

## Guidelines for Selecting a Cuala GAA Team Captain /



## Treoirínite maidir le Captaen Foirne Cuala CLG a Roghnú

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### Introduction / Réamhrá

Selecting a team captain is a significant decision in Gaelic games. While the coach manages the team, the captain leads it on and off the pitch. A captain should embody the club's values, serve as a role model, and foster team spirit. Given the voluntary nature of Gaelic games, leadership is as much about character as it is about skill.

This document, developed in consultation with the club's Coaching group and Player Representative, for coaching groups, coaches, and players, to provide structured guidance on captain selection that aligns with club values and traditions.

While there are no official guidelines from the GAA, LGFA, or Camogie Association on selecting captains, the Code of Behaviour for underage players advises clubs to vary selection methods to promote inclusivity. This document provides a foundation for best-practice guidance for coaches and captains - for underage guidelines, refer to [GAA's Code of Behaviour – Section 03](#).

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## Guidelines for Coaches: Selecting a Captain / Treoirínite do Chóitseálaithe: Captaen a Roghnú

### Considerations for Captaincy Selection / Machnamh ar Roghnú an Chaptaein

Maturity and leadership, communication skills, commitment, work ethic, resilience and team spirit, personality and leadership style-fit are some of the attributes that should be considered when selecting your team captain:

- The ideal captain is someone players respect and look up to.
- Captains need to liaise between players, coaches, referees, and club representatives.
- They should be dependable and lead by example in training and matches.
- The captain sets the tone for effort and discipline within the squad.
- The best leaders inspire during both wins and losses.
- Some players lead vocally, while others lead by example—both styles can be effective depending on the team dynamic.

Different approaches suit different teams. Below are suggested methods that can be used for camogie, hurling, men's and ladies football teams:

### 1. Coach-Chosen Captain / **Captaen Roghnaithe ag an gCóitseálaí**

- The coach selects a captain based on leadership qualities, experience, and suitability.
- Ensures the captain embodies club values and is a strong communicator.
- Best for younger teams needing structured leadership or teams in transition.

### 2. Player-Chosen Captain from Panel / **Captaen Roghnaithe ag na hImlreoirí ón bPainéal**

- Coaches shortlist team leaders based on pre-determined criteria.
- Players vote for their top two or three candidates.
- The player with the most votes takes on the **Captain** role, while those with the second and/or third most votes assume **Vice-Captain** roles.
- Encourages a democratic approach and fosters team responsibility.
- Ensures that the selected player has the respect of teammates.

### 3. Leadership Group / **Grúpa Ceannaireachta**

- A small group (e.g., 3-4 players) shares leadership duties.
- Can include a **captain, vice-captain, and additional leaders** from different zones (defence, midfield, attack) or based on specific areas of influence.
- Leadership roles may be divided as follows - Matchday Captain, Training Leader, Team Culture Lead, and Club Liaison, who:
  - Leads on the pitch, communicates with referees
  - Ensures team energy and motivation during sessions
  - Helps with team bonding and off-field activities
  - Engages with club committees, club representatives, or fundraising efforts.
- Best for large squads or teams with strong personalities that benefit from shared leadership.

### 4. Rotating Captain / **Captaen Rothlach**

- Captaincy rotates among players, usually game-by-game.
- Provides leadership opportunities and ensures inclusivity.
- Works well for underage teams or when developing leadership skills in multiple players.

### 5. Set-Time Captain / **Captaen le haghaidh Tréimhse Socraithe**

- A player is appointed captain for a defined period (e.g., one month or six matches).
- Allows for structured leadership while providing opportunities for others later.

## Additional Coach Considerations / **Machnamh Breise do Chóitseálaithe**

- **Underage Players:**
  - Keep the selection process fair and inclusive, ensuring all players understand the role - for underage guidelines, refer to [GAA's Code of Behaviour – Section 03](#).
- **Dual Players:**
  - If a player is balancing multiple teams (e.g., club & county, hurling/camogie & football), consider their availability.
- **Injury or Absence:**
  - If a **Vice-Captain** has been appointed, they should step up and assume the role. Otherwise, a temporary captain should be selected.

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## Guidelines for Captains: The Role & Responsibilities / **Treoirínite do Chaptaein: An Ról & Freagrachtaí**

Being named a captain is an honour and a responsibility. A great captain leads by example and fosters unity within the team. The following principles can help guide you in your role.

### The 3 C's of a Gaelic Games Captain / **Na 3 'C' an Chaptaein**

#### **Caring, Courageous, and Consistent / Comhbhách, Cróga agus Comhsheasmhach**

##### 1. **Caring / Comhbhách**

- Show genuine commitment to the team and club.
- Support and encourage teammates, fostering a positive environment.
- Address any issues privately and constructively to maintain team harmony.

##### 2. **Courageous / Cróga**

- Lead by example in tough situations.
- Be the voice of the team with referees, coaches, and officials.
- Hold teammates accountable while also standing up for them when needed.

##### 3. **Consistent / Comhsheasmhach**

- Maintain high standards in training and matches.
- Communicate clearly and confidently.
- Be a steady influence regardless of results.

If you succeed in these areas, you will gain a fourth ‘C’—**Credibility**—which is the foundation of strong leadership.

### Captain’s Duties & Expectations / **Dualgais & Ionchais an Chaptaein**

- **On the Pitch:**
  - Lead warm-ups and ensure they are carried out effectively.
  - Communicate with referees respectfully when needed.
  - Keep the team focused and motivated.
- **Off the Pitch:**
  - Encourage a positive team culture.
  - Assist in welcoming new players and integrating them into the squad.
  - Liaise with the **Club’s Player Representative** (relevant to adult, over 18 players) to represent the team in discussions with club leadership.
  - Be the link between players and management.

### Developing Leadership Skills as a Captain / **Scileanna Ceannaireachta a Fhorbairt mar Chaptaen**

Seek advice, learn from mistakes, be authentic and stay committed:

- Speak with past captains, coaches, and senior players about handling leadership challenges.
- No captain is perfect—use setbacks as learning experiences.
- Find a leadership style that suits your personality.
- Your actions will influence team morale more than your words.

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### Final Thoughts / **Smaointe Deiridh**

There is no single ‘right’ way to choose or act as a captain in Gaelic games. The key is to align the selection process with the team’s needs and to ensure captains understand their responsibilities. Leadership can be developed over time, and every captain has the potential to make a lasting impact on their team and club.

By following these guidelines, coaches and players can ensure that the role of captain is approached with the respect and dedication it deserves.

*Strong leadership builds great teams! Best of luck to all players in this selection process. / **Tógann ceannaireacht láidir foireann iontach! Go n-éirí go geal libh sa phróiseas roghnúcháin!***