family close so I suppose we kept as positive as we could.

What impact did it have on your employment? Are you working from home or still travelling?

I am a secondary school teacher in Colaiste Bhaile Chlair so we were working from home everyday. The students now have their holidays which will give them a nice break from online learning for a while now but I have to acknowledge how well they adapted to this change during all the uncertainty. It couldn't have been easy for the students but they continued to work and connect with the teachers in the school. I do miss the interaction with the students and staff and hope we will all be able to be back to school in the near future.

How did you find life without Camogie training or matches during the year?

It was very strange at the beginning of lockdown as up to that we were training

4/5 times a week with Galway and with work in school it was very busy. It took awhile to adjust. We have huge support from our management team and communicate on a daily/weekly basis either with wellness check in's or programmes to keep us occupied at home. Again, I missed the girls we were together several times a week to not seeing them for a couple of months was so strange.

What activities did you get up to? Have you tried anything new?

We have kept ourselves occupied at home. At the start of lockdown my brother bought a lot of gym equipment to do sessions outside which kept us going. Like most families we started painting the house and doing bits outside that we had no time for up to this. The dogs still look to be walked. I went through a cooking and baking phase with the Davey Nutrition book so handy to go to when you feel like making healthy treats. I have always been creative so id often start designing clothes on sketchpads or making cards with watercolours. I love to make headbands and head pieces but have nowhere to wear them at the moment.

Does it make Camogie feel even more important after you weren't able to take part during the lockdown?

I think we have all learned that our health and the health of our families is all our main priorities when everything is stripped back. But yes I definitely have

realised that huge part it plays in our daily lives.

When something is taken from you, you want it back more than ever. I think we all had a new appreciation for been able to get out with our club and county teams to play. I think we will have a new appreciation for been able to go to club and county matches at the weekends and go home to watch it again on the Sunday Game. This has been so normal for us all our lives and when it returned it was the most enjoyable yet for us all.

Have you binged on any Netflix shows during the lockdown?

*Michael Jordon The Last Dance
Formula 1*

What is your best survival tip for the coming weeks?

What works for me right now is:

- *Focusing on the present (I try not allow myself to think too far down the line with Covid-19 as nobody really knows how long we will have to live with this)*
- *Routine: Have things in line each day to get done makes me feel better, I also include exercise into my routine to keep it consistent and it also lifts my mood*
- *Connecting with friends and family: whether its sitting out with family having chats around a fire or having another BBQ, zoom calls with friends or the window visits I think it has really helped me stay connected.*
- *Appreciate the simple things.*



BRÍD MCNAMARA

Interview with Clare Camogie PRO

By Sarah Stanley

Firstly, how have you found 2020 so far with all the challenges it has brought?

2020 has been a big challenge and a difficult year in terms of how we live our life's. For me personally, it was the isolation of lockdown and not being able to meet family, friends or the Camogie family every weekend. I even missed going to meetings!! I was still working from the office but with the majority of staff working from home, even that was strange. I took to the local roads walking each evening when I got home from work which I found to be great both for physical fitness but also for my own peace of mind.

Clare reached their second All-Ireland Quarter-Final this year, although it didn't end in the way

you would have hoped, is there a good sign of progression within the team?

Most definitely there is. The Littlewoods Ireland League had gone really well, the win over Kilkenny in Nolan Park was great for the girls confidence and we were still in the running for the League Final when games had to end due to COVID-19. The girls maintained individual training with great support from our management throughout lockdown and were able to concentrate on the Club Championship before going back training as a county panel. To make it to the quarter final where we hadn't been for 6 years, shows us that the girls have the talent and they have progressed from last year. We have a great mix, with the more experienced players being joined by a younger crew, they are all very

determined and whatever challenges were thrown at them in terms of restrictions re dressing rooms, water breaks etc they met them head on and got on with what they had to do. For the last number of years I would have been at training and prepared tea, sandwiches, soup for the girls after training and that is one thing I really missed when we got back to Inter County activity. After a tough training session, it was an opportunity for the girls to relax for a few minutes and it was great to have the craic with both the girls and the management. Hopefully all going well in 2021 we will be able to re-introduce this.

You done a great fundraising initiative this Summer – can you tell me a little bit about that and how did it come about?



Our Seniors were challenged by Clare LGFA to complete the 1,000km in 7 days Challenge which they completed the first week of May. I helped them with the social media side of things and walked every day in solidarity with them so to speak. I kept that up and on the June Bank Holiday weekend was speaking to Mike Duggan (dad of Orlaith) and it came up about the walking and he suggested jokingly that I should do it as a fundraiser for the County Board – my reply was “Forget you said that Mike!!!”. 3 days later the chairperson Joe O'Donnell rang me and said we would have to do a fundraiser and what or how could we do one? At the time I was in Fr McNamara Park varnishing the benches, so I told Joe I'd ring him back that night with all the details. I duly rang Joe that night and said that we'd do a fundraising walk, the distance being Fr Mc Park to Croke Park and back, that I would do the walking and we could visit every Club

in the County and get them all involved on “their” day. And so Clare Camogie to Croke & Back became reality.

Were you pleased with the amount of traction it got on Social Media platforms? You had received a large volume of well wishes from so many different people.

Credit for the social media campaign has to go to the superb team we put together to run it. Anne Marie McGann headed up the team and had help from Ciara Grogan, Chloe Morey, Mary McMahon and Dervilla Moloney. We came up with the daily comments and sorted the promo pictures in July and then on 01st August the team took over the social media and did a superb job. Everyday Anne Marie would text me & say there were messages of good luck coming in from all over the county and country and even overseas. I think it was something that caught people's imagination and as

they saw that the daily requirement of kms walked was being achieved, people wanted to see the reaction in each Club. There were some days during the walk that were tough – especially having to walk in a few Yellow Rain warnings but then when the social media was updated that night, and the comments were flying up “keep it going”, “well done” that was a tonic to see and very encouraging to keep going.

Heading into 2021 will you be continuing on your PRO journey?

Yes I will be carrying on as PRO in 2021 – I love what I do and while my skills were never on the actual field of Camogie, my strengths lie in being able to promote the game and the girls who play the game. Even after all the years doing this role, I still get a kick out of seeing players reaction to an item in the local paper or an album of pictures on Facebook.



BREDA DONNELLY

Kilcoole Camogie Club M.N.A Mentor 2020

By Sarah Stanley

How did you get involved with your club?

I got involved in Kilcoole Camogie Club way back, shortly after it was set up. We are celebrating our 25th year in existence this year. I was asked by the lady who set it up would I give a hand and that was it. There was no going back after that.

Why did your club decide to apply for the M.N.A Programme?

When we started all those years back the full committee and all the coaches were women. 25 years later the demographics have changed quite a lot.

When we saw this advertised, we filled in all the questions and one of the questions was to go through the coaches in the club, the qualified coaches and basically analysis who you have got age wise and gender wise and we realised that most of our coaches today are men. Now, we are delighted to have them, they are perfectly fine coaches, but we noticed that we had a shortage of females at the adult level. We have an adult team but most of the players involved in our adult team are quite young so when this came along, we had thought a couple of years ago to enter into the Hurl with Me but we didn't get off the ground.

So when this came through from the Camogie Association we thought this was the perfect opportunity for us as it promises to provide what we have identified we need which is extra coaches to start with of any gender but also some extra women in the club.

Have you enjoyed the upskilling and development provided to the M.N.A Mentors?

Yes, I personally enjoyed it a lot. Obviously coaching today has moved on a lot. Coaching today has moved on. Coaching develops and evolves every year and there are new systems and technologies in place, and I have enjoyed learning about that.

For the people that came into the programme most of the uptake was from parents. Because of the pandemic we didn't send out an open invitation we recruited people from within the club, parents of underage players that were already in the club. This wasn't our original intention but as the pandemic developed and everybody was obliged to fill out all the COVID paperwork within the club we had decided that the parents had already done that so it would be very beneficial for us if we didn't have to do that for all the new participants.

As it turned out we got a very good uptake. We started with 18 on the first day and at the end we had 26. Two of those were not in the club, everybody else was already involved in the club. The two new people were friends of parents that came along. On another occasion it would be really good to open that out to the broader community and bring new people into the club. But on this occasion we decided to stick with parents. Their children were playing but they weren't involved themselves in the club. That has been fantastic because apart from the crack they had when they came along the

kids were very good recruiters themselves, after the first day especially we had a big increase on the second day and that was down to the U8's and U10's and we grew to a group of 26.

At the end of the four weeks we were blessed with the fantastic summer sunshine in September and that really contributed to the overall enjoyment for everybody.

After the Hurl with Me they have moved on to do the Foundation coaching course which is offered to them and they are working their way through the Safeguarding 1 programme also so that is a huge benefit to the club. I don't expect that the 26 people will complete everything but out of those 26 they will tell you that they have learned an awful lot about the game of Camogie.

For some of them it was just something that their children were playing and just something they brought their children to on a Tuesday night but they have learned an awful lot and some of them will say they have huge respect for their girls who are very small and are well able to do stuff that they themselves cannot do as adults.

Throughout the process how have you and your club been supported?

Louise's phone has been very busy. She's always at the end of the phone. As we moved through the pandemic things changed but she was always there as well as Sinéad to answer any questions that we had.

We have also had great support from the development people and Roberta with the Safeguarding course which has been great and anyone who has done it has remarked that it was great, and it was very well presented.

What impact has the MNA Programme had on your club?

It created a huge buzz around the place and a huge interest amongst parents, even parents that didn't do it will tell

you they are really sorry they didn't do it because they weren't too sure what it was so we would hope to do that Hurl with Me Programme again and maybe get those people on board.

In terms of the everyday workings on the club we have a pool of adults there who are more involved than they were and they have the opportunity to continue that involvement and continue their own upskilling as well and

get a qualification which can be used wherever they need it.

Would you recommend it to any other Camogie club in Ireland?

Absolutely, without a doubt. The Camogie clubs should be knocking down the door to get signed up to it. I can see no bad side to it really. It's beneficial on a number of levels to any club.





CHAMPIONSHIP

2020

ShoutOut - Supporting the LGBTI+ Community in Sport

By Sarah Stanley

In November ShoutOut delivered two educational workshops and inclusion training to the Camogie Association staff in relation to supporting the LGBTI+ community through sport.



Delivered by Bella Fitzpatrick, Executive Director and Aifric Ní Chríodáin, Development Manager the staff were provided with details of the fantastic work that ShoutOut provide for all members of the LGBTI+ community and also tips and tools on how we as an Association can continue to support our members who are a part of the LGBTI+ community.

In order to support our members to the fullest, it was important that we were made aware of the barriers that the community face throughout their sporting journeys. Some of those barriers include:

- *Previous negative experiences, especially in schools.*
- *Homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and interphobic bullying, stigma, stereotypes, and abuse.*
- *Lack of high-profile LGBTQ+ athletes.*
- *Lack of LGBTQ+ visibility in local sports settings.*

ShoutOut provide free workshops for all clubs and counties to provide further understanding of the various stigmas and issues currently felt in the LGBTI+ community. Some of the benefits of undertaking these workshops are:

- *Increased participation and membership*
- *Stronger links with diverse communities*
- *A more inclusive environment for all*

Speaking after the workshops, Development Manager Aifric Ní Chríodáin explained:

ShoutOut were delighted to deliver our LGBTI+ inclusion training, "Fair Play", to staff at the Camogie

Association and to come together in supporting LGBTI+ members and players. This training aims to support sporting Associations of all sizes in their inclusion efforts.

"It is free for any organisation seeking to enhance their understanding of LGBTI+ identity, terminology, and increasing LGBTI+ participation in sport. For more information see shoutout.ie/workshops or email development@shoutout.ie. This project is supported by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs."



Applications now open for 2021 M.N.A Programme

By Sarah Stanley

- ✓ *M.N.A Programme aims to increase the number of women coaching*
- ✓ *Programme is in partnership with Sport Ireland's Women in Sport Policy*
- ✓ *Applications now open for 100 Clubs to take part in 2021*

The Camogie Association are delighted to launch the second year of our female coaching and mentorship initiative, the M.N.A Programme, in partnership with Sport Ireland's Women in Sport Policy.

The M.N.A Programme primarily looks at the development of female Mentors and Coaches within Clubs around the country and the 2021 programme will offer places to 100 Clubs to take part.

The M.N.A Programme will act as an important step in assisting Clubs to ensure the retention of players away from the playing field and the recruitment of females and that they will pass on their knowledge and experience to future players through coaching. The role which women can play in passing on their intrinsic knowledge of the game to young players in particular is a key reason behind this programme and the part which they can play as positive role models for young players.

Participating Clubs will be required to nominate one female Mentor who will be upskilled across a wide range of areas including communications, mentoring and

volunteer development. Mentors will then be tasked with identifying new female Coaches within their Club who will assist them in delivering the Association's longstanding Hurl With Me initiative in 2021. Coaches participating in the programme will receive training in a Foundation Level Coaching Qualification.

M.N.A Mentor Training days will be held on the following dates:

13th February – online

27th February – in person at one of four locations around the country.

M.N.A Mentors must be available on both days of training in order to proceed with the programme. The programme is seen as a model for Clubs of how to develop a pathway to recruit, develop, retain, and support females within the Club on their journey as coaches or in other volunteer roles.

The application process for Clubs to apply to take part in the 2021 M.N.A Programme is now open until close of business on **Friday January 22nd 2021.**

Please click [HERE](#) to access to the application form.

Please see the link to the

M.N.A Programme Booklet



and our

Tesco Hurl With Me Booklet



If clubs have any queries please feel free to contact the M.N.A Programme Administrator (Sinéad) on the following e-mail address – mna@camogie.ie



THE REFEREE INTERVIEW

"It felt like a natural progression for me to take up the whistle"

Featuring:

John Dermody

Club: Lough Lene Gaels

County: Westmeath

Started Reffing: 2014

Profession: AVP with J.P. Morgan Bank (Ireland) plc.



What ignited your interest in refereeing?

When I finished playing, I coached underage Camogie & hurling with the club and county development squads. I would have had a great admiration for a lot of top quality Westmeath GAA referees such as Paddy Collins, Barry Kelly, Jimmy Weldon and James McGrath.

I had a general interest in refereeing and the rules of both GAA and Camogie. When I received a call from my club colleague Sheila Carroll asking if I had an interest in representing the club on the Westmeath referees panel it felt like a natural progression for me to take up the whistle.

What is the most enjoyable part about refereeing?

There is so much I find enjoyable about taking up the whistle. I love the social side of it, whether it be the meetings or fitness tests with the other referees, or the fun and laughter travelling to games with my incredibly reliable team of umpires.

However, in a perverse way, the part I enjoy the most would probably be the pressure of match day. The games involve game management, decision making, and a huge amount of teamwork with my team of goal umpires and line umpires etc.

It throws up its fair share of challenges, but as the saying goes, if it was easy, everyone would be doing it.



**THE
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ASSOCIATION**
An Cumann Camógaíochta

**To all our members and volunteers,
our players and match officials
and everyone who makes our sport
the game it is today,**

**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT
IN 2020**

**and we wish you a safe and
Happy Christmas and New Year.
We look forward to seeing you
back with us in 2021.**