



WORLD GAA GAMES 2026 OFFICIAL COMPETITION CHARTER

Monday, July 13th – Friday, July 17th

Release Date	October 2025 World GAA Council.
Updated Date	April 2026 World GAA Council

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Charter Overview

This Charter sets out the Tournament Regulations and Playing Rules adopted by the World GAA Council for the World GAA Games.

Further to approval from World GAA Council, a Competitions Control Committee (CCC) shall be appointed for the World GAA Games.

The CCC will be chaired by the Chairperson of the World GAA Council and will also include representatives from the Camogie Association and the LGFA

A Hearing's Committee will be appointed – A Chair (from the LGFA) will be appointed and will also include representatives from the GAA and Camogie Association.

An Appeals Committee will be appointed – A Chair (from the Camogie Association) will be appointed and will also include representatives from the GAA and the LGFA

Full detail on the composition and the operation of the World GAA Games CCC, Hearings and Appeals Committees is contained in Section 7.

Section 1: Players

1.1 Player Eligibility

- a) Player Eligibility is determined based on three criteria: membership, residency, and birthplace.
- b) Players must be members of either an international GAA, LGFA or Camogie unit or from a GAA, LGFA Camogie club in Britain and evidence of membership must be available on Foireann or on request by the World GAA Games CCC.
- c) Players must be resident in their nominated country/team region from no later than October 31st, 2025. A 'team region' may consist of a group of countries.
- d) Players participating in the 'International born' competitions must not have been born on the island of Ireland.
- e) Any player regardless of nationality, who participated in Games Development youth structure in the 32 counties of Ireland (12-17 years old) cannot compete in the 'International born' grade. However, any such player is welcome to play in the 'open' grade of the competition.
- f) A player as of **Monday July 13th, 2026**, must be 18 years of age to participate in the World GAA Games
- g) Any player participating in the World Games must have their own health insurance and travel insurance. Proof of insurance must be submitted to the county board by close of business on **Friday, July 3rd, 2026**. We are not in a position to advise on insurance policy cover for travelling teams. Participants will need to make their own arrangements to ensure they have cover for the trip which includes cover for a playing injury.
- h) Players are not eligible to participate in the 2026 World GAA Games if they compete in a competitive match in Ireland after **January 1st, 2026**, with any club, county, or team other than the region or team they intend to represent at the 2026 World GAA Games.

Section 2: Teams

2.1 Team Eligibility

- a) GAA/LGFA/Camogie

Entry to the Competition is open to all International Units and GAA/LGFA/Camogie Clubs in Britain. To be eligible, a team must have registered and received approval from their governing body in accordance with the approved application process. If the club / team does not have a unit allocated to them, approval from the World GAA Council is required. See 2.9 below for Handball.

2.2 Panel Composition

Panels are limited to a maximum of fourteen (14) players for the duration of the competition. In the event that a team panel loses a player or players named on the official registered team-list prior to the commencement of the competition, whether due to injury, ineligibility, or other verified cause, the affected player(s) may be replaced, subject to compliance with the Player Eligibility Guidelines **and with the prior approval of the CCC of the World GAA Games**.

All requests for replacement must be submitted in writing (including relevant supporting documentation, such as medical certification where applicable) to the CCC. Requests will be reviewed within 2 business hours (Ireland Time) of receipt and, where possible, decisions will be communicated before the team's next scheduled fixture. For example, if a player sustains an injury at 10:00am on Day 1 and the team's next match is at 2:00pm, the CCC will aim to issue a decision

before that 2:00pm fixture. The CCC reserves the right to verify all documentation and may reject any request that does not meet the standards of fairness, eligibility, or timely submission.

2.3 Pitch – Coordinator Role

To ensure all games are played on time according to the fixtures' schedule.

To ensure all match officials are in place prior to each match.

To ensure required playing equipment is in place for the game.

To ensure match results and match reports are signed off by the Referee and relayed to the World Games Office.

2.4 Team Composition

Teams are limited to a maximum of nine (9) players on the field of play at any one time.

2.5 Team Adherence to Fixtures

Teams must report to the Pitch Coordinator and be ready to start their match 10 minutes before the scheduled start time of the game.

As soon as the pitch is available, the two teams will take the field. Each team must have a minimum of 7 players on the field for the game to start at the beginning of each half.

The Referee will throw the ball in on time once there is a minimum of 7 players from each team on the field.

A team that causes a game to be delayed for more than 2 minutes will forfeit the game. Time will be noted by the Referee and relayed to the World Games CCC.

2.6 Team Kit

Each team panel must wear individually numbered playing jerseys, with standard numbers 1 to 14 assigned to the starting players. These numbers must be clearly visible on the back of each jersey and must not be duplicated within the team panel.

In Camogie, goalkeepers may wear the same jersey design as outfield players, provided the assigned number clearly identifies the goalkeeper (typically No. 1).

Teams are encouraged to have additional jerseys numbered 15 and 16 available for use by:

- Blood substitutes, or
- Approved player replacements (e.g., in the event of pre-tournament injury or ineligibility, as sanctioned by the CCC).

In the event of a colour clash between two opposing teams, a coin toss will be conducted to determine which team must wear an alternative jersey or coloured bibs for that fixture. All alternate kits or bibs must also comply with numbering and visibility standards. Pitch coordinator will have numbered bibs available if required.

2.7 Team Registration

The team registration fee, €500, is required to be paid by or on behalf of each team by COB on Friday, **January 30th, 2026**.

Post tournament, €300 will be returned to each team on the condition all games were fulfilled during the tournament.

Each competing team shall submit their team registration along with proof of residency i.e. utility bill or proof of employment and proof of insurance to centrally supplied shared folder by close of business on **Friday, July 3rd, 2026**. The county board are required to provide all registration documentation to the CCC on request.

All details must be available for inspection on request during the Competition.
Wrist bands will be supplied to all players; ID badges will be supplied to the team mentors.

2.8 Team mentors

Each team shall be accompanied on the playing field by a maximum of two team mentors. Each team mentor will be provided with a bib for identification purposes. The names of the mentors must be provided on the team registration sheet prior to the competition

2.9 Handball

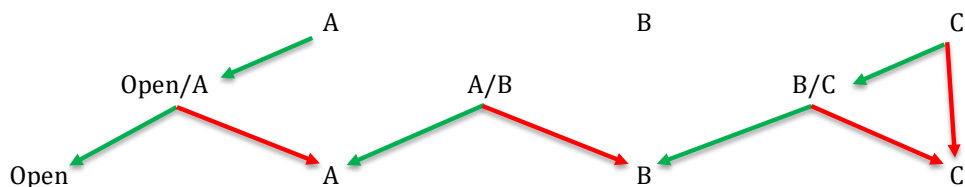
Entry to the Competition is open to all International Units. To be eligible, a team must have registered with Handball Ireland and received approval from their governing body in accordance with the approved application process. If the club/team does not have a unit allocated to them, approval from the World GAA Council is required.

Competition

As part of these games GAA Handball will offer games in the following divisions:

- Open (Established Advanced Players)
- A (Players with experience)
- B (Beginners Players)
- C (First time participants in the sport)

Matches will be run on a dropdown system where every player will be guaranteed 3 games, your third and subsequent matches being knockout's.



For example, if you enter the A division, your first match will be against someone from Division A, and your pathway then has two options:

Option one:

If you win, you're first match, you're in the Open/A split and it will be against the bottom half of the Open, if you win in your second match, you're in the Open Division, lose and you're in the A division.

Option Two:

If you lose your first match, you're in the A/B Split, win the second match, you're in the A division, lose the second match then you're in the B division.

Matches will be one game, it will be timed to 10 minutes, or first to reach 15 points.

Membership

A once-off GAA Handball membership will be included as part of the entry process. This membership fee is incorporated into the overall entry fee required to participate in the GAA World Games 2026.

The total entry fee for handball is €100. Post tournament, €50 will be returned to each player on the condition all games were fulfilled during the tournament.

The deadline for completing and submitting the required expression of interest form has been extended to Thursday April 30th, 2026 (GAA Handball only)

Section 3: Match Officials

3.1 Match Officials

At each game played as part of the Competition, the following Match Officials shall officiate:

- 1 Referee
- 4 Umpires
- 2 Linespersons (one to act as stand-by Referee)
- 1 Interchange Official

3.2 Appointment of Match Officials

Representatives of the GAA, World GAA, the Camogie Association and the LGFA will liaise to identify a panel of Match Officials for the World Games. Only Match Officials appointed to this panel can officiate at games.

Section 4: Competition Format

4.1 Competition Classifications

World Games competitions will be classified as either 'Open' or 'International born'. A player is only eligible to participate in **one** of these classifications and may **not compete in both**.

Open

Where a competition is classified as 'Open' participating players will be those who were born on the island of Ireland and / or international born players

International born

Where a competition is classified as 'International born' participating players birthplace is other than the island of Ireland.

Depending on affiliation numbers and the need to ensure that all teams are provided with a schedule of meaningful games, teams from both grades may be combined for grading and/or qualification purposes where this is not otherwise predetermined. Teams in the 'International born' grade may be graded to ensure meaningful games depending on registered number of teams. International born teams may be separated into international grade I or II depending on number of international born teams registered.

4.2 Game Duration

At the Group Stages, each game will consist of two halves – 12 minutes per half with a 2-minute half-time break.

At the Knock-out Stages, each game will consist of two halves – 12 minutes per half with a 2-minute half-time break.

The Finals of the competition will consist of two halves – 15 minutes per half with a 5-minute half-time break.

4.3 Extra-Time

Tiebreakers and Penalty Shootouts – Knock-Out Stage & Finals

- There shall be no Extra-Time for games played during the Group Stages.
- In the event of a drawn match during the Knock-Out Stages or Finals, Extra-Time will be played and shall consist of two periods of four (4) minutes, with a two (2) minute interval at half-time.
- If the game remains tied at the conclusion of Extra-Time, the outcome shall be decided by a penalty shootout, in accordance with the below rules:
 - Each team will nominate five (5) players to take a penalty:
 - From 11 metres (Football)
 - From 20 metres (Hurling/Camogie)
 - All shots to be taken from the centre of the goal line
 - If scores are still level after the initial five penalties per team, sudden-death penalties will apply using the same location and distance.
 - The five original penalty takers must also take the penalties in sudden death, although they do not have to follow the same order as in the previous round.
 - To be eligible to take a penalty (initial or sudden death), a player must have been on the field of play at the conclusion of Extra-Time. Players who were substituted or sent off prior to the end of Extra-Time are not eligible to participate in the shootout.
- In Extra-Time, any team that has a reduced number of players due to a red card may not replace the dismissed player(s) under any circumstances.
- Sin-Bin infractions (where applicable) are dealt with under Section 4.4 of the Charter. For the avoidance of doubt, Sin-Bin penalties do not carry over to the next game.

4.4 Sin Bin

- i. In GAA, a player who commits a black card infraction, shall be ordered off for 3 minutes in the Sin Bin.
- ii. In LGFA, a player committing a yellow card offence as per Rule 408 of the LGFA Official Guide shall be ordered off for 3 minutes playing time in the Sin Bin.
- iii. In Camogie, a player committing a yellow card offence as per Rule 10.1/2 of the Camogie Association's Official Guide (Cuid a do - 2024-27) shall be ordered off for 3 minutes in the Sin Bin.
- iv. The period in the Sin Bin shall be of 3 minutes duration irrespective of delays. The 3 minutes shall transverse normal time (which includes additional time) and Extra-Time if played.

4.5 Points System

At the Group Stages teams will be awarded points on the following basis:

- 2 Match Points (MP) for a win
- 1 Match Point (MP) for a draw
- 2 Match Points (MP) for a walk over

When teams finish with Equal Points for Qualification for the concluding stages repeat pairings will be avoided where possible, the tie shall be determined by the following means and in the order specified:

1. The higher number of League Points obtained in the 'Head-to-Head' games defined as the games in which the teams involved in the tie have played each other.

2. The higher Scoring Difference (subtracting the total Scores Against from total Scores For) in the 'Head-to-Head' games.
3. The higher Scores For in the 'Head-to-Head' games.
4. If, having applied criteria (i) to (iii) inclusive, there are still teams with an equal ranking, criteria (i) to (iii) are applied to the 'Head-to-Head' games between the teams which remain tied.
5. The higher Scoring Difference in all games in the League Group.
6. The higher Scores For in all games in the League Group.
7. A Play-Off.

Games Awarded Without Score (e.g., a walk -over) Involved in a Tie-Breaker Team Awarded Game. Its 'Average Score For' and 'Average Score Against' achieved in games played (in Head-to-Head or All the Group, as applicable) shall be added to its 'Score For' and 'Scores Against' totals. Team Against whom Game was Awarded. It shall have zero added to its 'Score For'. Its 'Average Score Against' conceded in games played (in Head-to-Head or All Group, as applicable) shall be added to its 'Score Against' total.

Section 5: Competition Regulations

5.1 Competition regulations will be circulated to all participating teams in advance of the Games.

5.2 The final fixtures schedule will be circulated no later than 10 days prior to the start of the competition.

These materials will be sent to both:

- The County Secretary of the relevant County Board, and
- The email address provided by the team at the time of registration.

It is the responsibility of each team to ensure that a valid and accurate email address is provided during registration. The organisers accept no responsibility for non-receipt of materials due to incorrect or inactive email addresses submitted by the team.

Section 6: Playing Rules and Discipline

6.1 Playing Rules of the World Games – General

The World Games will be played under the full Playing Rules of Gaelic football (FRC adaptation Appendix I), Hurling, Camogie and Ladies Gaelic football (as applicable save for the following exceptions:

- LGFA new rules ratified in 2026 will not apply.
- The Rules governing the number of Players are as set out in Section 1 of this Charter.
- The Rules governing Time – and sanctions involving extra time - are as set out in Section 4 of this Charter.
- A Kick-Out or Puck-Out can be taken either from the hands or off the ground. The ball shall be kicked or pucked out from within the small rectangle and all players, other than the player taking the kick-out or puck-out, shall be outside of the 13m line until the ball is played.
- The Rules governing substitution are replaced by interchange:

- A team may make an unlimited number of interchanges per half, but only from the 'Interchange Area'.
- The Interchange Area is constituted of an area - 5m Wide - marked adjacent to and either side of the Centre Line – on one side of the Field - through which players may enter and leave the field of play.
- A player coming off must have stepped into the Interchange Area before the Incoming players can step on the pitch to replace the next player.
- The baton must be physically exchanged from the player coming on to the player going off, i.e. the baton must be passed from hand-to-hand rather than thrown.
- In the event of a breach of procedure - player enters pitch before player being replaced (unless injured) has exited the Interchange Area or a player enters the field from anywhere other than the Interchange Area – a team will be subject to the following penalties:
 - a) Infraction by a team will result in a 45-metre free being awarded to the opposing team.

6.2 Playing Rules of the World Games - Gaelic Football

The following exception to the normal Playing Rules applies specifically to Gaelic football:

In 'International born' grade II (if applicable), Gaelic football a player may lift the ball from the ground with the hands provided the person concerned has at least one foot on the ground at the time of lifting.

6.3 Playing Rules of the World Games – Hurling / Camogie

Hurling & Camogie – A player cannot score from a puck out.

6.4 Discipline – Tournament Bans

Games will be played as per official guide as per the code of the competition.

A sending off for a Red Card Offence shall result in the following penalty:

- The offending player/s must report their correct name to the referee and must leave the field of play. He/she will be suspended for a minimum of one game. The CCC of the World Games reserves the right to propose additional sanctions, including debarment from the competition of teams that fail to comply with the rules of the World GAA Games.

Section 7: Disciplinary Matters for 2026 World GAA Games

7.1 World GAA Games Competitions Controls Committee

The World GAA Games Competitions Control Committee (CCC) of the World GAA Games shall comprise of the Cathaoirleach (nominated). The remaining members shall be drawn from GAA, Camogie and LGFA Associations.

- i. Be responsible for the scheduling, arrangements, and control of games (excluding the appointment of referees) under the auspices of the World Games Committee.
- ii. Investigate and process matters relating to the enforcement of the 2026 World GAA Games Charter and playing rules (including hearing objections and counter objections) and match regulations for competitions and games under the auspices of the World GAA Committee.

7.2 World Games Hearings Committee

A Hearing's Committee will be appointed. A Chair (from the LGFA) will be nominated, and the committee will comprise of representative drawn from each of the following: GAA, Camogie Association and LGFA.

The World GAA Games Hearings Committee shall:

- i. Act in lieu of the Central Hearings Committee to adjudicate on all matters where a Hearing is prescribed and requested relating to the Enforcement of Rules arising from matters under the jurisdiction of the World GAA Games Committee during the Tournament.

7.3 The World GAA Games Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee will be appointed. A Chair (from the Camogie Association) will be nominated, and the committee will comprise of representative drawn from each of the following: GAA, Camogie and LGFA.

The World GAA Games Appeals Committee shall:

- i. Act in lieu of the Central Appeals Committee to adjudicate on all matters where an appeal is prescribed and requested relating to the Enforcement of Rules arising from matters under the jurisdiction of the World GAA Games Committee during the Tournament.
- ii. Its decisions shall be final and binding.

7.4 Disciplinary Procedures

World GAA Games: The disciplinary procedures are set out below:

- Incidents shall be reported by the match referee in the match report. The report will be submitted immediately to the World GAA Games Competitions Control Committee.
- The CCC shall investigate whether any potential breach in rule has occurred.
- The World GAA Games CCC shall issue any proposed sanctions in all disciplinary cases as quickly as possible.
- The Unit representative must then notify the World GAA Games CCC verbally of any proposals to challenge a proposed sanction and request a hearing in writing within 30 minutes of receipt of the proposed sanction.

When a hearing is concluded, the individual must notify the World GAA Games Appeals Committee verbally of any proposal to Appeal the decision of the World GAA Games Hearings Committee within 15 minutes of the penalty being imposed and received in writing within 30 minutes.

Appendix I: FRC Adaptation

FRC Rules	1 v 1 throw in	Solo & Go	Tactical foul	Interfering with free kick/KO	Tactical foul	Contributing to a melee	50m forcefully challenging referee	20m free kick for dissent from a team official	U18 black card
World GAA Games									
9 a side	✓	✓	30m	30m	✓	✓	30m	✓	✓

Appendix II: Pitch Dimensions

