

**GAA Oral History Project**  
**Interview Report Form**

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| <b>Name of Interviewer</b>                          | Mark Farrelly   |
| <b>Date of Interview</b>                            | 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2010  |
| <b>Location</b>                                     | Boston College-Ireland, Dublin  |
| <b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname) | Brian Becker  |
| <b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>   |   |
| <b>Gender</b>                                       | Male  |
| <b>Born</b>   | <b>Year Born:</b> 1982<br><b>Home County:</b> The Americas, United States   |
| <b>Education</b>                                    | <b>Primary:</b> Our Lady of Council, Vienna, Virginia<br><b>Secondary:</b> Gonzaga College High School<br><b>Third Level:</b> Washington and Lee University |
| <b>Family</b>                                       | <b>Siblings:</b> 2 sisters<br><b>Current Family if Different:</b> Wife  |
| <b>Club(s)</b>                                      | Washington DC Gaels [Americas]  |
| <b>Occupation</b>                                   | Teacher   |
| <b>Parents' Occupation</b>                          | Mortgage banker, Non-profit management  |
| <b>Religion</b>                                     | Roman Catholic  |
| <b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>           | None  |
| <b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>             | None  |

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| <b>Date of Report</b>             | 11 <sup>th</sup> July 2012   |
| <b>Period Covered</b>             | 2000s - 2010   |
| <b>Counties/Countries Covered</b> | Americas, USA  |
| <b>Key Themes Covered</b>         | Administration, Alcohol, All-Ireland, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Challenges, Coaching, Education, Emigration, Facilities, Food and Drink, Fundraising, GAA Abroad, Grounds, Identity, Impact of life, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Media, Officials, Outsider's Perspectives, Playing, Professionalism, Opening of Croke Park, Refereeing, Relationship with the Association, Role of the Club in the Community, Socialising, Sponsorship, The Troubles, Training, Violence, Volunteers  |
| <b>Interview Summary</b>          | <p>Brian tells us about his personal background and how he came across the GAA on trips to Ireland, and in his studies on Ireland. He describes how he became involved as a player with Washington DC Gaels. Brian goes on to discuss many aspects of playing in America and the GAA in America. He compares aspects of the GAA to other sports, especially American Football. Brian describes the plight of GAA clubs in America, and the role they play in the community. He talks about his experiences of watching GAA matches in Ireland. Brian gives his views on aspects of GAA which he feels are most relevant today, he also uses other sports as examples to compare these aspects to such as video evidence etc.</p> <p>00:00:27 Gives personal background, and lists other sports he's played, American football, baseball, basketball. He met people from Washington DC Gaels at an expo. He joined DC Gaels this year. He has relations in Ballina, Co. Mayo.</p> <p>00:02:37 Attraction to the sport. Compares hurling and football to each other and other sports he has played like basketball. He discusses differences in training. Gaelic football requires a different level of fitness.</p> <p>00:04:24 Difference between Gaelic football in Ireland, and in the USA. Huge difference in skill, football in Ireland is much more advanced. Basics are tough to master. Irish players on almost every club team, they help guide and train. Teams are more spread out across America. Harder to find games, and they have long journeys e.g. Charlotte, North Carolina, Boston and San Francisco. The amount of volunteers in Irish</p> |

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|  | <p>clubs a far greater than in America.</p> <p>00:07:09 Irish players on American club teams. Irish students generally welcomed with open arms, he is interested to hear their perspective.</p> <p>00:08:00 Volunteering in GAA and other sports, and issues relating to payment in sports. Argues the similarities and differences between volunteering in the GAA and American sports, using little league baseball as an example. He speaks about the division in America between amateur and professional sports. He describes American football in college. He discusses payment of coaches in GAA clubs in America, and Irish people getting enticements to come over to play football in America. He compares this to American football payments structure. He discusses the issue of coaches getting paid in Irish clubs and county teams, and professionalism overall in the GAA.</p> <p>00:12:03 Experiences with GAA oral history. He talks about the oral history of American football and the community aspect of the GAA. Gives his view on the provincial championships in Ireland, and draws parallels to conference championships in America. He speaks about his experiences with clubs in Ireland and the comparisons between Washington DC Gaels and clubs 50 years ago in Ireland. Addresses issue of a broad demographic background of people coming to DC and compares it to Faughs GAA club in Dublin, and other issues such as fundraising, grounds, and exposure.</p> <p>00:17:25 The GAA's attitude towards GAA teams in America. He discusses the support from headquarters and their recognition of clubs outside Ireland, level of interaction, and possibilities of greater support from the GAA. He talks about coaching programs in the GAA and possibility of such programs in the States.</p> <p>00:19:21 First thoughts of the GAA when he seen some matches for the first time. He describes tourists' reaction to seeing them training in DC and the exposure they got.</p> <p>00:20:32 The types of people in America who are attracted to the GAA. He talks about former soccer players who come to play. He discusses the other sports people play such as</p> |
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|  | <p>kickball, and the soccer leagues.</p> <p>00:22:20 The community aspect of the GAA in America. The size of America and the issues related to this such as travelling times to training, matches etc. create issues. He tells a story about inviting people to come to the bar with him for drinks and food. He discusses the friendships created between clubs and between people who play GAA in America. He talks about how GAA has gone from a sideshow at festivals in America to a more competitive feel.</p> <p>00:25:51 Trips to Croke Park. He went to the Leinster Senior Football Semi Finals this year. Discusses the experiences of going and what he learns.</p> <p>00:26:40 He gives his views on video evidence in the GAA. He talks about cases of goals in GAA, and fairness in sport. He describes the system in American Ice Hockey used for video evidence in relation to goals scored and compares it to problems in the GAA.</p> <p>00:29:11 Other big things he has noticed whilst watching GAA. He talks about the fans storming the field, and how it is not allowed in American football. He discusses the events after the match between Louth and Meath in the Leinster Senior Football Final 2010.</p> <p>00:30:10 Discusses the difference between going to a GAA match and an American football match and issues such as alcohol consumption, and family.</p> <p>00:31:32 Aspects of the game play in Gaelic Football matches.</p> <p>00:32:14 GAA Oral History Project. Describes how he got involved in the project and his gives his thoughts on it. Discusses the challenges the GAA faces in the coming years. Also talks about the issues within the GAA recently such as foreign sports, and sectarianism. He wants to follow up on the negative stories about the GAA.</p> <p>35:10 Discusses the questionnaires he has read for the project and the people who fill them out. Tells a story about a woman who answered a questionnaire and tells stories about her grandparents dating back to 1889. Discusses how far the GAA has come.</p> |
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|   | <p>00:36:15 Discusses the project and how it will be viewed in generations to come. Addresses the issue of professionalism in GAA, and aspects of it being an amateur organisation</p> <p>00:38:40 Aspects of the GAA he can bring back to his club in America. He discusses GAA fundraisers in America, and the opportunities for improving the community aspect in GAA clubs in America. He considers the problem of people leaving DC.</p>   |
| <b>Involvement in GAA</b>   | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p> |
| <b>Record as a Player</b><br>(Titles won; Length of time played)    | N/A   |
| <b>Record as an Administrator</b><br>(Positions held; how long for) | N/A   |
| <b>Format</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual   |
| <b>Duration</b>   | Length of Interview: 00:40:00   |
| <b>Language</b>   | English   |

**To be filled in by Interviewer:**

I hereby assign the copyright of the content of the above to the GAA Oral History Project on the understanding that the content will not be used in a derogatory manner. I understand that I am giving the GAA Oral History Project the right to use and make available to the public the content of this interview.

Signed: Mark Farrelly

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010