

Motion 1 - That Temporary Rule 5.46, Rules of Hurling, Official Guide Part 2 and Temporary Rule 5.42, Rules of Football, be retained for Senior Inter-County Championships and National Leagues in 2022 and 2023.

Delegates will recall the unanimous support demonstrated at Annual Congress 2021 for the introduction of an Emergency Rule (5.46 Hurling and 5.42 Football) to address the level of cynical foul play that had besmirched the All-Ireland senior championships in the preceding seasons.

It identified three rules in hurling (Cat 1) and three rules in football (Cat 2) that, should they to lead to the denial of a goal scoring opportunity for an opponent, were to be penalized by the individual player responsible for the foul being sent to the sinbin for a period of 10 minutes and a penalty awarded to the team fouled against. The latter sanction was founded on the principle that if an opportunity was denied a team by cynical foul play that this should be re-instated (through the award of a penalty) whilst the former offered contemporariness in respect of both an individual and team sanction and, otherwise, has been proven to be successful as, in the first instance, a deterrent against cynical foul play and, as appropriate, a sanction for the same.

Objective statistical analysis of the 2021 season (by Gaelic Stats – Full report made available to delegates) is categoric in respect of the effectiveness of these temporary rules in eradicating all but the very occasional act of such foul play, whilst the benefits of doing so to the overall stature of the game remain clear. For instance (according to the Gaelic Stats report):

- The 2021 Hurling Championship had the highest ever number of scores per game (59.2) in the competition’s long and illustrious history.
- Specifically – in the context of this rule – the Hurling Championship had the highest number of goals (3.5) scored for almost a decade.
- Cynical Fouling has fallen from 1.4 such fouls per game in 2020 to 0.4 per game in 2021 – a decline of almost 75% across one season.
- Fouls preventing clear goal scoring opportunities have also significantly decreased from 1.5 per game in 2020 to 0.3 per game in 2021 – again a fall of almost 75%.
- In respect of the success of the sinbin, the team with the numerical advantage obtained during the 10 minutes an opponent was in the Sin Bin outscored their opponents 2:1, on average.

The picture is similarly positive in respect of the Football Championship where, again according to the independent analysis offered by Gaelic Stats (Report made available to delegates):

- At 37.3 pts per game, Championship scores for the 2021 Senior Championship are the second highest since records began (1887).
- In terms of goals, the 2021 Championship witnessed more goals than any Championship season in over two decades (since 1990).
- Some 27% of the black cards awarded in the 2021 Championship formed part of the Emergency Rule protocol, meaning they were accompanied by the award of a penalty kick to the team affected.

Whilst the Emergency Rule introduced for the 2021 Championship represented an overwhelming success, the SCPR has sought to enhance the Rule still further for consideration for a further two-year extension (2022 and 2023 seasons) and has done so by:

- Offering a clear definition of the Denial of a Goal Scoring Opportunity to provide match referees with further clarity around when this Rule should be deployed.
- As part of this definition, which is an integral part of the rule, referees are offered clarity in terms of location (where on the field of play this rule should come into effect), circumstance (notably the player, when fouled, must be in possession of the ball) and impact (in the judgement of the match referee was the opportunity to score a goal denied).
- The proposal to indicate the sanctioning of any of the named infractions in hurling using a black rather than yellow card is merely to aid referees when indicating to both teams and patrons attending the game that the foul being punished is one of the three infractions listed in Temporary Rule 5.46.
- Finally, because there is now a need for the player fouled in these instances to be in possession of the ball, clarification is also offered in terms of a definition of possession, which is specified in any one or more Rule 1 – The Play sub-sections 1.3,1.4,1.7 (Hurling); 1.4,1.5 (Football).

The SCPR respectfully requests approval from Central Council for a two year extension to this Temporary Rule to permit further and complete assessments to be undertaken of its effectiveness when addressing cynical foul play.