

# Hurling 2020

## Committee Report

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# Foreword



## Liam Sheedy

GAA President Liam O'Neill established the Hurling 2020 committee which was launched on June 5th in Croke Park. A huge coaching and developmental culture permeates hurling now but we were given a very broad briefing to look at all aspects of both hurling and the structures around the game. While everyone would agree that the game is in a healthy state, it would be foolish of us all to think that it cannot be further improved in the months and years ahead.

I was very fortunate to chair a committee that was steeped in the games of hurling and camogie for many years. The passion they have for the game was heartening, enthusiastic and infectious. Ultimately we want every person to get the opportunity to play our national game which is very much part of our culture. We would also hope that greater participation would foster some, or all, of the wonderful experiences we have got over the years from being involved in hurling at all levels. We absolutely believe we are doing the GAA and the game of hurling a massive injustice by not allowing this to happen. This will be our number one priority as we start that journey from 2015.

One of the key parts of this document regarding hurling participation and improving standards refers to a three-pronged approach of / Protect, Grow and Develop the game. That terminology and philosophy very much reflects the mindset of the committee. While the culture of our game is beautiful and highly expressive of our personality as a people, we really want hurling to go to the level we know it can reach. The potential of the game is absolutely massive. We hope to try and fulfil that potential right across the board.

Just as important as expanding the base, however, is realising the need to continue to strengthen that base. Making the roots even stronger, realising that the game cannot grow without the light and heat and food of continued hard work. With the brilliance of the last few Liam MacCarthy championships, there is a feeling that we are on the cusp of another golden era for the game. Yet we cannot just assume that this is going to just happen either. 15 of the last 16 All-Irelands have still been won by the traditional "Big Three" of Kilkenny, Cork and Tipperary.

After the revolution years of the 1990s, when Offaly, Clare and Wexford won five All-Irelands between 1994-'98, we thought the revolution would continue to rage. But it didn't. Some counties became complacent. Others didn't work hard enough to stay at the top. There are always a multitude of reasons and excuses when it comes to growing, developing and sustaining the game but complacency is a disease which is more lethal in hurling than in any other sport. This committee hopes to help eradicate that virus from hurling's mindset.

Outstanding work is taking place in some counties at underage and development level but this has to be applied consistently in every county. The target has to be to take the game from strength to strength in the top-tier counties. Equally, significant effort needs to be put into the tier two counties to give them every opportunity to get up to that top-tier. This committee passionately believes that a bottom-up approach, involving intensive schools programmes, the formation of new clubs, and strengthening of the links between both, to be critical in assisting tier three counties to move forward. If every child in the country is given an opportunity to have a hurley in their hand, and the club culture becomes stronger, then the game will grow stronger too, at every level.

As a Tipperary man, I have been proud and honoured to see my own county involved in some of the greatest hurling games of all time in the last five years. Yet as a hurling man, I would also dearly love to see other counties to try and reach that level. To be given the opportunity to try and reach that level. More importantly, increasing participation, expanding the playing base and growing the culture is just as big a form of success than winning cups and medals and trophies.

We would like to thank all of the people who helped us in gathering our data, whether through completing the online survey, which was extremely well supported by email or post, or through the numerous face to face meetings which were held with people who are actively involved in the game and

who share the same passion as ourselves. I certainly believe the report will do all of our engagements justice and it will stimulate the changes that will ensure the game continues to go from strength to strength in the coming years.

Hurling is the best field game in the world, a game with a unique and wonderful mix of speed, skill and courage, which continues to capture the attention of thousands and thousands of people everywhere. With Sky Sports and GAAGo now showcasing our wonderful game to a global audience, the capacity to grow and market our unique product has never been greater. That reality puts an even greater responsibility on all our shoulders to fulfil hurling's immense potential.

Our focus for now is very much on addressing the game and I see this document as being the initial report. There is plenty of hard work to be done but the committee view this document as a key step in moving forward on the great path ahead.

### Liam Sheedy

Chairman of the Hurling 2020 Committee



# Introduction / Methodology

In March 2014, GAA President Liam O’Neill established a committee to look at improving the game of hurling. Under the chairmanship of Liam Sheedy (Tipperary), other committee members included; Ed Donnelly (Secretary), Pat Henderson (Kilkenny), Des Cullinane (Cork), Terence “Sambo” Mc Naughton (Antrim), Ollie Moran (Limerick), Veronica Curtin (Galway), Frank Lohan (Clare), Ollie Canning (Galway) and Paul Flynn (Waterford). Michael Duignan (Offaly) also served as a member of the committee for a number of months before having to withdraw due to work and family commitments.

The committee’s first meeting took place on April 22 2014 when It was agreed to undergo an extensive consultation process to gain feedback on the current issues as they pertain to the game of hurling at all levels.

## 1. Web Site / Survey

The committee agreed to set up a website which would host a survey on the state of the game. This survey was completed by 3,859 people between June 25 and August 5. The survey took on average eight minutes to complete and all responses were anonymous. A number of additional comments and suggestions were sent through while an e-mail address (hurling@gaa.ie) has remained open during the duration of the committee’s work. Over 100 submissions have been received through e-mail and postal mail.

### Hurling 2020 Survey Executive Summary

Of those who completed the survey, 57% of those involved in hurling are fully paid up members of the GAA, while four in ten are either volunteers or actively participate in fund-raising.

On average, men are more likely to be coaches, club players, overseas club players and paid up members of the GAA. Women are more likely to be attendees at games (as parents of players) and much less likely to be volunteers, players or coaches.

### Who We Spoke To

Not surprisingly, under 25 year olds over-index as being players and under index on all other levels of involvement. Once respondents reach their late 20s, they are more likely than average to become GAA employees, club players and overseas club players. The number of respondents in their 40s (particularly women) who are only involved in the game of hurling because of their children is well above average. Respondents in their 60s substantially over-index in terms of passive involvement.

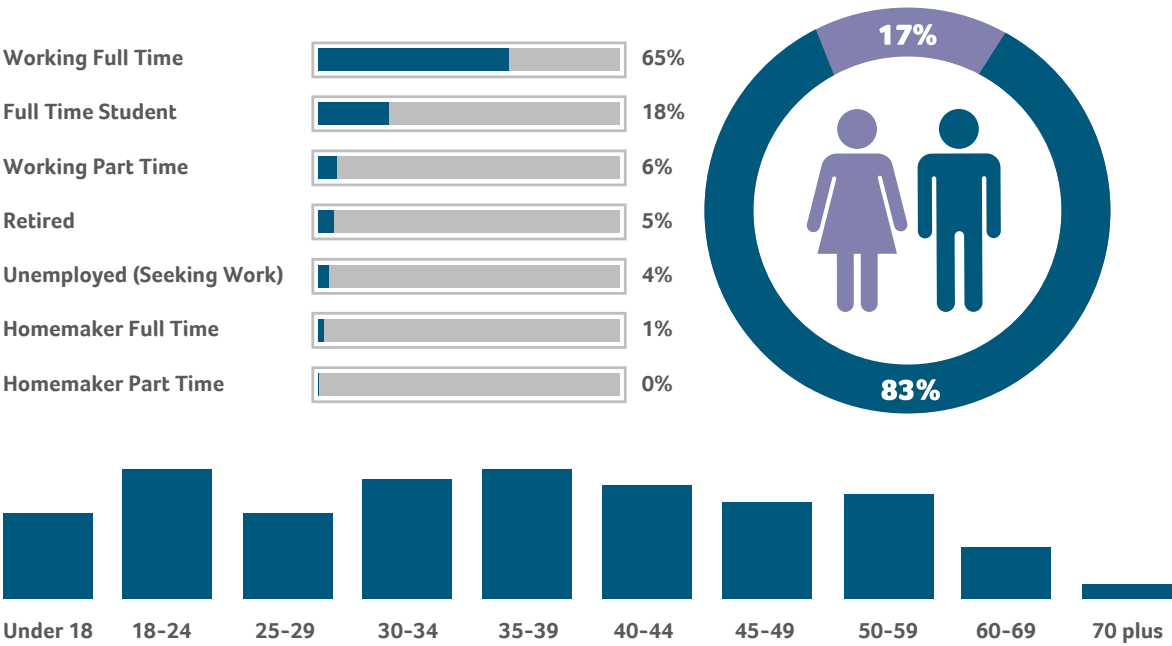
Half of all the men surveyed who are involved in hurling, and a quarter of the women in this group, also participate in football.

As a sport at senior inter-county level, senior club level, underage county level, under-age club level and third level college level, hurling is rated excellent or good by the majority of respondents.

At primary and post-primary level, the game did not rate as highly with the respondents. A significant minority rate the sport as poor, or very poor in schools, and also at third level.

The issues which respondents see as most pertinent to the school age game are:

- Investment in full-time coaching
- The belief that greater involvement from local hurling clubs in the schools would improve standards.
- Coaches are also more likely to see investment in coaching as essential than average.



The top five most attractive aspects of hurling include:

- Catching skills (which is mentioned by four in five respondents as among their top five)
- Hooking and blocking skills
- Long range point scoring
- Goal scoring
- Correct tackling.

When it comes to the negatives, referee inconsistency is top of the list. Player misbehaviour also ranks highly, as does negative and illegitimate tackling, and disrespect for referees. Women are especially exercised about time wasting, while men are much more concerned about the amount of ruck ball in the game now.

In relation to rules and refereeing at senior inter-county and club level, the majority of respondents favour the introduction of an advantage rule and a separate hurling referees committee. About half favour the use of a public time clock.

More fundamental changes to the way the game is played – as outlined in Section 2: Proposals for Rule Changes - are not supported to the same degree.

While February is the preferred month for the start of the Allianz Leagues, this is more evident among players than spectators. Only one in four respondents favours the existing format for the Allianz Leagues, with the more popular option being an eight team division 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Those involved in hurling are evenly divided in their opinion about the number of teams which should be relegated and promoted each season. The two up and two down option is marginally more popular than others.

About half of all those involved in hurling would like to see two League semi-finals and then a final. Spectators are most likely to favour the inclusion of four League quarter-finals also, though this is still only the view of one in three.

Unsurprisingly, fixture-making at club level comes under massive scrutiny, with only a minority rating it good or excellent, with 34% rating it poor or very poor. The most critical of fixture-making are players and coaches, with both showing a ‘net negative’ on this scale. A similar picture persists for under-age club level fixture-making, where there is a net positive of 11% overall, dropping to a net negative of 7% among players.

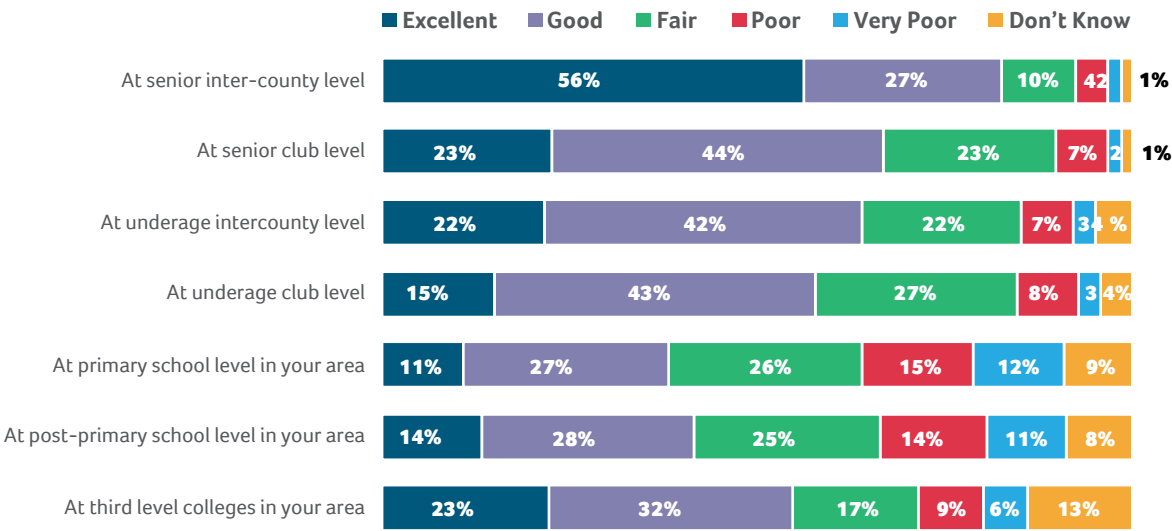
Overall, seven in 10 agree that there should be a national fixtures calendar for all club and county hurling fixtures fixed by the CCCC and run by individual counties.

Two in three agree there should be cross-border clustering of clubs to facilitate more club championship fixtures at youth and adult levels in the developing counties. This view is supported by 79% of those in Ulster.

There is also a considerable amount of concern about the schedule of club level games being dependent on inter-county teams. Six in 10 respondents are very, or extremely concerned, about the lack of emphasis on skills development at this level, and the demands put on players by the inter-county team managers.

On a scale of excellent to poor (+5 to +1), the promotion of hurling in Ireland averages 3.61, compared to 3.95 for Gaelic Football, 4.38 for Rugby and 3.48 for Soccer. Four in five people feel that the GAA should do more to promote hurling at national level. 77% believe this is relevant at county level, 91% for club level and 92% for schools level hurling.

Rating of Hurling as a Sport



Interest in the promotion of recreational hurling by the GAA is extremely high with the majority at least very interested – this is particularly popular with those of parental age and among referees.

A large minority are happy with the current schedule for the Fitzgibbon Cup.

Only 14% of respondents consider the sliotar too light, but this increases with age, and amongst referees. The skill and speed of the game rate as the aspects of hurling which people love the most.

2. Stakeholder Meetings

The Hurling 2020 committee cast the net far and wide when it came to the consultation process, to gather as much information as possible concerning the present day issues, along with listening to suggestions for improvement in to the future.

The Hurling 2020 committee met with the following groups and committees between May and August 2014.

- Medical Scientific and Welfare Committee
- Coaching & Games Development Committee
- Referees Committee
- Hurling Development Committee
- Camogie Association
- Post Primary Schools
- GPA
- CCC

3. Focus Group Meetings

The committee met with representatives from each tier of the current hurling landscape. The invitees included player representatives, managers and / or selectors, along with County Board officials as well as Coaching and Games personnel in some cases. Given the unique vantage points the media have while covering the game of hurling, we also invited members of the media to meet with the committee or submit proposals.

The following is the breakdown of the focus group meetings held –

- Media
- Liam MacCarthy counties
- Leinster Round-Robin counties
- Christy Ring Cup counties
- Nicky Rackard Cup counties
- Lory Meagher Cup counties

## Section 1: Hurling Participation

As a committee which adopted the title of “Hurling 2020”, **our number one priority is to look at the structures in place today with a view to effecting change to improve the standard of hurling being played in every county.** With no disrespect to any group who have sought to spread the gospel of hurling outside of the traditional strongholds over the past 130 years, the fact remains that hurling’s top table is a small one.

The game of hurling is often called the fastest field game in the world. The more passionate Irish amongst us would go further and call it the most exciting game in the world. While opinions will differ among all sports lovers about the best game, hurling holds a unique place in Irish Culture and is one which we are eminently proud of. Having said all of that, **hurling continues to be a minority sport within Ireland when it comes to participation at the highest level.** In 2015, 10 counties will take part in the Liam MacCarthy Cup with another four playing in a round-robin competition in Leinster for the right for two of them to ultimately gain access to the Leinster Championship Quarter-Final and with it, a place in the All-Ireland series. Below those 14 counties are teams at varying levels of ability grouped in to the Christy Ring Cup, Nicky Rackard Cup and Lory Meagher Cup.

Without arguing the unique skills of hurling, the facts are that for many years the number of counties which can win the top honour in the game, the Liam MacCarthy Cup, arguably has never reached double-figures in a given year. 12 counties, along with London, have won the All-Ireland Senior Hurling title. However of those 12, six have failed to win an All-Ireland in the last 40 years, while three counties have accounted for 72% of all titles won, including 15 of the last 16 titles (94%).

This imbalance in the playing standards has militated against the growth of the game from underage level, through the education sector and ultimately at adult level. Efforts at Hurling Participation in so-called non-traditional areas are to be applauded but history has shown that while limited successes can be achieved, a sustained improvement outside of the top counties has never materialised with hurling being played at a high level by very few counties in comparison with Gaelic Football. **As an organisation which aims to promote hurling and football equally, we have been doing the game of hurling an injustice for a long time.**

**As a committee, we feel that there is a poor return on investment for the money being allocated to the game of hurling by the GAA at central level. In our view, the issue is not funding but how that money is being allocated, the governance of the funding and the ability of the units within the organisation to be able filter the money in to the right channels.** As with any organisation, the addition of human resources is a key component. While full-time personnel are important, the recruitment of volunteers under a clear, concise template is the way forward to improving the status of hurling in counties who wish to improve.

**For the purpose of improving standards in the game of hurling, we would characterise the work required to improve hurling within each county in to three distinct groups – Protect the Game, Grow the Game, Develop the Game.** As a committee, we would see the current status of the participating counties as follows –

1. Protect the Game (Clare, Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford)
2. Grow the Game (Antrim, Carlow, Derry, Down, Kerry, Kildare, Laois, Offaly, Westmeath)
3. Develop the Game (Armagh, Cavan, Donegal, Fermanagh, Fingal, Leitrim, London, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Roscommon, Sligo, Tyrone, Warwickshire, Wicklow)

As a committee, we met with the 10 counties in the Liam MacCarthy proper and each shared with the committee their current Hurling Coaching structures being implemented within each county. While no one county has a perfect system, we do feel that there is a lot of good work ongoing within each of those counties which should be used as the foundation for a consistent template for improving hurling in the future.

**We propose engaging with an external consultancy organisation to examine the best practices of how hurling is nurtured in the ten Liam MacCarthy counties playing today. These best practices should include (but not be limited to) – underage participation, hurling activity at primary schools and post primary schools, club / school links, coaching strictures, development squads and part-time and full-time coaching personnel.**

The external consultancy organisation will be asked to produce a best practice template to be used as a blueprint to share with all counties which if followed will help to build up hurling within each county from its foundations, i.e. at underage level. As different counties may be at different stages, the blueprint can be used in different ways with funding and resources to be allocated only to those who meet the agreed success criteria.





**This strategy will require strong oversight in the shape of a newly established role of a Director of Hurling.** This role of this person will be to monitor the implementation of the template versus pre-ordained goals agreed by each county. The Director of Hurling will have the power to withhold funding should aspects of the template not take place to their satisfaction based on very clear guidelines. We do not see the role of the Director of Hurling to be involved in hands-on coaching of Hurling but rather to oversee the investment of money in to the game of hurling and to ensure a Return on Investment with a view to improving the standard of hurling across the board.

**This should not be seen as a project over a short timeframe but rather a starting point for the GAA to adopt to improve the game of hurling from the grassroots upwards.**

At a high level, we would like to see the Director of Hurling to have the following roles and responsibilities

- The National Director of Hurling will implement, organise, and monitor all hurling development initiatives nationally.
- This position will not be charged with hands-on grass roots coaching but will instead place a special emphasis on the cultivation of a network of hurling coaches supported and encouraged through coaching seminars at county and provincial level with the intention of growing the game from club level up.
- He/she will examine current structures throughout the four provinces, work closely with full time staff and advise on inputs that will enhance future projects. He/she will, at all times, implement national policy.
- The National Director of Hurling will report, and be responsible to the Ard Stiúrthóir, with a close working relationship with the National coaching + games development committee.

Active work areas / involvement -

- Delivery on national policy's six merit based projects and promotion of same.
- Delivery and accountability on funding specific to projects allocated the promotion of hurling
- Basic administration structure - evaluating present and recommending future projects
- Evaluate quality of staff delivering for hurling nationally
- Further development of the club / school link both primary and post primary
- Promotion of fundamental hurling programme (physical literacy movement skills) specific to hurling nationally. This would fall in line with promotion of "Best Practice"

### Proposal 1

Work with an external consultancy organisation to produce a best practice template to be used as a blueprint to share with all counties which if followed will help to build up hurling within each county from its foundations.

### Proposal 2

Establish a full-time Director of Hurling role. See Appendix 3 for proposed job description.





## Section 2: Proposals For Rule Changes

The playing rules in the game of hurling have served the Association well over the years. Feedback received from some quarters would indicate that the game is in a good place and that no rule changes should be implemented. The survey indicated a similar vein but with some notable exceptions, some of which have been high profile in recent times.

This section aims to outline the areas which the Hurling 2020 committee looked at and the proposals which we aim to set out by way of motions to 2015 Annual Congress.

### Penalty

The penalty has become one of the more high profile parts of hurling in recent times. At present, the rule is governed as follows –

Official Guide Rule 2.3 – A penalty puck shall be taken at the centre point of the 20m line and the semi-circular arc, and only three defending players may stand on the goal-line. All other players, with the exception of the player taking the puck, shall be outside the 20m line, and shall not cross the 20m line or the arc until the ball has been struck. If a defending player(s) fouls before the ball is struck and a goal does not result, the referee shall allow the penalty puck to be retaken.

While the existing rule states that the penalty puck be taken at the centre point of the 20m line, there has always been an acceptance that as this is a two-step action, the rising of the sliotar for all frees will require a forward movement. For frees taken by players in defensive positions, this forward movement typically involves taken a couple of steps to gain momentum before striking the ball. In the case of a penalty, the

same couple of steps have been used for many years with the odd player gaining that bit extra yardage. However, the vagueness in the interpretation of this rule has led players to seek to gain an advantage. Allied to the use of larger hurleys and/or a lighter sliotar, the distance between ball striker and the three defending players has been as little as 10 to 13 metres. Given the power which can be generated by such shots, an obvious safety concern has been cited in this regard.

With the penalty having become one of the more high profile parts of hurling in recent times, with safety concerns at the heart of the debate, the Management Committee of the GAA made a recommendation subsequently endorsed by Central Council to change the interpretation of the rule on June 10th 2014. In effect, this amendment enforced the letter of the law so to speak, which has stopped the penalty taker passing the 20 metre line. The full text of the June 10th 2014 decision can be found in Appendix 2.

The net effect of this interpretation has seen the advantage sway significantly to the benefit of the defending team with only 20% of penalty shots being scored in the Liam MacCarthy games following the rule change. In our showcase All-Ireland finals, three penalties were awarded in the Senior Final and one in the Under 21 Final which amounted to the sum total of one point for the attacking teams.

It is the view of the Hurling 2020 committee that there must be an advantage to the attacking team where the odds favour the penalty taker, while at the same time ensuring that safety concerns are addressed.

### Hurling Penalty Trial

With this in mind, the Hurling 2020 committee organised a testing session at Semple Stadium Thurles on Saturday October 4 involving a number of top inter-county penalty takers and goalkeepers. The players included were: Colm Callanan (Galway), Joe Canning (Galway), Shane Dowling (Limerick), Eoin Kelly (Tipperary), Patrick Kelly (Clare) and Anthony Nash (Cork). Inter-County Referee Johnny Ryan (Tipperary) was also present. This exercise was tracked by video as well as clocking shots at over 150km per hour. The permutations trialled were as follows –

- 1 on 2 (to be struck no closer than the 20m line)
- 1 on 2 with Ball in Hand (to be struck no closer than the 20m line – no free taking movement required).
- The trial also included 20 metre frees from the edge of the D with 3 in goal. A total of 114 shots were taken with the following success rates –
- 1 on 1 – 62%
- 18m shot with 3 in goal – 48%
- 1 on 2 – 42%
- 1 on 2 with Ball in Hand – 24%
- 20m Free from the Side with 3 in goal – 22%



Galway's Joe Canning faces Clare's Patrick Kelly

- 1 on 1 from the 20m line (ball can be placed outside the 20m line but cannot be struck inside 20m)
- 18m shot with 3 in goal (ball can be placed outside the 20m line but cannot be struck inside 18m)





While compensating for the fact that multiple inter-county goalies were in goal for some of the trials where two or three defenders were on the line, the highest rate of success was the “One on One” shot where the placement of the ball rather than sheer power came in to play. We have also received support for reverting to a shot from 18 metres which would most resemble the spirit of the original rule where the striker would take a couple of steps before striking the ball. The difficulties of this proposal would be a) the additional of a new 18 metre line in all GAA grounds, similar to the penalty spot in Football and b) safety concerns about hitting the ball from this distance from the defenders on the line.

Taking everything in consideration, the view of the Hurling 2020 committee is that the “One on One” proposal gives the attacking team the best chance of success as well as creating a new and exciting set-play where the goalkeepers will pit their reflexes against the best strikers from the opposing team. A trial period for this rule in the 2015 pre-season competitions such as the Waterford Crystal Cup, the Walsh Cup and the Kehoe Cup has been requested of the relevant Provincial Councils to allow everyone an opportunity to see how the new One on One shot works in a match setting.



Cork's Anthony Nash saves from Tipperary's Eoin Kelly

### Proposal 3

The Hurling 2020 committee proposes that the awarding of a penalty in hurling will result in the penalty taker having to face one defender on the line. The ball can be placed anywhere outside the 20m line but must be struck no closer than 20m. This rule would come in to effect for all hurling competitions for a period of five years until the next Annual Congress where rule changes are heard in 2020.

### 20 metre free

In recommending a change to a “One on One” penalty, we also need to change the 20 metre free in tandem. It would make no sense to allow a “One on One” scoring opportunity for an offence at one side of the small rectangle while allowing as many players as you wish to defend the line if fouled just outside the small rectangle.

With this in mind, we would recommend that the 20m free be defended by no more than three defenders on the goal line. In situations where the free is awarded near the sideline, then the normal rules would apply where defenders could stand within 13 metres of the free taker and between the free taker and the goal. However, we would still insist that no more than three defenders could actually stand on the goal line.

The current rule is governed as follows –

Official Guide Rule 2.2 (ii) – A free puck, awarded for a foul by a defending player inside his own 20m line but outside the large rectangle, shall be taken from the 20m line opposite where the foul occurred.

### Proposal 4

The Hurling 2020 committee proposes the existing rule be changed to allow for just three defenders on the goal line while enshrining in rule that the ball cannot be struck any closer than the 20m line.



## Advantage Rule

The advantage rule already exists within hurling (Rules 4.36 and 5.35). However, the main issue with the advantage rule as written is that once advantage has been allowed, the referee has no power to stop the play and award a free if the advantage does not actually accrue in favour of the player in possession.

These rules were amended at 2014 Annual Congress for the game of Gaelic Football only, giving the referee the latitude to not only play advantage but also award a free at the location of the foul should the advantage not materialise after five seconds. 89% of those who responded to the Hurling 2020 survey sought a change in this area, with it being the number one item among changes sought for both inter-county and club level. To ensure consistency between the two codes, we propose the same rule be adopted in hurling from 2015.

### Proposal 5

The Hurling 2020 committee proposes the following new Advantage Rule to replace Rule 4.36 and Rule 5.35, for implementation in 2015:

“When a foul is committed, the referee may allow the play to continue if he considers it to be to the advantage of the offended team. He shall signal that advantage by raising an arm upright and shall allow the advantage to run by maintaining his arm in the upright position for up to five seconds after the foul or for less time if it becomes clear that no advantage has accrued. If he deems no advantage to have accrued, he may subsequently award a free for the foul from where it occurred, (except as provided under Exceptions (v) and (vi) of Rule 2.2). He shall apply any relevant disciplinary action.”

## Public Time Clock

A majority of survey respondents (52%) sought the introduction of a public time clock at inter-county level with another 32% giving their tentative approval. At the present time, the introduction of a public time clock is something which has been approved for Gaelic Football but is on hold following issues raised during a trial in the 2014 Sigerson Cup. The Hurling 2020 committee await with interest the outcome of the ongoing review to see if the issues can be ironed out and be implemented as planned before making a recommendation for its use in the game of hurling.

## Two points for a sideline cut

The introduction of two points for a sideline cut was met with equal positive and negative feedback during our consultation process. The survey results in this area were unequivocal, with 38% saying Yes, 27% Maybe, and 35% No. The recent introduction of this rule in Camogie should be monitored with interest but at the present time, the Hurling 2020 committee do not see the requirement for the introduction of this change in the game of hurling.

## The number of steps

We introduced two questions in our survey related to the number of steps a hurler is allowed in possession before putting the ball on the hurley. This was based on a feeling among some committee members that four steps was too few, especially with the amount of rucks in modern hurling. Having possession now can often result in a negative situation by either losing possession when trying to play the ball or, by being penalised for over-carrying.

The survey results in this regard found no appetite for change in this area and as a committee, we chose not to pursue this further

- Increase steps to 5 – 18% in favour
- Increase steps to 6 – 9% in favour

Another related question in our survey related to the reduction of steps in hurling from four to three. Those in favour of such a reduction would see this as necessitating the man in possession to get rid of the ball quicker or to perhaps resort to ground hurling or overhead striking, two skills which are much more redundant in modern hurling than in the past. The survey results for this question showed very little support for such a reduction in steps. The Hurling 2020 Committee does not see a reduction in the number of steps as necessary for returning the skills of ground hurling and overhead striking. Based on just a 3% favourable response in our survey, there seems to be no appetite for such a reduction.

- Decrease steps from 4 to 3 – 3% in favour

## Four points for a goal

The scoring of a goal in hurling is one of the game's more exciting events. Despite the 2013 Hurling Championship season being lauded as one of the best ever, rounded off by eight goals in the All-Ireland Final replay between Clare and Cork, it also was a season where the number of goals scored per game dropped off dramatically on the previous two years. On average, there was one goal less per game in the 2013 Championship compared to 2012, with every inter-county championship competition bar one recording a reduction in goals scored. In real terms, there were 44 less goals scored in 2013 versus 2012 and 58 less goals scored when you compare 2013 with 2011.

Such a decline prompted discussion among the Hurling 2020 committee about the need for a goal to be rewarded with four points instead of three as has traditionally been the case. This was a radical proposal and got little traction with just 6% approval among survey respondents. The statistics for 2014 have shown

an increase to 3.1 goals per game, up 0.5 goals per game on 2013 but still short of the goals scored in 2011 and 2012.

The reasons for this decline may be due to a number of factors. It could also be a statistical anomaly but it is one worth keeping an eye on in an era of ever increasing statistical analysis focused on nullifying the strengths of the opponent.

## Standardisation of the Sliotar

The Hurling 2020 committee would have concerns about the differences in the size and weight of the sliotar by various manufacturers. While 14% of those surveyed feel the current sliotar is too light, our concern is focused on the disparity in the size and shape of the ball. We completely support the ongoing efforts within the GAA Coaching and Games team to standardise the ball at all levels.

### Proposal 6

To ensure fairness and consistency, we propose the standardisation of the ball in hurling at all levels.



## Section 3: Disciplinary Structures

### Hurling Referees Committee

The second most sought after change as called out by the Hurling 2020 survey respondents was the introduction of a separate Hurling Referees Committee at national level with 88% seeing the need for the establishment of a separate body. As part of the extensive consultation process, in particular with players and team managements, there is a strongly held view that the games of Hurling and Gaelic Football are very different in terms of the speed of the game. That disparity also exists in relation to fouls committed. In that context, having one single body administering both codes is not benefitting the game of hurling. Feedback received in particular from the Christy Ring, Nicky Rackard and Lory Meagher Cup counties highlighted the frustration at the number of cards being shown at those levels as opposed to at the top level in the Liam MacCarthy Cup.

The proposal of the Hurling 2020 committee as a starting point would be to change the referee structures at a top level. While still maintaining an overall Referees Committee, we would see it as a requirement to have a Hurling Referees Sub-Committee and a Football Referees Sub-Committee at inter-county level within that structure, with the process beginning with the term of An tUachtarán-tofa Aogán Ó Fearghail. We would see the Chairman of the Hurling Referees Sub-Committee having responsibility for how the game of hurling is refereed. We would strongly recommend this model filtering down to Provincial and County Board level as a logical next step subject to the success of the new committee at national level, and its ability to ensure a more consistent high standard of refereeing in hurling.

#### Proposal 7

Set up a Hurling Referees Sub-Committee at National level from 2015 onwards.

### Disciplinary Cards

The area of discipline in the game of hurling is one which has improved over the years. At club or inter-county level, the number of straight red card offences does not appear to be high. Any hurler committing a red card offence knows where the line is and deserves that sanction should they commit the foul.

On the other hand, what has become more prevalent seems to be players being sent off for two yellow card offences. While not looking to change what a yellow card offence is, the Hurling 2020 committee feel that these offences can often be for mistimed fouls, or can occur early in a game when a referee is seeking to stamp his authority on the match. Once on an early yellow card, the risk of getting a second yellow card is then an issue for both the player and the team management given the end result is a reduction in the playing numbers for that team.

Overall, as a committee we feel that a) hurling is not a cynical game, b) we are best served where the game is 15 v 15 and c) the impact on underage players being sent off for two bookable offences is putting an unfair pressure on the individuals given the consequence of their team-mates being down a player.

While not wishing to diminish the punishment on the player for two yellow card offences in hurling, the Hurling 2020 committee feel that the added punishment of ensuring a team is down a player for the rest of the game cannot be justified in a game where discipline is not seen as an issue. On the flip side of the argument, referees are often reluctant to show a second yellow card to a player as they know the sanction hurts not only the player but the team. In summary, we do not feel that two yellow card offences in a majority of cases warrants a team going down a player for the rest of the game.

Instead, we are looking at introducing a new system whereby two yellow card offences will mean the expulsion of the player in the same way as happens currently but that player can be replaced by a substitute (in the event that team has not already used all their substitutes). The production of the second yellow card would be followed by a referee pointing to the sideline rather than another colour card being introduced for this. Based on our consultation process, and irrespective of the lack of consistent implementation of the black card in Football in 2014, there is no appetite for the introduction of another colour card in hurling.

#### Proposal 8

Change to Official Guide 1.2 (ix) (b) - To order off a player who commits a second Cautionable Foul/Infraction by showing him a second Yellow Card followed by showing him a Red Card.

#### TO

To order off a player who commits a second Cautionable Foul/Infraction by showing him a second Yellow Card followed by pointing to the sideline to indicate he can no longer take part in the game. Allow a replacement from within the substitutions permitted in Rule 2.4, Rules of Specification.



## Club Refereeing Standards

The standard of refereeing at club level is an area of concern, something expressed on a consistent basis across as part of the committee's consultation process. Feedback such as the lack of knowledge in relation to the playing rules by some referees at club level, in addition to the inconsistencies between officials, is an area of huge concern. On the flip side, the understanding of the playing rules by players and selectors, not to mention supporters, adds to criticism of referees when in fact, it is ignorance of the rules rather than the misapplication of those rules which is the root of the problem. The lack of respect shown towards referees by all mentioned above as compared to other sports is not acceptable and in many cases leads those who may be very capable as the man in the middle to decide against becoming a referee. Until such time as an organisation we stamp out abuse of officials from the earliest age groups upwards, the pool of people who may be attracted to become a hurling referee will remain small. We would see the improvement of hurling refereeing standards at Club level as being an integral part of any strategy to attract new officials. We would propose that each club nominate at least one new recruit into a referee development program on an annual basis. Potential inter-county referees can be fast tracked into an inter-county development programme.

## Two Referees

The introduction of two referees for the game of hurling has been suggested, particularly at inter-county level where the game is played at such a fast pace that it is extremely difficult for one referee to keep up with the play. There is some support for this plan at inter-county level with 1 in 4 (25%) survey respondents looking for this to be introduced. A further 39% answered maybe, while 36% answered no to this proposal.

The view of Hurling 2020 committee on this is that while two referees in theory is a good idea, the level of inconsistency among referees in hurling today is one of the most commented negatives among players. Having two referees on the pitch at the one time could further exacerbate this inconsistency with incidents within the same game being officiated in different ways by each referee.

Also, the respect for referees, in particular at club level, is so low that it is already difficult enough to ensure there is one referee at every club game. To expect to get two referees to take charge at even Senior Club Championship level will be difficult.

## Twinning – Stronger/Developing counties

The practice of twinning a stronger hurling county with a developing hurling county has been done with varying levels of success in recent years. The utilisation of coaching expertise in conjunction with top class coaches and current inter-county players from the stronger hurling county can provide many short term benefits.

However, in the view of the Hurling 2020 committee, such twinning projects have had limited long term success as the structures on the ground in the developing hurling county are often not sufficient to sustain the effort for any period of time once the visit of the stronger hurling county personnel has come to an end.

The new Director of Hurling role would help ensure that working with local personnel, such twinning exercises would not be set up without the necessary structures in place to ensure the overall participation levels can be increased with the assistance of local personnel at club and county level.

## Urban Development

As part of the attempts at widening participation, in particular in the developing counties, it is important to understand that one size does not fit all. This is particularly true when looking at the more urbanised centres of population where in many cases, there is either one club or no club catering for the game of hurling. While the urban areas may have their own unique issues, they should also have additional resources which, channelled in the correct way under a specific and clear template, can ensure long term sustainable growth in the game of hurling. The Hurling 2020 committee, in conjunction with the Director of Hurling and local personnel, can identify the urban areas to focus on and measure success accordingly.



## Section 4: Competition Structures

The area of competition structures is one which as a committee we did not look in to in great detail. This is due to the ongoing discussions to run all GAA competitions within a calendar year, something which will have an impact on hurling at all levels. While the running of our games is decided by the Central Competitions Control Committee, we would make the following observations and recommendations.

### Inter-County Senior Hurling Championship

The current inter-county senior hurling championship has always been based around the Provincial structure. In recent years, this has seen Galway, Antrim and London taking part in the Leinster Hurling Championship. Calls for the scrapping of the Provincial Structure in favour of an All-Ireland open draw knockout competition received little support in the Hurling 2020 survey with just 14% in favour. Of the other 86% of people surveyed, 40% would like to see no change to the current inter-county senior hurling championship. 29% would like to see an All-Ireland open draw knockout competition based on a provincial structure. As a committee, we will not be making any recommendations for change to the overall inter-county senior hurling championship structure while the Calendar year championship structure is still under discussion.

### Leinster Round-Robin

The structure of the round-robin format in the Leinster Senior Hurling Championship was the basis of negative feedback during our consultation process. The inclusion of five teams in the round-robin section of the competition during 2014 left very little time to run off the competition without asking counties to play numerous weeks in a row soon after the Allianz Hurling Leagues had been completed. The inclusion of just four teams in the 2015 Leinster Round-Robin competition will hopefully give this structure a better chance of success with a week gap between Round 2 and 3, as well as a week between Round 3 and the Leinster Quarter-Final for the round-robin winner and runner-up. This should ensure more preparation time for the counties involved without having to ensure a number of consecutive weeks of inter-county hurling as happened in 2014.

### Allianz Hurling Leagues

The format of the Allianz Hurling Leagues has been a contentious topic of debate for many years. The current system of six teams in Division 1A & 1B has resulted in a very high quality and competitive standard of games which has captured the imagination. On the flip side, the cut-throat nature of the competition does not allow for managers to try out new players as frequently as may have been the case under an eight team format.

The survey results showed just 28% in favour of the current Division 1A/1B structure of six teams in each. 61% favoured an eight team Division 1, with 36% favouring eight team Divisions' 1, 2, 3 and 4. 25% favoured an eight team Division 1 and a six team divisional structure from Division 2 down.

The committee also looked very closely at two seven team Divisions in Division 1A and Division 1B, whereby the top three teams in Division 1A, along with the Division 1B Champions (final between top two teams in the table) qualify for Division 1 Semi-Finals.

Relegation would consist of the bottom team in Division 1A dropping to Division 1B, with the bottom team in Division 1B relegated to Division 2A

Based on the 2014 league ranking, the make-up of the Divisions would be as follows –

- Division 1A – Kilkenny, Tipperary, Dublin, Clare, Galway, Cork, Waterford
- Division 1B – Antrim, Laois, Limerick, Offaly, Wexford, Division 2A champion (Kerry based on 2014), Division 2A runner-up (Carlow based on 2014).
- For the 2016 season, we would envisage Division 1A and Division 1B including the following –
- Division 1A – top Five teams from 2015 Division 1A, Two top teams from 2015 Division 1B
- Division 1B – relegated team from 2015 Division 1A, First, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth teams from Division 1B (no relegation for 2015 only), Two top teams from 2015 Division 2A



## Advantages

1. 14 counties instead of 12 playing Division One hurling
2. Each county guaranteed three home matches and three away matches every year (removes inequality of current system where three counties have just two home games). This is a positive from a promotional and financial perspective for counties.
3. Additional game would provide more opportunities for teams to give up and coming players game-time
4. Every county will have a bye

## Disadvantages

1. Strength of Division 1B is weakened by moving up one county to Division 1A and replacing them with two Division 2A counties
2. More one-sided matches in Division 1B
3. Counties with a bye in the first round will be at a disadvantage in Round two when playing a team which has already had a competitive game
4. Counties with a bye in the last round will be at a disadvantage in that the other counties will know what they have to do in order to qualify

As a committee, we agreed no firm proposal for change in this area but would recommend to the CCCC the option of reverting to an eight team Division One as appears to be the preference among the general public and also the majority of counties we met.

An interesting part of the survey feedback for the Allianz Hurling Leagues found that 42% were in favour of using the League results as the basis for Championship seeding. Under the current structure of making the Championship draws in the October before the following year's competition, such a proposal is not an option. However, this may be something to be debated further once the Calendar Year fixtures programme comes in to effect from 2016.

## Promotion / Relegation

The issue of promotion and relegation within the Leagues and also Championship structures is one which our committee received very strong feedback. The requirement of a team which wins a competition like Division 2A or the Christy Ring Cup having to then later have to play the bottom team from the competition above them a week later is the main source of contention. As a committee, while understanding the requirement of a promoted team being able to compete at the higher level, asking them to play against a stronger opponent just a week after winning a competition and, in often cases where the aspiring county has been playing for numerous weeks without a break, is not fair. We would strongly recommend a change to the current system whereby a team from a lower division does not earn the right for promotion by simply winning their division. The reward for winning a competition should be promotion and with that, a chance to prepare appropriately for the following year's competition at a higher grade.

### Proposal 9

Remove all Promotion/Relegation playoffs involving teams in different divisions in the Allianz Hurling Leagues.

### Proposal 10

Remove the Promotion / Relegation playoff involving the bottom team in the Leinster Round-Robin competition and the Christy Ring Cup champion. Instead, the bottom Leinster Round-Robin team would be relegated to the Christy Ring Cup while the Christy Ring Cup champion would be automatically promoted as a reward for winning the competition.

## Christy Ring Cup

The current structures within the Christy Ring Cup require the competition to be run off over a period of five weeks culminating in a final. With four victories required to win the competition, this allows very little time for counties to properly prepare for each game. In the case where one game ends in a draw or a game cannot take place as planned for whatever reason, the one week gap between the semi-finals and finals is then removed. In 2014, Kildare were asked to play six weekends in a row and from there, asked a week later to play Westmeath to "earn" their right to play in the Liam MacCarthy Cup. Such a rushed structure does not assist with the development of hurling in these counties which are aspiring to play at a higher level.

While understanding that the rushed nature of these fixtures is due to the request of the counties involved to get the fixtures completed to allow for club championship action, as a committee we do not feel it is unreasonable to allow this competition even a couple of additional weeks to take place. That would give players more time to prepare for the knockout stages, particularly in addition to playing longer in to the summer in the better weather.

From a geographical perspective, some counties have requested that games between teams which are of a significant distance from each other should be played at a neutral venue. Rather than ask the CCC to legislate for this, we would recommend that counties come to an agreement in advance to play their games at a neutral venue in the event they are drawn to play.

Another proposal we would strongly recommend is to revert to the original situation whereby the Christy Ring Cup final is played as a curtain-raiser to a high profile hurling game, perhaps a Liam MacCarthy Cup All-Ireland Senior Hurling Qualifier in mid to late June. This would promote the game of hurling more in our view than playing the final in an empty Croke Park each year.

### Proposal 11

Increase the length of time to play the Christy Ring Cup from five weekends to seven weekends.

### Proposal 12

Play the Christy Ring Cup Final as a curtain raiser to a high profile Liam MacCarthy Cup All-Ireland Senior Hurling Qualifier

## Nicky Rackard Cup & Lory Meagher Cups

As a committee, we would like to see a change in emphasis in the counties participating in the lower divisions of the Allianz Hurling Leagues and taking part in the Nicky Rackard and Lory Meagher Cup. To ensure a sustainable future for the game of hurling in these counties, we would recommend the focus should be to increase participation at primary and post primary schools levels. This in turn would increase the number of clubs participating.

Such a bottom up approach would benefit a lot of these counties in the long term rather than the present situation where in some counties, two or three clubs contest a club Championship and subsequently combine to field an inter-county team for League and Championship. It is the view of the committee that investing in elements of the Coaching Best Practice template, referred to earlier, would be of more benefit to growing the game of hurling in these counties.



## Section 5: The Club

The lot of the club player with the association is one which is full of uncertainty. Such are the myriad of competitions at inter-county, 3rd level colleges and post primary schools levels, not to mention Divisional teams at club level, it is almost impossible to tie down a defined fixture list for our club players. A number of young sportspeople within Ireland are attracted to many aspects of the games of hurling and Gaelic football but are turned off by the lack of a fixture schedule which other sporting organisations can offer. The difficulty of course when comparing the GAA to other sporting organisations in terms of fixture scheduling is that those other sports only have to concern themselves with one sport. In many counties, the games of hurling and Gaelic Football are trying to co-exist within a window which is getting increasing smaller while at the same time, club competitions have moved away from traditional knockout structures to leagues and round-robins. So the club in a county where an inter-county team(s) may be successful on a regular basis is now totally reliant on the success or otherwise of the inter-county team and their management.

### Central Fixtures Body

The plight of a fixtures committee is not an easy one, no matter what level they preside over. Many of those critical of fixture making within the Association have never severed on a fixtures body and proposals for change often do not take in to account the many factors which cause issues in the first place. Having said that, there is a need for much stricter governance when it comes to the monitoring of fixtures. While such governance exists today, it appears to be in name only as there is little or no sanction for those not adhering to their club fixtures schedule. The Hurling 2020 committee feel that a Central Fixtures Oversight body needs to be put in place. For consistency purposes, this can be a sub-committee of the National CCC. This Central Fixtures Oversight body would have sole responsibility for working with counties to ensure the fixtures schedules as laid out and agreed at the beginning of the year are being followed. Sanctions need to be meaningful so as to ensure compliance – these sanctions could include a reduction in funding from Central Units for the County Board which does not meet the fixtures schedule. The removal of the county from the following year's Provincial Club Championships could be another sanction.

### Proposal 13

Reset the terms of reference of the Central Fixtures Oversight Body to ensure the Club Fixtures Schedule, which provides regular games and activity, is adhered to.





## Section 6: Integration With Camogie

The games of camogie and hurling are intertwined by a common love for our ancient game. At many levels, the two sporting organisations work well together and the ongoing discussions to implement the One Club Model are fully supported by the Hurling 2020 committee. Far more can be gained by combining resources and working together and there are increasing signs that this is happening.

Many of the objectives for the Camogie Association at grassroots level mirror the Hurling 2020's commitment to increase the participation of those playing the game across all levels. Indeed, the objectives of the Director of Hurling could be linked closely with the Camogie Association to ensure that more boys and girls are afforded the opportunity to play hurling and camogie.

Provided the structures are in place at Camogie grassroots level, there is little to prevent the plans being proposed in conjunction with a Director of Hurling being implemented for the game of Camogie in tandem with each other. The advantages of such a partnership far outweigh the disadvantages. In addition to widening the participation, the areas of Coaching at schools level, Urban Development and Coach Education would all fall under the priority list of both the hurling and camogie personnel.

Overall, the Camogie Association is being run in a very professional manner. By working together with the GAA and the Hurling community, there are many benefits to be gained in the short term to ensure more young people have an opportunity to play the game.





## Section 7: Promotion

With Sky Sports and GAAGo now showcasing hurling to a global audience, hurling has reached a whole new level in terms of promotion. However, promotion is even more important in the modern age by connecting with all age-groups through different communication channels. It will also ensure interest in the code will develop and encourage participation.

This is especially important at child and youth level. Initiatives such as Freestyle Hurling - which captures the imagination of young players by encouraging them to video their own freestyle hurling skills and posting them on YouTube - should be built on. The videos are posted onto the official GAA YouTube channel and sharing is encouraged to spread the content.

Modern players have never been more skilful. With increased access to multi-media and all forms of sports programming, our young players look now at TV features

such as 'Skill School' on Sky Sports Soccer AM and realise the magnificent skills they can showcase with a hurley and ball. Increasing that awareness and encouraging the forum for greater expression through their skill and imagination via the GAA social media community is something the committee believe should be strongly recommended.

The use of GAA.ie could also be utilised to promote hurling scores, skills and player profiles. With recognition of our players being an issue since the compulsory introduction of helmets, promoting our players has never been as important (this point is also discussed in Section 8 under the heading Squad Numbers).

However, it is also important that the promotion of our hurlers is not just limited to the top players. The promotion of hurling at tier two and tier three, in particular for the Allianz Hurling Leagues, could be improved.

The fixtures and results of the Division 2 and Division 3 games in the League are often not included in news bulletins on TV & Radio on a Sunday night/Monday morning. In general, many of those games do not receive any coverage in Monday newspapers and media outlets. In general, many of the games do not receive any coverage in Monday newspapers and media outlets. While understanding the fact that any such coverage would be small, to ignore the competitions altogether is wrong and should be looked at by the Communications team in the GAA in consultation with the various media outlets.

The disparity is illustrated most clearly when you compare live TV coverage of Division 3 and Division 4 Allianz Football Finals being played in Croke Park to little or no media coverage of similar Allianz Hurling Leagues

Finals played in some of the smaller provincial venues.

In an overall sense though, promotion of hurling has to be an area of focus across all levels, covering every spectrum. For example, the Clare hurlers had just two home games in the Allianz league this season. With the county on such a high after their 2013 breakthrough success, granting young kids only two chances to see their heroes at home was, in the opinion of the committee, a missed opportunity. As a hurling community, we cannot keep passing up on these opportunities.



## Section 8: Miscellaneous

### Player Hydration

The number of personnel on the sideline for Senior Championship games has rightly been reduced in recent times for both hurling and football. However, the Hurling 2020 committee feel that to introduce the same limits on sideline personnel for hurling as in football is not comparable. Primarily because the 'Maor Camán' has a specific role which does not exist in Football, where two allocated 'Maor Uisce' personnel will suffice.

At the height of our games in the summer, the issue of player hydration of our hurlers is essential and feedback from the GAA Medical, Scientific and Welfare committee has highlighted this as an ongoing issue. We would recommend increasing the number of 'Maor Camán'/'Maor Uisce' by one for senior inter-county Hurling League and Championship games, and measure accordingly over a season the impact of such a change. We do not feel this would impact on sideline congestion but would help alleviate concerns at present over player hydration.

#### Proposal 14

Increase the number of 'Maor Camán'/'Maor Uisce' by one for senior inter-county hurling league and championship games starting in 2015

### Squad numbers

One of the growing issues in Gaelic Games at Senior level over the last 15 years is the issuing of dummy teams, i.e. where a team announced in the lead-up to the game is then materially different in positional and personnel sense when the game takes place. The new rules being proposed by Central Council to combat these trends will be viewed by the Hurling 2020 committee with interest.

Since the introduction of the rule ensuring all players are required to wear helmets, it is becoming more difficult to recognise players. As a committee, we would propose the introduction of squad numbers beginning with the 2015 Liam MacCarthy Cup competition.

At the beginning of the Championship, each player would be allocated a number. The player would then keep that number for the remainder of the Championship, helping supporters to associate the number with the player as the more successful team's progress.

Along with assisting with the identification of our top players, it would also add a new promotional vehicle as supporters – young and old – would seek to get their favourite player's jersey, complete with their squad number.

#### Proposal 15

Allocate squad numbers to each team in the Liam MacCarthy Cup prior to their team's first game.





# Appendix 1: Hurling 2020 Committee Members

## Liam Sheedy (Chairman)

Liam Sheedy is a native of Portroe in North Tipperary. Liam played hurling at all levels with Tipperary, winning All-Ireland Under 21 and Junior medals and a National League title in 1999. He managed Tipperary to win an All-Ireland Minor Hurling title in 2006 before graduating to the Tipperary Senior Hurlers who he managed to win the 2008 Allianz Hurling Leagues, two Munster titles and the 2010 All-Ireland Senior Hurling title. At the end of that 2010 season, Liam won the Phillips Manager of the Year. Since 2011, Liam has been a hurling analyst on RTÉ's Sunday Game programme. Liam is currently a member of the Board of the Irish Sports Council. He is Head of Sales and Revenue at the Bank of Ireland.

## Ed Donnelly (Secretary)

Ed Donnelly is currently working as Social Media coordinator for Munster GAA having previously worked with Dell Computers in a variety of HR roles during a 20 year career , which included Director of Human Resources Operations for Europe, Middle East & Africa. Ed served as Tipperary Public Relations Officer (PRO) from 2003 to 2008 before graduating to the position of Munster PRO for three years, being chosen as the inaugural winner of the Gaelic Writers Association PRO of the Year in 2009. Ed is currently a member of the GAA Communications committee having served on various GAA IT & Communications committee's at National level. Ed played club hurling with his native Moycarkey-Borris for whom he has served as Club PRO and Club Secretary in recent years.

## Pat Henderson

Pat is a retired Business Manager and currently the Post Primary Schools Officer for South Leinster. Pat played inter-county hurling at all grades with Kilkenny between 1961 and 1978, winning five All-Ireland Senior titles, eight Leinster Senior titles, two National Leagues and two All-Star awards in addition to winning six Railway Cup medals with Leinster. Pat was joint manager of the Kilkenny Senior Hurling team in 1979 & 1980 before taking on the manager role between 1982-1987, winning three All-Ireland titles during that time. Pat played club hurling with Johnstown and Fenians from 1959 to 1984. He was a Founding Member of Fenians GAA Club established in 1968, along with being the club's first Secretary and County Board Rep.

## Des Cullinane

Des works as Director of Cork City Learning Support Services which is part of the Cork ETB. He has had a long involvement with the GAA at a county, provincial and national level. He is currently Cork's Central Council Representative and a member of the National CCCC. He is also a member of the National Strategic Plan Sub-Committee as well as the National Officer Training Committee. In the past he has been Chairman of Comhairle Ardoideachais, a member of Comhairle na Mumhan, Coaching officer of the Cork County Board and numerous other national and provincial committees. He has had a long time involvement with the Fitzgibbon Cup and various 3rd level competitions. He is currently a member of the management team of Glen Rovers senior hurling team and is also actively involved at under 15 level. He has coached successfully at 3rd level and at club and intercounty level.

## Terence “Sambo” Mc Naughton

“Sambo” was born in Cushendall, County Antrim. He played for his club at all under age levels until he made his senior deputy at the age of 16 where he then went on to win nine county titles with Cushendall. He played inter county hurling from 1980 until 1997, where he played in an All-Ireland Final in 1989 and won an All Star in 1991. He was voted Ulster hurler of the Century in 2000 and in 2013 he was selected on the 80s team of best hurlers never to win an All-Ireland. He has managed County and Club teams at all levels and last year guided Cushendall to the Atrium SHC title. He was a member of the first Players advisory committee in Croke Park.

## Ollie Moran

Ollie is a member of the famed Ahane GAA Club in Limerick. He began his career as a goalkeeper before moving outfield whilst at Waterford IT. He commenced his inter county career in 1997, winning a National League medal that year. Ollie operated in a number of positions during his inter county career, the highlight of which was winning an All Star award in 2007. He commenced adult hurling for his club in 1991 and is still actively involved at junior level. He recently commenced his coaching career with Tipperary club, Borris-Ileigh. Ollie owns a financial services brokerage in Limerick City.

## Veronica Curtin

Veronica is a member of the Kinvara club in Galway. She won Minor and Junior Camogie medals in 1994, winning player of the game in both finals. Veronica played Senior inter-county camogie with Galway from 1995 at the age of 15 until her retirement from the inter-county scene in 2012. Veronica's list of honours includes a Senior All-Ireland medal in 1996, a Senior National League medal in 2005, two Junior and two senior Gael linn medals with Connacht, as well as winning camogie All-Star awards in 2006 and 2007. Veronica received a sports scholarship to UCG (1998 to 2001) and was selected on the Ashbourne combined colleges all-star teams of 1999, 2000 and 2001. Veronica is a Primary Teacher and is currently Deputy Principal of St .Brendan's N.S Portumna.

## Ollie Canning

Ollie Canning is a member of Portumna GAA Club in Galway. Ollie has represented Galway at all levels and was a member of the Galway Senior Hurling Team from 1995 to 2010. He has won two All-Ireland Minor Championships, one All-Ireland U21 Championship, four National Hurling League Titles and two Railway Cup Titles. Ollie is also the holder of four All-Star awards. During his club career to date he has won six county championships in Galway and four All-Ireland Club Hurling Titles. Ollie Captained Portumna to three of these All-Ireland victories. He still plays hurling for Portumna and is actively involved in administration and development within the club. Since his retirement from the inter-county scene, Ollie has been working within national media as a commentator and hurling analyst.

## Frank Lohan

Frank is an accountant by profession with a practice in the mid-west. A member of the All-Ireland winning Clare teams of 1995 and 1997, he played senior hurling with Clare until 2008. He captained UCC to a Fitzgibbon cup win in 1996 and won two county senior championship medals with Wolfe Tones Na Sionna and appeared in the 1997 All-Ireland club final losing to Athenry. He represented Clare at senior inter county football and all underage levels. He resides in Oranmore in Galway with his family and is currently coach of the under 6s, along with being a selector of the Oranmore-Maree intermediate hurling team.

## Paul Flynn

Paul is a member of the Ballygunner GAA club in Waterford. Paul played with the Waterford Senior Hurlers from 1993 to 2008, winning three Munster titles, one Allianz Hurling Leagues and an All-Star award in 2004. Paul also won an All-Ireland U- 21 Hurling medal in 1992 in addition to two Munster Under 21 and one Munster Minor medal. At club level, Paul won eight Waterford Senior Hurling titles and one Munster Club title with Ballygunner. Paul is a pharmaceutical rep in the Munster area.

## Appendix 2 – Penalty Rule Interpretation (June 10th 2014)

The Management Committee of the GAA has asked Central Council to consider and adjudicate on the following recommendations for Interpretations of Rule in relation to the Playing Rules of Hurling 2.2 Exceptions (i) and (ii), 2.3, 2.5 and 4.16(b)

The terms “taken” or “retaken” in Rules 2.2 Exceptions (i) and (ii) and 2.3 shall mean the ball being “struck”.

A player taking a penalty or a 20m free puck, may bring the ball back up to seven metres from the 20m line for the purposes of making a traditional run at the ball, but shall strike the ball on or outside the 20m line but not inside it.

Exception: In the context of Rule 2.5, if a player taking a penalty or free puck on the actual 20m line fails to lift the ball at the first attempt or fails to strike it with the hurley, and that action causes the ball to marginally cross inside the 20m line, the player, as provided for in this Rule, shall be allowed to strike the ball on the ground without delay.

(a) The players defending a penalty or free puck awarded on the centre point of the 20m line shall stand on their goal-line and may not move towards the 20m line until the ball has been actually struck. ‘Lifting’ the ball with the hurley does not constitute ‘striking the ball’.

(b) The players defending a free puck awarded on the 20m line at a point other than on the centre point of that line shall stand a minimum of 20m from the point of award of the free and may not move closer to that point of award until the ball has been actually struck. ‘Lifting’ the ball with the hurley does not constitute ‘striking the ball’

This Interpretation shall, in accordance with Rule 3.43, Official Guide Part 1, have the force of Rule until Congress 2015, when the issues will be further addressed by way of Motion(s).





# Appendix 3 – Director Of Hurling Job Description

As part of the findings of the Hurling 20/20 Committee it is recommended that a full-time position be created charged with the overall strategic development of hurling.

The person in this role will pay particular attention to the points mapped out in this report with a view to monitoring and improving the standards and participation levels of the game across all grades.

This position will not be charged with hands-on grass roots coaching but will instead place a special emphasis on the cultivation of a network of hurling coaches supported and encouraged through coaching seminars at county and provincial level with the intention of growing the game from club level up.

## Role Purpose:

To maximise participation levels and optimise performance standards across the island with particular reference to solidifying the strength of the game in strong areas and nurturing it in second and third-tier counties where scope exists for improvement.

## Reports to:

Ard Stiúrthóir

## Schedule / Workload

As part of an agreed vision for this position the successful candidate will be invited to input to the final plans before agreed monthly schedules are put in place as part of a longer term plan.

This plan will include specific targets and area-based plans dependent on the needs of a given region.

Weekly reports will be furnished to Croke Park outlining duties in any given seven-day period.

## Key qualifications

- The successful figure must have a clear proven track record in involvement of hurling over a prolonged period.
- They must exhibit a deep understanding and passion for the game and display a thorough understanding of the challenges facing the game and those charged with promoting and administering it.
- A clear grasp of the differing levels and standards of hurling across the country is a basic requirement.
- The candidate must possess excellent communication skills which will be central to the roll out of the duties involved through coaching workshops, seminars and presentations.
- Familiarity with modern day communications techniques and IT would be a plus in addition to an understanding about the importance of optics and positive PR around the game.

## Skills

- Excellent verbal, written and interpersonal skills
- The ability to manage people/resources and build and sustain good team relationships and manage conflict
- Excellent negotiation skills
- Effective presentation skills
- Very good time management and organisational skills in order to effectively manage self, others and plan, initiate, develop and implement projects

## Other specific requirements

- The holder of the role must possess a clean full driving license.
- Have flexibility in working arrangements, including evenings and weekends.
- Will be subject to Garda vetting as with all full-time GAA roles
- Have the ability to work at home with a view to travelling the country as part of the role.

# Appendix 4 – Coaching Template Example

See below an example of a Coaching Template made up of different elements of templates submitted to the committee during the course of our consultations. This template is an example for the purpose of the report.

Number of Clubs	
(Hurling and / or Dual)	
Number of Competing club teams at each level from Under 8 level upwards	
Number of Active Hurling Referees in your County	
Number of Primary Schools with hurling activity on a weekly basis	
Number of Post-Primary Schools with hurling activity on a weekly basis	
Development Squads Details for Hurling (number of squads, number of players involved with each)	U14 4 Regional 2 County 120 players U15 3 Regional 2 County 100 players U16 2 Divisional 2 County 60 Players U17 1 County 30 – 35
Number of full-time Games Development Personnel in your County	
Number of part-time Games Development Personnel in your County	
Number of Qualified and Active Coaches for Hurling within each club	20+ approximately per club
Details of active Club / School links in place	Club/Primary Schools Coaching Scheme in place. Of the 28 clubs approx. 15 have very active club school links, 8 more have a base to build on and the final 5 have limited or no club school link
What areas within your County would you identify as Hurling black spots, i.e. in need of improvement	The biggest impediment to hurling in some rural areas is population. Small rural clubs who have to amalgamate due to numbers. In urban areas the lack of club activity, especially at adult level, due to the protracted inter-county season is an issue.
General Comments	

## Proposals

### Proposal 1

Work with an external consultancy organisation to produce a best practice template to be used as a blueprint to share with all counties which if followed will help to build up hurling within each county from its foundations.

### Proposal 2

Establish a full-time Director of Hurling role. See Appendix three for a proposed Job Description.

### Proposal 3

The Hurling 2020 committee proposes that the awarding of a penalty in hurling will result in the penalty taker having to face one defender on the line. The ball can be placed anywhere outside the 20m line but must be struck no closer than 20m. This rule would come in to effect for all hurling competitions for a period of five years until the next Annual Congress where rule changes are heard in 2020.

### Proposal 4

The Hurling 2020 committee proposes the existing rule be changed to allow for just 3 defenders on the goal line while enshrining in rule that the ball cannot be struck any closer than the 20m line.

### Proposal 5

The Hurling 2020 committee proposes the following new Advantage Rule to replace Rule 4.36 and Rule 5.35, for implementation in 2015:

“When a foul is committed, the referee may allow the play to continue if he considers it to be to the advantage of the offended team. He shall signal that advantage by raising an arm upright and shall allow the advantage to run by maintaining his arm in the upright position for up to five seconds after the foul or for less time if it becomes clear that no advantage has accrued. If he deems no advantage to have accrued, he may subsequently award a free for the foul from where it occurred, (except as provided under Exceptions (v) and (vi) of Rule 2.2). He shall apply any relevant disciplinary action.”

### Proposal 6

To ensure fairness and consistency, we propose the standardisation of the ball in hurling at all levels.

### Proposal 7

Set up a Hurling Referees Sub-Committee at National level from 2015 onwards.

### Proposal 8

Change to Official Guide 1.2 (ix) (b) - To order off a player who commits a second Cautionable Foul/Infraction by showing him a second Yellow Card followed by showing him a Red Card.

TO

To order off a player who commits a second Cautionable Foul/Infraction by showing him a second Yellow Card followed by pointing to the sideline to indicate he can no longer take part in the game. Allow a replacement from within the substitutions permitted in Rule 2.4, Rules of Specification.

### Proposal 9

Remove all Promotion/Relegation playoffs involving teams in different divisions in the Allianz Hurling Leagues.

### Proposal 10

Remove the Promotion / Relegation playoff involving the bottom team in the Leinster Round-Robin competition and the Christy Ring Cup champion. Instead, the bottom Leinster Round-Robin team would be relegated to the Christy Ring Cup while the Christy Ring Cup champion would be automatically promoted as a reward for winning the competition.

### Proposal 11

Increase the length of time to play the Christy Ring Cup from five weekends to seven weekends.

### Proposal 12

Play the Christy Ring Cup Final as a curtain raiser to a high profile Liam MacCarthy Cup All-Ireland Senior Hurling Qualifier

### Proposal 13

Reset the terms of reference of the Central Fixtures Oversight Body to ensure the Club Fixtures Schedule, which provides regular games and activity, is adhered to.

### Proposal 14

Increase the number of ‘Maor Camán’/’Maor Uisce’ by one for senior inter-county hurling league and championship games starting in 2015

### Proposal 15

Allocate squad numbers to each team in the Liam MacCarthy Cup prior to their team’s first game.



