



Do: Gach Runaí Chlub

A chara,

With clubs across the country and beyond commencing their preparations for the 2026 season, the GAA is keen to remind members of rules and guidance in the realm of hurling equipment – particularly Helmets and Sliotars.

Helmets

The GAA's position on Hurling Helmets has remained consistent since the introduction of Rule 4.2 (i) in Part II of the Official Guide, that is, *"in all Hurling Games and Hurling Practice Sessions, it shall be mandatory for, and the responsibility of, each individual player to wear a helmet with a facial guard that meets the standard set out in IS:355 or other replacement standard as determined by the National Safety Authority of Ireland (NSAI). Such helmets shall not be modified from their original manufactured state in any circumstances."*

Within the Player Education Resource Hub on Tobar, the Gaelic Games' Association's learning and education platform, this rule-based advice has remained consistent - <https://learning.gaa.ie/mouthguardshurlinghelmets>

All players are advised that in the event of a head injury occurring, if the helmet being worn does not meet the standard or is modified or altered from the original manufactured state, they are not covered under the terms of the GAA Injury Benefit Fund.

The GAA recognises the need, in a best practice player welfare context, to introduce and implement a regulatory model to the helmet market at all levels of Camogie and Hurling. Initially, a Hurling Helmet Work Group was created to address this objective, and since then, this has evolved into the Sliotar, Hurley and Helmet Work Group, which is tasked with overseeing the implementation of effective regulation and safety within the hurling equipment space, and maintaining the integrity of the game.

Work is ongoing on this key objective, and we would expect to be in a position to advise on a project timeline in 2026.

The GAA has worked with the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission in recent years on specific awareness campaigns, alerting members to dangerous counterfeit helmets circulating in the market and reiterating its position as per the above -

- <https://www.gaa.ie/article/hurling-and-camogie-players-warned-to-never-use-dangerous-gola-helmets>
- <https://www.ccpc.ie/consumers/2023/12/18/counterfeit-hurling-camogie-helmets-are-dangerous-warn-ccpc-and-gaa/>



- <https://www.gaa.ie/news/counterfeit-hurling-camogie-helmets-are-dangerous-warn-ccpc-and-gaa>

Licensed Smart & Match Sliotars

Smart Sliotars are those embedded with a chip in the core which can be read by the Foireann app, used for sliotar verification purposes. Smart Sliotars are primarily used in the inter-county game at present, but it is envisaged that they will be increasingly used in the club game moving forward.

Match Sliotars are all other sliotars, other than Smart Sliotars, which are produced by GAA Licensees, meet GAA rule specifications and can be used in Official Games.

Please see attached the 2026 list of approved licensed Smart and Match Sliotar providers (subject to change). Clubs are asked to ensure that only **Licensed Sliotar** providers are used. This is because -

- Sliotar Licensees have obtained the **WFSGI Pledge from the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry**, which provides assurances that licensed products are manufactured in compliance with internationally accepted **labour standards** and **environmental requirements** – confirming their commitment to ethical manufacturing standards and responsible environmental practices.
- Sliotar Licensees **undergo regular laboratory and field testing** to ensure compliance with specifications and to maintain the integrity of the game.
- It continues to be the recommendation that all hurling games at all levels from Minor and above use a **Fluorescent Yellow/High-Vis** Sliotar from a GAA Sliotar Licensee.

Further information on Sliotar Licensing, and on Smart & Match Sliotars is available through the below -

- <https://www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/getting-involved/sliotar>
- <https://www.gaa.ie/article/smart-sliotar-license-information>
- <https://www.gaa.ie/hurling/news/the-science-behind-the-yellow-sliotar>

Further information is available from GAA Player Welfare Manager, eoghan.tuohey@gaa.ie

Le meas,
Grúpa Oibre Sliotar, Camán & Clogad CLG
GAA Sliotar, Hurley & Helmet Work Group
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