**Camogie Retention**



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**Title: Creating a more supportive environment for all camogie club members**

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# **Introduction**:

Founded in 1904 the Camogie Association has over 537 clubs in Ireland and aims to provide an inclusive, enjoyable and lifelong involvement in Camogie, as a vibrant part of the Gaelic games family, at home and internationally. The camogie club is a great way for girls and women of all ages to make friends and get fit. As the camogie club is very beneficial to girls and women we will be discussing ways to prevent camogie retention. As girls get older they sometimes tend to drop out of camogie. This is called camogie retention. In our project we will discuss why we think girls drop out of camogie and ways we can prevent this. In order to prevent camogie retention we would like to create a more supportive environment for all camogie club members which would involve organised buses to matches , fair game time, optional matches and more of an emphasis on mental health , we will now discuss these in further detail.



# **Methods :**

As we said in the introduction our idea to prevent camogie retention is to create a more supportive environment for all camogie club members. With clubs all over the country there tends to be a lot of inter-county travel. These journeys could take over 2 hours which could be an inconvenience to parents of players on the team as they might have small kids at home who they can't leave and they might not be able to carpool. This could lead to their daughter not being able to attend the match which might damage her performance. One of the ways that we would implement a more supportive environment would be to provide one bus which would bring all team members to their destination. The benefits of which will be expanded in the last section.

Another way to create a more supportive environment for members would be to give fair game time in matches. In some cases you might not get to play a match and you might be sitting on the sideline on a freezing cold day and see other people put on but not you. This can be very damaging to a player as it will lead them to think that they are not good enough to be on the team. They may stop going to matches altogether as they may assume that they won't get put on again which could lead to them missing out or quitting the team. It could also put them into the mentality that they aren't good enough and that brings me to my next point which is to have optional matches.

This is where players can choose to just go to training to stay fit and to be social and to see their friends outside of school without having the pressure of attending matches. This also leads me to the next method of implementing our idea which is less pressure from coaches. I think that this would come hand in hand with the option of attending matches but it will create a more supportive environment for players that feel that they don't deserve to be on the team as they coach instead of in some cases putting them down which in many cases leads them to quit lifts them up and gives them the opportunity to flourish in a sport that has impacted on so many lives.

Lastly, all of these methods should show that there is more of an emphasis on mental health in the club community. Mental health is a major part of the world and society in general and this needs to be brought to clubs no matter if it is a camogie club or hurling club. These are our methods to prevent camogie retention.

# **Results & Recommendations :**

As you can see from the methods above, these are just a few ideas of how we can prevent camogie retention. A more supportive environment for all camogie club members and an emphasis on mental health for the players is key to reduce camogie retention.

As part of our project we did some market research and interviewed girls in transition year in our school. We interviewed girls who played camogie before and girls who still play camogie. In our interviews we asked certain questions such as : Do you enjoy playing camogie?,Why did you drop out of camogie? , What do you like about camogie?, What was your relationship between your coaches and teammates, different opinions and what their benefits were playing with their camogie club. These girls experiences past and present were also recorded.

Interview A was on a girl who dropped out of camogie . She had played camogie from the ages of 6 to 14. She joined the sport because her Mam thought it would be important to get along with people in her club and community. Her reason for dropping out was because of her coach and the team players. She felt as if she didn't fit in and wasn't included. Too much competition and rivalry amongst her team. Her team coach wasn't supportive and an unkind environment was established between them. This gave her fear and she didn't want to pursue playing camogie. This clearly affected her mental health and wasn't enjoyable anymore. This girl we interviewed could see the dropout rate as she left the club to rise. These atmospheres and environments affected more than just one girl on the team. If interview A had a different experience in her club and had a steady relationship with her coach things would be different and fear wouldn't be the reason for her love of the sport to stop.

As for interview B , this girl is involved with her camogie club still and loves to play camogie. She gets along well with her teammates and coaches. Interview B loves being involved in her camogie club as the social benefits and meeting people is important to her. She loves the activeness and playing matches. This girl doesn't have the same experience as interview A, it isn't common for many camogie dropouts in her club and the participation is huge. In her opinion competition amongst teammates and game time for each player is a pull on the team. Compared to interview A , this girl has a different approach to the love for her club. She doesn't have fear turning up to training and afraid to be played at matches.

We also got the opportunity to interview a woman ahead of the camogie committee. We asked her a few questions such as , Why did she get involved in the committee? This woman had two daughters playing and was interested in supporting them. Another question that was asked was in her opinion does she think it is important to play camogie?, "It is great for physical health with also physical development and being active which brings benefits such as meeting new people and playing with girls your own age. Mental health is so important and the main aim is for everyone to be looked after for and enjoy playing camogie for the love of the game."

We asked this woman in the interview what age does she tend to see a dropout rate in, She told us that 14 - 15 is when she sees a drop off in teenagers playing. The biggest age group in the club that this woman is involved in would be under 10's, u8's and a steady growth in numbers with u6's. The main factors to camogie retention that had been highlighted above in the introduction and the method of this project is involvement with a team spirit, buses to organise matches and fair play. If the key factors are equally given to each player the dropout rates for camogie would be much lower. Coaches, trainers , managers should be supportive and inclusive to all players . A good relationship will bring success to the team and team spirit. The player's mental health should always be the main priority and not to push them till they can't enjoy their sport anymore. A balance and knowing what your able for is best.