



Mol an Óige agus Tiocfaidh Sí

Cuala GAA | Minor Girls

Date: 10 January 2024

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Definition of common terms:

- *'Club player' = player at club level (inter-county policy is set by County Board)*
- *'Adult' = any player or team composed of individuals aged 19 and above (most relevant for Under 19 / 20 / 21 teams)*
- *'Year 1 Minor' = under 17 age group (in 2023, if born in 2006)*
- *'Year 2 Minor' = under 18 age group (in 2023, if born in 2005)*
- *'Minor mentor' = lead coach for player's primary team in either code*
- *'Code rep' = contact for Women's Section and secondary contact for dual code players*
- *'FLO' = Female Liaison Officer*

Version	Date	Description of Changes	Approved By
0.5	21/12/2023	Sign-off request	Coaching Forum
1.0	10/01/2024	Sign off	Coiste

Introduction

This document is structured to provide clear guidelines and procedures for the Cuala Minor Girl's 'playing up' protocols that will ensure the smooth functioning of our teams and the fair treatment of all players.

The aim of having clear and flexible principles for Playing Up protocols will greatly benefit coaches and players and should guide decision-making while allowing mentors the flexibility to address unique circumstances. Consistency across age groups and genders/codes will provide a unified approach, and a positive attitude towards playing up will enhance both individual and club development.

Dublin County Boards

Outline of administrative and operational structures specific to Minor Girls competitions in camogie and ladies' football, highlighting the unique challenges and developments in these areas:

- Separate bodies are responsible for Minor Girls competition in camogie and ladies' football.
- Unlike GAA model, week-on/week-off for each code is inconsistent and can often result in fixture clashes during the season
- The evolution of female minor grades (particularly camogie) is a recent development compared to minor boys and current minor/adult split less established than male codes

Cuala GAA Minor Girls (2023)

Detail of specific protocols and practices within the Cuala GAA club, especially as they pertain to the transition of minor girls from juvenile to adult levels. This section is crucial for understanding the club's approach to nurturing young talent and integrating it into the broader adult team structure.

- A "playing up to adult" policy has not previously been documented
- Dual Player protocol exists, which was approved by Women's Section [2023] and shared with players

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- Minor girls are managed within the Women's Section in their first year out of Juvenile (U17) for both codes
- Cuala Women's adult sections are still relatively early in their maturity.
 - Minor level competitive participation has existed for several years more at ladies' football, than camogie

Summary

Condensed overview of our core policies - these include stipulations on player eligibility, team priorities, and the conditions under which players may 'play up' in different circumstances. This section serves as a quick reference guide for understanding the key principles and rules that govern our club's sporting activities.

- It is club policy that underage players' priority is to play with teams of their own age group
- Every effort should be made to give all players a run during a game as otherwise they may not continue to turn up.
- Overage or otherwise ineligible players must never be played. The penalty in the event of an objection is loss of the match and suspension for the player, mentor, club chair and secretary.
- In instances where older teams face a shortage of players, younger players may be elevated to fill in ('play up'), provided it does not undermine the standing or game time of committed players in the older age group. Specifically, a 'play up' scenario must not result in reduced playing time or exclusion for dedicated adult team members who commit to training and matches. This policy aims to prevent the demotivation of adult players who might feel displaced, undervalued, or overshadowed due to the advancement of a younger player, regardless of the latter's skill level. It's essential to foster a team environment where commitment and loyalty are valued alongside skill and performance.
- Maintaining the principle of prioritising older team players, the club acknowledges there may be exceptional circumstances necessitating the 'playing up' of younger players.
 - These circumstances might include, but are not limited to, acute player shortages in specific roles, sudden player absences, or injuries during games. In such scenarios,

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- any decision to have a younger player 'play up' must be thoroughly documented, justifying the necessity based on the immediate team requirements. This documentation is to be kept for review, ensuring decisions are transparent and equitable.
- Crucially, mentors are expected to engage in consistent and clear communication with both their teams and individual players regarding the 'playing up' approach each season. This communication should be initiated at the season's start, prior to each competition, and ahead of specific games where 'playing up' players might be needed. The intent is to foster an environment of openness and clarity, ensuring all team members understand the potential for and reasoning behind any 'playing up' decisions. This approach aims to balance the team's immediate needs with every player's long-term development and morale."
 - This revision emphasises the importance of ongoing communication between mentors and players, ensuring that all team members are kept informed and understand the rationale behind 'playing up' decisions.
 - Mentors of the older team must receive permission from the mentors of the younger teams (in both codes, if applicable) before playing players up.
 - Contact should not be made with the player until the relevant mentors in both codes have been appraised of the request.

Cuala GAA Club-level Protocol for Minor players

Any situation where an underage (under 18 years) player is involved with club activity - **ALL** coaches, mentors, volunteers **MUST** be Garda Vetted and Safeguarded in line with the [GAA Code of Behaviour \(Underage\)](#) by which we are governed.

- Vetting applications can be made online via the Foireann app
- Safeguarding can be accessed by registering with [Ken Fitzgerald](#), Club GPO
- Online Refresher course available for those who previously attended Safeguarding 1.

Visit [GAA Safeguarding Refresh](#) to complete

Mentors of adult teams that include underage players must be vetted, must have attended child safeguarding training and must have a minimum coaching qualification, this includes guest and/or external specialist coaches. Refer to: [Code of Behaviour \(Underage\)](#)

Minor Girls “Playing up” to Adult Squads Policy | Camogie and Ladies Football

The progression of a player from underage grades to adult teams is always welcomed and may come sooner for some rather than others. While it is not unusual for players under 18 years of age to be part of adult club teams, their participation requires additional attention as they still legally hold recognition as a child which their parents, fellow players, their Club and mentors and their Association must recognise and uphold.

This may require their fellow team members being spoken to by the team mentors to address the legal status of the under 18-year-old and to emphasise that adults must always conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and an assurance that the adults will not encourage or facilitate the under 18 year old to participate in adult related socialising or activity.

By adhering to these guidelines, adult players will play a crucial role in safeguarding the well-being and development of underage players within our club. These measures are in place not only to comply with legal obligations but to foster a culture of respect, safety, and inclusivity. It is expected that team mentors will regularly communicate with adult players to reinforce these expectations and provide guidance on appropriate interactions with underage players.

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Minor Player's Priority Squad

- Year 1 (U17)
 - Minor team will remain as the player's main priority and team throughout their full season
- Year 2 (U18)
 - Minor team will remain as player's main priority and team up until competition has concluded for that year

Adult "playing up" Eligibility

- *Juvenile Final Year U16 (In 2024, players born 2008)*
 - *Refer to Cuala GAA Underage 'playing up' Policy (implementation due 2024)*
- Year 1 U17 (In 2024, players born 2007)
 - No player in their first Minor year (U17) will be eligible for adult 'playing up' roles, including participation in adult games or training sessions. This policy ensures prioritisation of player development at appropriate age levels. Exceptions to this rule may be considered only under rare and well-justified circumstances, such as a critical shortage of available players in the adult team. In such cases, the decision to allow a first-year Minor player to 'play up' must be explicitly approved by both the Minor and Adult team coaches and documented for accountability and review.
- Year 2 U18 (In 2024, players born 2006)
 - ALL players are eligible to play up for adult games / training in their second Minor year and provided with equal opportunity and consideration for adult "playing up" purposes.
 - The GAA Directive under the Code of Behaviour (Underage) is clear and aims to provide all eligible players with an opportunity to participate in their age-appropriate teams and if certain players have demonstrated the skills and capabilities to compete at an adult level before turning 18, it would be unfair to exclude them based solely on their turning 18 in a later month, of the same year as their team members.

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- Year 2 (U18) Player is eligible and may be provided to support adult teams when short to field for competitive action in
 - League / Cup
 - Championship
 - Challenge games

Overall, it is important to adhere to the guidelines and policies outlined by the governing body and this will remain the Club's position to allow ALL U18 (year 2) players to be eligible to "play up" to adult. The need for foundation coaching and the mandatory safeguarding and vetting to be undertaken by adult mentors and volunteers (not fellow-team member adult players) remains a requirement where a player has yet to turn 18.

Adult “playing up” Requests

The decision to involve underage players in adult competition should be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration their abilities, maturity, and safeguarding measures.

- Minor Lead Coach and their mentor group to determine player’s readiness for progression from underage to adult teams
- Minor player to be made aware of any implications regarding ‘cup-tied’ game-time and potential regrading in the following season when they move up as an adult player (i.e., if “playing up” for any amount of time with a first adult team in competitive games, they need to be aware that they cannot “play up” with an adult team of a lower division and will need to wait for regrade in the following season)
- Requests to “play up” are for Minors to be used as support, or surplus to existing adult team members when available numbers require it.
- “Playing up” by a minor who already has a main priority squad, should not negatively impact existing adult team players

Requests where Year 2 player has NOT yet turned 18:

- Mentors of adult teams (i.e., coaches; physio; S&C; first aid, volunteers, guest coaches etc.) that include underage players in their teams, ALL must be vetted, must have

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attended child safeguarding training and must have a minimum GAA coaching qualification.

- Confirmation for all mentors of adult teams will be required for Garda vetting and completion of safeguarding training. Details to be provided to the Club's Children Officer.

Further detail on under 18 rules and guidelines are covered in the GAA Code of Behaviour (Underage), refer to [Section 3: Maintaining Good Practice and Behaviour](#)

Contact arrangements

No direct contact with player / parent to be made without Minor Year 2 lead coach knowledge by adult mentors, or an adult player on behalf of adult mentors.

- For each adult game where a minor year 2 player is needed, it will require its own request
- First point of contact for request should be as follows:
 - Single code player: Contact the Minor Lead Coach directly (e.g., adult ladies football mentor contacts minor ladies football lead coach directly).
 - Dual-code player: Initial contact should be made to the Minor Lead Coach of the relevant code. It's encouraged that Minor Lead Coaches across both codes collaborate and consult with each other, especially when considering the player load for dual-code players, before granting consent for the player to 'play up'. This collaborative approach ensures a balanced and well-considered decision that prioritises the welfare and development of the player.
- Second point of contact (only to be made when approved by main minor team management) will be with:
 - Player, if already turned 18, OR
 - Parent for player if under 18

Appendices

Underage Code of Behaviour

Section 1 | Code of Behaviour and Child Safeguarding Policy Statement

Section 2 | Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Section 3 | Maintain Good Practice and Behaviour

YOUNG PLAYERS ON ADULT TEAMS

The progression of a player from underage grades to adult teams is always welcomed and may come sooner for some rather than others. While it is not unusual for players under 18 yrs. of age to be part of adult club teams their participation requires additional attention as they still legally hold recognition as a child which their parents, fellow players, their Club and mentors and their Association must recognise and uphold.

This may require their fellow team members being spoken to by the team mentors so as to address the legal status of the under 18 yr. olds and to emphasise that adults must always conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and an assurance that the adults will not encourage or facilitate the under 18 yr. olds to participate in adult related socialising or activity.

Mentors of adult teams that include underage players must be vetted, must have attended child safeguarding training and must have a minimum coaching qualification

Section 4 | Dealing with breaches of the Code of Behaviour

Section 5 | Recruitment and Selection

Section 6 | Player Injury Funds and Insurance

Section 7 | Club and County Children's Officer

Section 8 | Designated Liaison Person

Section 9 | Organising Club Activities

Section 11 | Dealing with allegations or concerns of abuse

Section 12 | Tackling bullying in your club

Player Welfare [for review by HCO/CF in 2024]

Player welfare | Minor Girls*

- No impact to be made on existing minor player's activities or return from injury plans
- Unlike the Minor boys who can avail of week on / week off schedules and there is a strict rule against playing up in the same week as a game in their own grade, a more flexible approach will be adopted (until such time as Camogie Association and LGFA address the week on / week off for dual players):
 - Mentors should closely monitor and consider the playing load of a minor player over a given week or period of time, ensuring it remains at a manageable level.
 - This consideration should help in making informed decisions about when a player can 'play up' to adult squads, with the player's health, well-being, and development remaining as top priorities.
 - When available, Minor Lead Coach (single code) and Minor Lead Coaches and/or Minor Rep (dual code) to provide season schedule availability at earliest possible opportunity to allow for adequate planning for adult squads
- Player load to be monitored by both adult and minor mentors, and where possible activity recorded and available to player's main Minor mentor
- A calendar of activities for the year to be drawn up collaboratively by the mentors with the intention of avoiding over-training. The calendar aims to allow for designated "free from training" weeks, as well as taking into account school playing seasons. An 'off-season' to be agreed that no games/challenge matches are played during that period.
- "unacceptable risk" process to be followed under the LGFA Transgender Policy (draft going to Coiste week of 4 Sep and awaiting response)
- Refer to [Section 9: Organising Club Activities](#) for social / non-playing activities where Year 2, U18 players have not yet turned 18
- Attendance for Minor Year 2 player to be maintained with priority squad records and made available to all mentors where player is shared

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- Allowance should be made for periods of the year when players are involved in intensive school games activities and club training should be modified accordingly.
- When selecting players for Dublin development squads, that due cognisance be taken of the demands being placed on players and it is recommended that a player should be nominated to participate in one squad only i.e.. either hurling / football; camogie/ ladies football from U14 upwards.
- When players are being called up to play at an older age group, contact must first be made with the mentor of the relevant team. Contact should not be made with the player until the relevant mentor has been appraised of the request.
- Where possible, dual players should not be called upon to 'sub up' to the next age group. It is preferable if the players being requested to 'sub up' are rotated i.e. that the same players are not being called on the whole time.

Player welfare (general)*

- A standardised warm up/cool down procedure be implemented with all club teams in the interests of injury prevention.

*Further review needed on player welfare area– there is a requirement to set-up and agree what monitoring is necessary; who will be responsible and where this will be held. Proposal to include any CCC directive also

Dual Player Protocol | Women's Section | Jan 2023

- Each Dual Player will have **two camogie** and **two football outings per week**
 - in the normal course this will be one training and one match on dedicated days
- As required, a player may be asked to play a second game (or part thereof) but this should be instead of their existing second commitment
- No activities should be arranged outside the dedicated match/training days without clearance from all relevant mentors and this by exception only.
- If an eligible player plays on a secondary squad, having already played a match or trained with their primary squad in that week - she will not participate in further training with any other squad
- Challenge games should only be arranged after considering how many dual players will be involved and whether this can be achieved without breaching the (2 + 2) outings per week for a dual player
- Players (and parents when under 18) should be asked to communicate with mentors/first aiders early and regularly on injuries and to seek engagement with a physio where appropriate.
- Dual Players/parents should be encouraged to discuss injuries with both their camogie and football mentors in parallel and the mentors should then discuss and agree an appropriate injury management plan.
- In the event of up to 3 - 4 consecutive days activity in a week, where activity is unavoidable (due to LGFA and / or Camogie board fixture schedules, pitch availability etc.) - players will be encouraged they rest for the remaining weekdays
- Mentors to communicate with dual players / parents of U18s on frequent basis and as required, what their primary and secondary days are for training / matches.
 - In addition, they must clear what their excused day is in the week (e.g., camogie: Tues training; Sun match; Thur excused or football: Mon training; Wednesday match; Saturday excused)