

ON THE BALL

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION


Summer 2020



**THE
CAMOGIE
ASSOCIATION**

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Uachtarán Kathleen Woods with Lily Dunne at the Volunteer and Media Awards in Croke Park in February.



Foreword

You are very welcome to the Summer edition of the On the Ball magazine in what has been unprecedented and challenging times for all of our members and society in general all over the world.

While we have not taken to the field together in what feels like a long time, we know that together by showing compassion and respect for our current situation that we can come back even stronger and more connected than ever before.

For now, we need to show teamwork of another kind and look out for our members, players and volunteers. Our game is, and always has been about the love of community, and while we cannot show that love of community in person together, let's continue to show it by picking up the phone or checking in on friends and members. Isolation can be difficult for even the strongest of characters.

This sport is where we have made friends for life and created memories we will cherish forever. Those days will return in due course and it is important that we don't lose sight of the future ahead.

The staff of the Association have been working hard to deliver Camogie content through various online platforms. By doing this we have remained connected with you through webinars in coaching, refereeing etc., interviews, games and quizzes, and lots more of

online content. We hope it has benefited in helping to get you through social distancing restrictions.

We are delighted that our facilities are opening back up to the public, and we can start to play and train again with our teammates. I would urge you all to follow all the necessary guidelines to ensure a safe return to play for all our members.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Association to express my sincerest condolences to any of you who may have lost a loved one due to COVID-19. I hope you can find the peace and courage to get through the difficult days ahead. You are not alone.

For now we keep the sliotar moving throughout these pages, and I hope that over the coming weeks and for the remainder of the pandemic situation that all of our members remain safe and healthy and continue to abide by the government protocols, while enjoying the summer sunshine.

I look forward to seeing you all in the near future!

Stay safe.

Kathleen Woods
Uachtarán an Cumann Camógaíochta



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Ellie Sheehy (right) in action in Croke Park during Seachtaine na Gaeilge.

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Wheelchair Hurling

A Spoke of Brilliance

by Sarah Stanley



Inspirational. Just one of many motivational words that can be used to describe Ellie Sheehy and her many accomplishments.

A three-time All-Ireland champion and a two-time All-Stars recipient in her teenage years, it had been a tougher start to life for her than most. The Tipperary native was born with Spina Bifida and has been a wheelchair user all her life.

That was a barrier that was used for greatness when she started taking part in wheelchair hurling in 2012.

Wheelchair hurling has been taking place in communities for almost 26 years and despite being called hurling, there is a mix of both men and women on the team.

When Sheehy heard about the sport she got involved from an early age and hasn't looked back since.

"I was in primary school and one of my teachers saw an advertisement in the local paper for the wheelchair hurling. So, my father and I decided to go in one evening to have a look and I haven't looked back since" Sheehy explains.

She has been a member of the Munster Wheelchair Hurling team based in Limerick where she trains every Thursday night from 7pm to 9pm in Delta Sports Arena in Limerick. While training is enjoyable, it is matchdays that Sheehy loves partaking in.

"I really enjoy everything about wheelchair hurling, but one of my favourites is definitely matchdays. Although we only have a few big days during the year they are really enjoyable as you get to meet old players that you are friendly with and you get the opportunity to meet the newer players that have joined."

Since the Tipperary star began, there have been developments within the game that have continued to improve the quality of matches and players alike.

"The game itself has developed a lot since I started. It began with the match being all ground hurling. Whereas now, they have introduced new parts of the game such as the ability to score points from sidelines to letting the keepers roll-lift the sliotar for a puck-out."

However, while there have been many positives, Sheehy would like to see more wheelchair users try the sport and get involved in the future.

"For me, I would like to see some more people get involved, especially women. There are only five women playing wheelchair hurling at senior level in this male-dominated sport. I would also like to see more opportunities for all players in general. It would be great if the game was promoted more too".

So, how does the season work?

"The wheelchair hurling season consists of an interprovincial league which has four provincial rounds. Each team plays three games and points are awarded for each game."

"The All-Ireland is played at the end of the season where a round-robin tournament is played. Then the 3rd and 4th team play each other and then the top two play each other for the All-Ireland Title."

Despite having many memorable moments in the sport, she has chosen her latest triumph as one of her favourite moments to date.

"Trying to pick one thing as my favourite moment is hard as I really enjoy all aspects of wheelchair hurling. One that stands out has to be the All-Ireland in 2019 as Munster hadn't won an All-Ireland in a number of years and also either of my two All-Stars."

Her inspiration deserves nationwide coverage, and her determination to continue succeeding is top class.

"I would love to win a few more All-Irelands and League titles with Munster and another few All-Stars of course. It would be an aim of mine to be the first woman on the Irish Wheelchair Floorball Squad."

CÁIT DEVANE



Cáit Devane in action in the Littlewoods
Ireland Camogie Leagues Camogie
League Round 5 in March

“The most important thing is people’s safety, health and well-being and everything else is secondary to that”

by Sarah Stanley

The last few months have been “very hard to comprehend” for people all over the world. Tipperary ace Cáit Devane has felt the same.

Despite the current climate, she has remained in positive spirits and has continued to keep herself busy despite the surrounding restrictions the COVID-19 pandemic has brought.

Without Camogie, things have felt very different. Not being able to train, meet teammates and play matches is something that has felt very unusual for the athlete.

“I think this scenario has made me realise how important and in a strange way how unimportant sport is, if that makes any sense. Things have definitely been put into perspective for everyone and at the moment the most important thing is people’s safety, health and well-being and everything else is secondary to that.

“With that said the lack of sport over the last while has highlighted how central sport is in my life. I miss every aspect of it, playing matches, training, watching it on telly, going to support the local club GAA teams, everything! When we do resume, we will all appreciate it more and not take it for granted.

“One of the main reasons I love playing is the team aspect and camaraderie that is associated with it. This is the thing I have missed most over the last couple of weeks.”

So how has the 2018 All-Stars recipient kept in contact with her teammates throughout lockdown?

“We are finding new ways to interact and stay in touch, through various team challenges on WhatsApp and Zoom which has helped keep spirits high. I think

when this is all over its something we will appreciate even more.”

Despite not being able to play, the situation everyone faced brought harsh realities to the surface.

“I do feel like the lockdown has opened people’s eyes to what is really important in life. Sometimes we can get caught up with things that really don’t matter, family, friends and good health have become peoples priority and it’s nice to see.”

Busy is a word that would certainly be associated with the Clonoulty/Rossmore club player. If living on a farm in the countryside didn’t bring enough work, Devane used the opportunity to learn new things, keep up some fitness and take online courses to pass the time.

“I count myself incredibly lucky to live on a farm in the countryside. I would have a keen interest in it and find myself loving the opportunity to lend a helping hand and make the most of the unusually lovely weather.

“I have resurrected an old bike we had at home and have gotten out on the roads a bit. It is a lovely way to get some exercise and fresh air. I’ve also had the chance to avail of the online WPGA short courses being run in conjunction with Setanta College. They have made a nutrition and a strength and conditioning one available which I really enjoyed and found very interesting.”

The situation has been tough on families all over the country, and the county star has sympathy for all those families affected during the pandemic.

“My heart goes out to the families who have been affected, I have so much respect

and admiration for the front-line workers who are making such incredible efforts to protect the most vulnerable in our society.”

The isolation period was made all the harder by not being able to meet the newest member of her family.

“My brother and his wife had a baby boy in March and due to the travel restrictions, we hadn’t met him which has been tough on all of the family. However, I have been extremely lucky that none of my loved ones have been directly affected, thank God.”

Her daily work routine as a teacher in Presentation Secondary School in Thurles meant she had to adapt her working routine to the current climate, but given her positive nature, it was a challenge she embraced.

“Since mid-March we have been teaching classes remotely. This in itself brings its own challenges, but we have been able to put provisions in place to allow us to teach virtually so the students are still getting course work and contact time with teachers every week.

“For me this is something that has been really important as it maintains a level of normality and routine for both teachers and students.”

Despite the busy lifestyle Devane did find time to relax and enjoy some quiet time when the opportunity presented itself.

“Over the last few weeks I have really enjoyed The English Game and The Last Dance on Netflix. TG4 and the RTE player have been life savers too with the reruns of the hurling and Camogie All-Ireland finals. Without them at the weekends I think I would be gone insane. Quality viewing!”

Mind Your Mental Health

The spread of Coronavirus is a new and challenging event. It's normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis like this and it is important that we look after ourselves first before trying to help others.

The GAA Community and Health department (www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/community-and-health/) and Mentalhealthireland.ie has lots of advice and information to help you look after your mental health. If you struggle with day-to-day fears and anxieties, there are

steps you can take to help you cope. Mental Health Ireland has shared five simple actions we can all take to protect our mental health and maintain positive wellbeing during uncertain and challenging times.



We can do many things to stay connected with our friends and family even if we cannot see them in person. Emailing, calling, texting or even writing letters are great ways to keep in touch. Set aside some time each day to catch up with a friend or relative. Plan and set aside some time to chat. Try to actively maintain social contact groups using Skype, Zoom, Text, Telecall or WhatsApp. The increased time spent at home can be challenging for

some families, but it can also be an opportunity to reconnect with our loved ones once again. Connecting with others can help us regain a sense of purpose and belonging. This is especially important when we are feeling more disconnected physically from family. Let's take this opportunity to have longer conversations and really listen to what they have to say. All these communication gestures can help us feel truly close and connected.



Get as much sunlight, fresh air and nature as you can, while maintaining a social distance. Keep a routine that involves some form of exercise (walking, running, cycling, gardening). Spending time in green, natural space can benefit both your

mental and physical wellbeing. It can improve your mood, reduce feelings of stress or anger, and make you feel more relaxed. Free online workouts to complete with the online community or in your own time.



Being mindful of how we are feeling currently is important. Noticing these feelings can help us to address them. Limit the time spent reading or listening to news reports and social media. Try to include some time in your day to 'Digitally Disconnect', this will help to regain a sense of perspective and give an opportunity for reflection. Be mindful of where you source your information from also; only use reputable Irish sources such as the HSE or Government sources. Taking a reflective moment to appreciate our immediate surroundings is beneficial. Taking notice can include noticing the birds singing, the trees rustling in the wind and flowers in bloom. Taking notice of ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, and

the world around us helps to improve our mood and our sense of wellbeing. Paying attention to the present moment, to the simple details of the day – the scent of coffee, a child's smile, or a favourite song on the radio. When we stand in that moment, our brain gets an opportunity to process the pleasure, boosting feel-good hormone levels that helps elevate mood and keeps us calm. If we are out of our usual routine, our sleep can be disrupted. Give your sleep patterns some thought, identifying the things that help you get a good night's sleep. Aim to keep a good routine by going to bed and getting up at the same time each day. If the uncertainty of the current situation is causing you to lose sleep, talk about your worries with friends and family or your GP rather than trying to cope alone.



Try something new. Signing up for short online courses or trying something as simple as cooking a new recipe a few times a week can help give us a sense of purpose, focus, and keep our mind active. It may even be as simple as learning a new card game, a breathing technique, or a new word in a

different language each day. Develop a varied diet of coping strategies to maintain good mental health and be generous – share your ideas with friends and family. The best coping strategies are the ones that are healthy.



We have seen an incredible and spontaneous increase in the number of community response groups offering services to the elderly or most vulnerable in our community. Volunteering your time with these services, if safe to do so, can help give you a sense of belonging. Offer your time, skills, expertise and availability – it makes a real difference and will help to channel any anxiety you may be feeling. Giving can also include something as simple as making someone a cup of tea or telling a joke.

Give yourself the space and time to look after yourself. Give yourself a treat. When you've made that call you've been dreading, for example, reinforce your success by treating yourself (a massage, a country walk, a movie, a little gift that makes you happy, make a healthy meal or taking 20 minutes to yourself if the house is crowded). Remember one of the biggest acts of giving any of us can do at this time is to adhere to the public health guidelines.

ONLINE upskilling



STAYING CONNECTED

Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic our members have been engaging in various online courses and webinars to continue upskilling without leaving the comfort of their own home.

Here are some of the courses that have taken place:

- Good Governance Webinar
- Fostering Wellbeing and Resilience during Covid-19
- Finance and Governance for Club Treasurer Webinar
- 'How to Guides' for video conferencing using Microsoft Teams and Zoom
- Upskilling Volunteers using Office 365 - Outlook, Teams, Excel, PowerPoint, OneDrive and Word.
- Club and County Secretary Q&A Webinar
- County PRO Webinar
- Club Strategic Planning
- Celebrating and Supporting our Officers - A Wellbeing Webinar

UPCOMING :

Succession Planning document will be released and followed up with training and webinars. This will outline ways to attract, train and retain volunteers and prepare people for roles within club and county committees to ensure consistency and development.

Finance training for Camogie Treasurers will be designed to provide templates and straight forward advice to help volunteers streamline financial procedures within their clubs.



Keep up to date with the latest news and events by visiting www.camogie.ie or finding us on our social media channels



BETH CARTON



Beth Carton scores a penalty
in the UPMC Ashbourne Cup
Final in February

On surviving lockdown, completing college and learning to cook!

by Sarah Stanley

Like many, the last few months in lockdown have been tough, sentiments echoed by Waterford star Beth Carton. Having entered her final year of college, the stress of the unknown looming, it certainly takes its toll.

“The last few months have definitely been difficult with this new situation we find ourselves in. However, everyone in Ireland and in the world are in the same position and some of us can count ourselves lucky that we, our families and friends are safe and healthy at this time”, Carton explains.

When the lockdown procedures were announced, Carton was located in Limerick for college, where she was studying her final year of teaching (PE and Geography). The finishing line for college was in sight, final year work being undertaken, and exam preparation was underway.

While many saw disadvantages to the situation, the two-time All-Stars winner was thankful for the distractions the college work brought.

“It has been a stressful few weeks with everything happening around us while still trying to concentrate on completing our assignments. However, the college work aspect has kept me busy and occupied over the previous few weeks and this is actually something that I am extremely grateful for. The lecturers in UL have been fantastic and very considerate of the position we find ourselves in”.

Despite not having Camogie to fall back on in those difficult times, the Waterford athlete continued to engage in regular exercise to maintain her fitness levels.

“Exercise has been an essential part of my daily routine as it certainly helps to clear the head, and a nice break from the college work.

“I have mainly kept myself occupied by going for walks, runs, pucks etc. We have a rebounder out the back which is getting good use in

an attempt to keep the ball work up. I also have home sessions and running sessions that must be completed throughout the week.”, she explains.

Despite the busy nature of her routine, Carton did manage to upgrade on other skills during her downtime.

“I have probably learned a bit more about cooking. You would get fed up of the same food, so I suppose learning to cook a variety of dishes. I say my housemates could have different to say about that one.”

The loss of Camogie during the last few months has proved as a reminder of how much the De La Salle Club player loves the sport.

“It certainly reminds me of the importance of Camogie in my life. Everything revolved around it prior to this. Every decision was made to suit training, a match etc.

“Prior to this life was going at a million miles between balancing final year college work with college Camogie, county Camogie and part-time work. Now, there is certainly more of a perspective on life and that just right now Camogie is not the most important thing.”

Despite this, Carton reveals she has missed seeing her teammates and meeting up on a regular basis.

“You would certainly miss the craic with the girls. You would miss the buzz at trainings and the atmosphere leading into a big game and you would even miss the hard-tough trainings as they must be done on your own now.”

Thankfully, the framework to return to action has been released, and a return to action for Carton and her teammates is upon us soon.



M.N.A PROGRAMME

The Aims and Objectives

Through this programme the Camogie Association hope to achieve increased women's sustained involvement in sport as coaches primarily, and mentors at the grassroots of our organisation.

This programme will primarily look at the development of female mentors within clubs around the country, while also assisting and allowing clubs to identify coaches, provide education, resources, and supports which allow any club to embrace this programme.

We hope to build on our successful Hurl With Me programme which was developed and supported initially through Sport Ireland Funding and we aim to develop it further with the support of the Women in Sport Grant to support and increase the number of qualified female coaches at the grassroots level.

THE OBJECTIVES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- To positively influence perceptions about females in sport.
- Increase the number of female coaches through recruitment, development, and retention of female coaches.
- Identify and develop female mentors at grassroots to help with the development and support of female coaches along their coaching pathway.

- Create and deliver a model directed at local level which can be engaged by all clubs to enhance the development of female coaches where the greatest impact will be felt and seen.
- Provide a sustainable model - which can potentially be continued at local, county and National level beyond any potential funding with adjustments.
- To increase opportunities for women to engage, enjoy and excel in all aspects of sport at a level of their choice.

As an Association our desired result is “to motivate our female members to engage with this opportunity, which will nurture our members while they are growing and developing as female coaches and provide support for each individual to aspire to their personal goals on their coaching journey”.

We also wanted to identify programmes already active which could link to this new programme such as our very successful “Hurl With Me” initiative which has been active over the past seven years.

During the first quarter of 2020 we upskilled our female coach developers within the Association so they could deliver this new programme.

On March 7th we hosted the first of two M.N.A Mentors training days. This training was held in two locations: LIT Thurles and the National Sport Campus.

Club M.N.A Mentors had an opportunity to meet and engage with each other, share ideas and thoughts, while also completing three and a half of the modules in upskilling. On the day they also received resources to take back to their clubs.

Day two of M.N.A Mentor training was due to take place two weeks later, on March 21st in the same locations, however due to COVID-19 this had to be cancelled. We were eager to somehow continue this training so, during the remaining weeks of March we adapted our modules to bring them online as four webinars which would be delivered over a four-week period.

We gave our M.N.A Mentors choices of times at which to engage and make it as easy and accessible as possible. Due to frontline commitment we had some M.N.A. Mentors that could not engage with this process and we as an Association will work with them once they can and are able to engage.

On completion of the four-week segment we provided a catch-up two-week period, where M.N.A Mentors could catch up on the webinars they could not complete during that period.

We hope that our Hurl With Me initiative can take place by all 52 M.N.A Clubs in the near future, adhering to HSE and Government guidelines. Naturally the outline of the programme will be adapted to ensure the safety and well-being and our members.



Ella Whelan with Susan Spillane and Referee Paul Ryan at the coin toss

Referee Updates:

PETER DOWNEY REFEREE ACADEMY 2020

The latest Referee Academy began in February 2020 with a seminar training event in Croke Park. The Academy is named after the late Peter Downey. Peter was a highly regarded Camogie and GAA referee. From Inniscarra in Cork, he was the chairperson of the Association's National Referee Committee for a number of years and he was instrumental in setting up the first National Camogie Referee Academy. Peter also helped develop the Camogie Association's Referee Pathway which was launched in 2015. It was only apt that the Peter Downey Referee Academy was unveiled in his name.

The new Academy is currently made up of 15 referees from across the country including Antrim, Galway, Kildare, Limerick, Meath, Offaly, Tipperary and Tyrone. Due to COVID-19, the academy didn't meet in May as planned. However, the academy members are also members of the National Referee Support Panel who recently took part in online training including a module on Line Umpire, and 4th and 5th Official training.

OTHER NEWS

- During COVID-19 our National Referee Panel have been taking part in a number of training events including: social media and media training, Trial Playing Rules, Line, Umpire and 4th and 5th official training.
- The Camogie Association offers a number of courses to those who wish to take up the whistle from a young age, as an adult and also offers refresher courses to assist existing referees. The courses available are: First Whistle Referee Course, Foundation Referee Course, Refresher Course and Conversion Course. For more information, check out <https://camogie.ie/development/refereeing>
- Referee in-service training will be available online in the coming weeks as part of a plan for a return to play for referees around the country. For more information, you can contact the Referee Education and Development Co-ordinator via email on lizzie.flynn@camogie.ie

LIFE & LOCKDOWN WITH AISLING MAHER



by Sarah Stanley



Aisling, how have you found the last few months in lockdown?

Obviously, it's not a situation that anyone wants to be in. It's very difficult being away from friends and teammates for an extended period of time but I'm learning to focus on the positives.

I'm very grateful that my family are healthy and well at the moment and I'm trying to use this time to focus on new areas that will develop me as a player for whenever normality returns.

What impact has it had on day-to-day-life?

I've been very fortunate as I went back to college to do a Masters this year so I've been able to keep studying and working on assignments from home, which has kept me busy and engaged.

How have you found life without Camogie training or matches?

Very strange! This is definitely the longest period of time that I've been at home without team training or matches. It's very difficult to adapt to making Camogie training an individual sport and I'm definitely missing my teammates.



I've a new-found respect for individual athletes, it takes me nearly 2 hours just to motivate myself to leave my house and do a session when I'm on my own!

What activities have you gotten up to to keep yourself occupied? Have you tried anything new?

I would have loved to try a new team sport, but obviously that's not really possible at the minute.

I've been doing a lot more running than I usually would which is giving me new challenges, and I've done some yoga as well for a bit of a change.

Does it make Camogie feel even more important in your life now that we haven't been able to take part during the lockdown?

Definitely, I promise to never complain about having to go to training again! (Or at least to try!)

Have you binged on any Netflix shows during the lockdown?

Yep – I think I've completed Netflix at this stage! I'm watching 'After Life' at the minute and also really enjoyed the 'Tiger King' hype.

What is your best survival tip for the coming weeks?

Be kind, look after people around you and stay in touch with friends, family and teammates as best you can.

Also keep the hurling work up, fitness will come back quicker than first touch will!





The following changes to the return to activity guidelines are being made after recommendations from this morning's Covid-19 Advisory Committee.

These changes were subsequently endorsed by the GAA, the Camogie Association and the LGFA.

- › Open pitches for Adult training next Wednesday, June 24th.
- › Open for Minor and below from Saturday, June 27th.
- › Both of the above on a non-contact basis and on the understanding that players and all participants have completed the eLearning module and are following the control measures in place (health questionnaire etc).
- › On the basis of a maximum of 15 players in a designated area of the field (26 Counties) and 10 players in a designated area of the field (6 Counties).
- › Coaching numbers for underage teams to be consistent with Code of Behaviour.

FROM JUNE 29TH:

- › Allow contact training and challenge games for all from Monday, June 29th (26 Counties).
- › We await guidance from the NI Executive in relation to 6 Counties – non-contact training in the numbers outlined above in the interim.
- › We also await clarification on what will constitute a close contact versus a casual contact.
- › Restriction on participants only attending training sessions to be relaxed from June 29th – subject to government specified maximum of 200 people in the ground.
- › Allow Club Fixtures from Friday July 17th.
- › No change to inter-county dates (Sept 14th for training; competitions to start on Oct 17th as planned).
- › All control measures for players, coaches and other team personnel (completion of health questionnaire, eLearning education etc) is to remain in place until advised otherwise; dressing rooms to remain closed until July 20th
- › The Advisory Committee is considering the position in relation to other GAA buildings (such as Club bars that are serving food, Gyms, Handball alleys etc). Guidance will be provided in this context before June 29th.

Coronavirus COVID-19



Help prevent coronavirus



Wash your hands



Cover mouth if coughing or sneezing



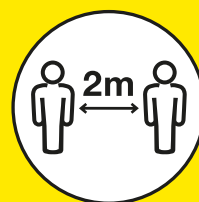
Avoid touching your face



Keep surfaces clean



Stop shaking hands and hugging



Keep a safe distance

The virus spreads in sneeze and cough droplets, so regularly taking the above measures helps reduce the chance of it spreading.

Visit [HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie)

For updated factual information and advice

Or call 1850 24 1850

Protection from coronavirus.
It's in our hands.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Pencil it into your calendar.

The Coaching Bubble is coming back, and this time with a twist!

In our new series that launched on **Tuesday, June 9th**, we focus solely on female coaches.

Throughout the series we speak to some of the top female coaches in the country to divulge on all coaching aspects from a variety of sports including Camogie, Athletics, Rugby and Soccer.

First up on the series is Kilkenny Camogie legend, Ann Downey. Ann shares an excellent insight into her coaching career, the beginning of the journey and the path she followed along the way.

Upcoming topics throughout the series include:

- > Coaches that influenced you
- > Coaching Versus Training
- > How your own sporting career has influenced your coaching
- > Transition from playing to coaching
- > Biggest challenge you have faced as a coach or Coach Developer
- > Your coaching philosophy

For more information on the Coaching Bubble Podcast or to listen to previous episodes visit www.camogie.ie