



Ironically the reason the association proceeded with the match was that it was felt cancellation would imply a link between the GAA and the IRB.

The match wasn't long in progress when a plane flew low over the ground and gave a Verrey light signal before heading north, a manoeuvre accepted as the go-ahead for the attack. That episode is depicted in an ominous detail of Sweeney's painting with the aircraft visible overhead in the monochrome panel.

In the programme for the 2015 international rules test, Michael Foley wrote about Bloody Sunday and GAA Communications Executive Cian Murphy was struck by the lines: "For all the years of outrage and anger, those killed in Croke Park were buried under decades of politics and historical debate and analysis, their names forgotten. Some still lie in unmarked graves."

This passage inspired a profound reaction that served as an ideal interim project between the 95th anniversary and this year's centenary – the restoration and in some cases even the provision of graves for the dead.

"There had been a selective amnesia even in the GAA," said Murphy, "about the victims. History books record what happened and the bare numbers – 14 people were killed – but we have set out to remember them as people and not statistics."

This sensibility has informed the centenary commemoration and the focus on 14 people who went to a match but never came home.

Tipperary's Mick Hogan, the only player to be killed and after whom the Hogan Stand was for decades the only victim to be memorialised.

The others remained strictly a supporting cast. Of the 14 who died, seven lay in unmarked graves until five years ago and these have been meticulously addressed.

Starting with Jane Boyle – a 26-year-old shop manager from Dublin who had been due to be married the following week to Daniel Byron and who was buried in her wedding dress – all have been commemorated.

In this year of centenary, it is timely that the GAA's focus on Bloody Sunday has switched away from the blood sacrifice for the cause of freedom and onto the human cost. That day had a seismic impact on how history unfolded but it also came at a terrible cost to families and individuals – 14 people, members of the GAA community, who went out to see a football match and never came home.

Michael Foley has quoted 1986 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Nazi death camp survivor, Elie Wiesel: "To forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time."

Killed at Croke Park on Bloody Sunday:

Jane Boyle (26)	James Burke (44)
Daniel Carroll (30)	Michael Feery (40)
Mick Hogan (24)	Tom Hogan (19)
James Matthews (48)	Patrick O'Dowd (57)
Jerome O'Leary (10)	William Robinson (11)
Tom Ryan (27)	John William Scott (14)
James Teehan (26)	Joe Traynor (21)

- 'Transilience' by David Sweeney will be on show at the Remembering Bloody Sunday exhibition at the GAA Museum from September.

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INCREASED INNOVATION AND APPLICATION HAS MADE THE RACE FOR LIAM MACCARTHY MORE OPEN THAN EVER BEFORE

Christy O'Connor

Freelance Journalist



Back in April, when all the TV stations began rolling out blasts of nostalgia as a form of microwaved sustenance for the real thing, some of the footage once again reaffirmed how nostalgia is such a powerful collaborator in framing history.

In the popular imagination, time often reinforces the status of past players and past games, as if their feats from the past become more glorious as the years pass. That can have such a powerful influence on memory that some of those past matches will always occupy a certain status in the mind's eye. Every match is of its time and era, which always makes comparisons difficult, but, fully accepting that reality, trying to compare 'great matches' is still instructive in examining nostalgia.



2004: Diarmuid O'Sullivan, Cork, in action against Paul Flynn, Waterford. Guinness Munster Senior Hurling Championship Final, Cork v Waterford, Semple Stadium, Thurles, Co. Tipperary. Photo by Ray McManus/Sportsfile.



Within the space of a few weeks in April, TG4 showed the 2004 Cork-Waterford Munster final, and the 2014 Kilkenny-Tipperary drawn All-Ireland final. For many hurling people, that 2004 epic was regarded as hurling's greatest game, a spell-binding classic which Waterford edged with 14 men.

Watching that drawn 2014 final though, forced a revision of that 2004 game's status in the minds of many of those hurling people who had always placed it at the peak. That 2014 match was surely the greatest All-Ireland final ever. Does that not grant it an elite status, almost incomparable with any other match?

Who knows, yet the numbers, and sheer quality of that 2014 drawn All-Ireland final underlined just how good that game was. Decorated by luminous class on both sides, the accuracy was off the charts; the tally of 54 scores was the most recorded in an All-Ireland final; there were 20 different scorers from play. Tipperary scored one goal but could have had five. They had two penalties saved. Tipp hit 1-28. And it still wasn't enough to win the match.

Kilkenny won the replay but when Tipperary finally avenged that defeat in the 2016 final, they blitzed Kilkenny for 2-29.



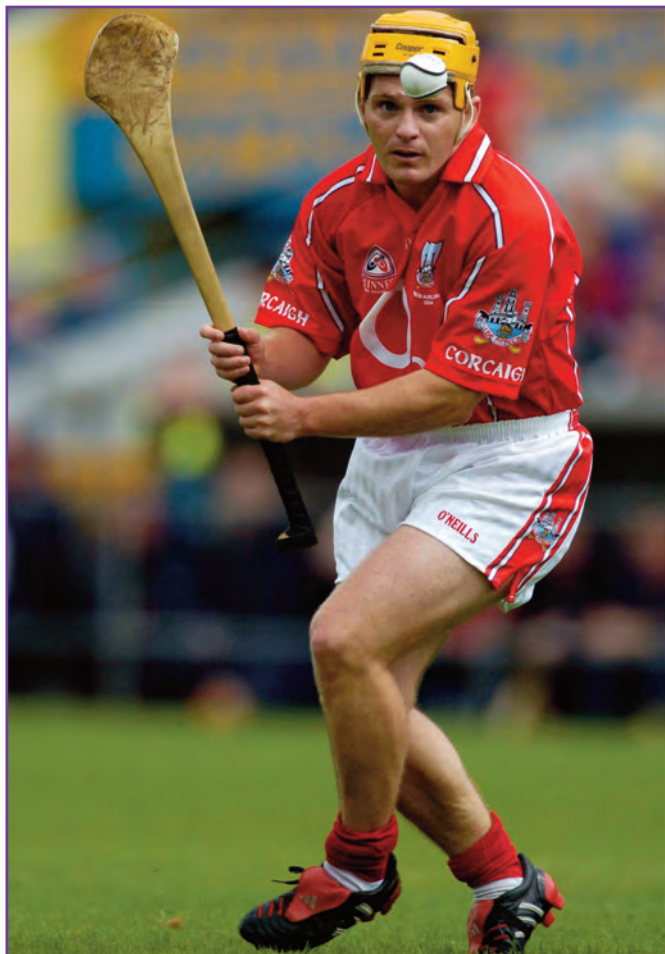


The same afternoon, Tipp could have had five goals only for three brilliant Eoin Murphy saves.

When Tipp defeated Kilkenny again in last year's final, they hit 3-25. The 20 points that Kilkenny scored last August would have been enough to win eight All-Ireland finals in the decade between 2000-'09. In the last decade it would have been sufficient to win two finals. Last year, it was only good enough for a 14-point hiding.

In an era where there has been so much talk about sweepers and defensive systems and forwards working back the field as an extra layer of cover, the defining trend of the last decade was the stratospheric scoring totals.

In the 2010 championship the average score by a winning team was 2-20; in 2019, it was 2-25. Before 2017 over 1,000 points had never been scored in the history of the championship; last year it happened for the third season in a row.



2004: Joe Deane, Cork, Guinness Munster Senior Hurling Championship Final, Cork v Waterford, Semple Stadium, Thurles, Co. Tipperary. Picture Credit: Ray McManus/Sportsfile.

Prior to 2014, there were only eight occasions when a team had hit 30 points (white flags) or more in a championship game. And only two of those games involved two top-nine teams. Yet in the last five seasons, that 30-point (white flags) total has now been breached an additional 11 times.

Prior to 2016, 32 points had been the most white-flags a team had raised in a 70-minute championship game (Kilkenny put 32 points on Galway in the 1974 All-Ireland semi-final in an 80-minute game). Yet Galway exceeded that total with 33 points against Offaly in the 2017 Leinster semi-final. And yet that record only lasted two weeks when Waterford hit 35 points against Offaly in Tullamore in the qualifiers. Then Cork blitzed it last summer when hitting 40 points against Westmeath.

Of course, it doesn't always take high volumes of scores to validate a match, or to rank the overall quality or wellbeing of a sport. The 2004 Munster final had 41 scores, 13 less than the 2014 drawn All-Ireland final, but, even though Cork's style was the beginning of hurling's new evolution, it was a different type of game back then, with more 50-50 contests.



2014: Eoin Larkin, Kilkenny, in action against Paddy Stapleton, Tipperary. GAA Hurling All Ireland Senior Championship Final, Kilkenny v Tipperary. Croke Park, Dublin. Picture Credit: Ramsey Cardy/Sportsfile.

Winning your own ball will always be a fundamental part of the game but there is a huge premium on shorter stick-passing and clean possession in hurling now. It's not about clean hooks and blocks anymore, because swarm tackling, turnovers and huge body hits are the new template.

Despite such claustrophobic conditions, and space being instantly swallowed up, every team now still expects to shoot the lights out. Yet that level of expectation wouldn't be possible unless all of the other metrics in the game had risen too, which most of them have.



The technical ability of most inter-county players is at a different level to anything seen before. The pace of the game has never been higher, but hurling's canvas has become so broad that players have to be able to play now in every corner. The spectacle has changed because the game has changed. A hurler was always programmed to drive the ball in just one direction – towards the other goal. Yet now, every player must have 360-degree awareness.

Goalkeepers have become such a passing outlet now that they are even starting to score; Waterford's Stephen O'Keeffe became the first 'keeper to score from play in the championship in 2018. Dublin's Alan Nolan repeated that feat against Galway last year.

Davy Fitzgerald's Wexford system is akin to the Dutch 'Total Football' of the 1970s, which is built on the tactical theory of every player being able to take over the role of any other outfield player. Defenders have as much a licence to score as forwards. Wexford goalkeeper Mark Fanning scored a point from play in this year's league against Kilkenny. Laois goalkeeper Enda Rowland went a step further in this year's league by scoring a goal against Wexford, his booming strike with the wind deceiving Fanning and ending up in the net.

Similar to Gaelic football, the hurling goalkeeper has become the most important player on the pitch. That is more for puckouts and restarts than general goalkeeping but the standard is still sky-high. Kilkenny 'keeper Eoin Murphy is one of the greatest to ever play the game.

The last decade belonged to the innovators and the strategists and the coaches with a new vision for the game. And that level of innovation has brought more counties to the top table.

Despite Kilkenny and Tipperary winning seven of the last ten titles on offer, Galway and Limerick ended huge famines, while Clare bridged a 16-year gap. Waterford reached an All-Ireland final. Dublin won a first Leinster title in 42 years. Wexford won last year's Leinster title and are now serious All-Ireland contenders again. So are most counties now in the Liam MacCarthy Cup.

At the outset of the 2010 championship, especially after the brilliant 2009 All-Ireland final, everyone knew that the following couple of years would belong to Kilkenny and Tipperary, which is exactly what happened.

Tipp and Kilkenny may have contested last year's All-Ireland final again. But the start of this decade certainly doesn't feel, or look, anything like the outset of the last decade.



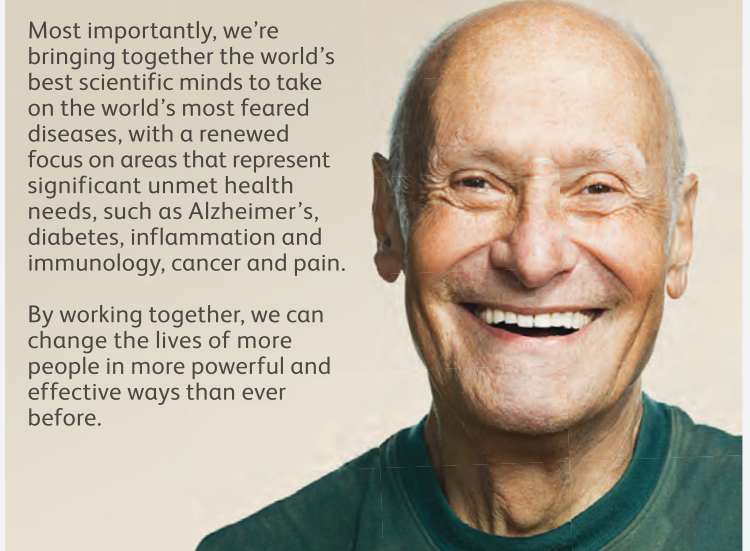
2014: TJ Reid, Kilkenny, in action against Paddy Stapleton, Tipperary. GAA Hurling All Ireland Senior Championship Final, Kilkenny v Tipperary. Croke Park, Dublin. Picture Credit: Piaras O Midheach/Sportsfile.

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HOW CAN WE DEVELOP THE SKILLS OF KILMACUD CROKE'S JUVENILE HURLERS?

Ian Quinn & James Matthews

Ian Quinn, MSc student, UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy & Sports Science, & Games Promotion Officer with Meath GAA.

James Matthews, Associate Professor, UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy & Sports Science.



There are considerable physical and mental health benefits for children who participate in organised sport. To take part in and enjoy sports such as hurling, children must feel capable to perform the particular skills needed to play the sport. Consequently, as coaches we should consider how we can best support children to develop these skills in training. Tracking children's performance of these skills over time can provide useful information that can inform what and how we coach with the ultimate aim of increasing children's engagement in and enjoyment of sport. It was with this approach in mind that members of the Kilmacud Croke's juvenile hurling committee and researchers from University College Dublin came together to conduct a research study. The aim of study was to track children's performance of specific hurling skills over a season by using the data collected from the biannual skills testing process.

As part of the current study, we were interested in the specific skills that are developed at different timepoints in young hurlers, for example, the roll lift for U8s to the sideline cut for U12s. We were also interested in exploring if there is a relationship between skill development and other factors such as having a sibling who plays the same sport and the relative age effect. The relative age effect is related to the difference in chronological age between children participating in the same age group and how these children develop their skills over time. By better understanding factors such as the relative age effect, we can take this into account if needed when organising competitive drills, giving feedback or praising successful performance.

Having received approval from the juvenile hurling committee and the UCD research ethics committee, we gathered the data from biannual skills testing that took place in May and September 2019. In total, we received parental consent to access the skills data of 243 boys across four age groups

(U12s = 28; U11s = 56, U10s = 66, U8s = 93). We are currently in the final stages of analysing this data, and we aim to share the findings from the study in the autumn. We hope that the results of this study might inform coaching practices in the club and lay the foundations for a longitudinal study of skill development in Kilmacud Croke's juvenile hurlers.

Finally, we would like to thank Jim Lyng, Niall Corcoran and Jo-Anne Durnin for proposing this project and their ongoing support in completing it.



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SEASONS SNAPSHOTS & SNIPPETS

2019 / 2020

Peter Walsh

Chairman
Kilmacud Crokes Hurling



In our review of the year, we like to provide an overview of the years action and activities. It goes without saying that we have a different place and perspective on the last 12 months. We last looked at things in August 2019 on the eve of the 2019 All Ireland Final. Notwithstanding the impact of the pandemic there has been plenty of highlights of hurling on which to reflect.

Over a memorable weekend in November 2019, we had county championship wins at under 16 and Minor level. Our under 16s overcame Ballyboden with a particularly strong second half revival winning 3-15 to 2-7. The following day saw our minors defeat the same opposition by a point, 0-15 to 0-14. The great Mick Hynes provides a report later in this Yearbook. Our 2019 Under 15s also contested a county final in November of last year losing out to an accomplished Lucan side.

So as we closed out on 2019 we were particularly content with our successes in the Under 13-18 cohort. The key challenge was to build on that success through to 2020. Though not having seen adult championship success during that year a notable success was the fact that our 2nd and 3rd teams secured league promotion and our teams were positioned in the top three divisions of the adult hurling leagues and were heading into the year with optimism and ambition.



2020

Things started well. We had local victories from Colaiste Eoin and Oatlands at the start of the year. Training was underway. Numbers were enthusiastic and strong.

Any analysis of the recent past year will of course be tempered and indeed dominated by the impact of the pandemic. It would have been very easy for our coaches, players and teams to opt out when the restrictions hit in March of 2020. But rather than give in to the dark covid cloud our hurling community rose up with ingenuity and resilience.

At all times we have been aware of and followed the rules and protocols. Our under-age teams were able to work with Niall Corcoran with sessions on Microsoft teams. Our senior hurlers set challenges and individual competitions for our juvenile players.

The bright but restricted days of May and June were filled with catching, striking and target practice challenges as skills were honed and personal bests bettered. Outside of skill development our players and club community found new ways to express themselves and reach out to each other and the broad locality as a whole.

We took out our purple and gold with pride and trekked the circumference of Ireland many times to raise 40k for Laura Lynn in the Coast for Crokes challenge. Our adult players made themselves available for a volunteer rota bringing necessary supplies to the most vulnerable in our society.

There were highlights on the field too. Our new senior A and B managements had the panels very well prepared in advance of the return of training at the end of June. This was reflected in very strong showings in the groups stages with both teams inflicting defeats against Ballyboden.

Unfortunately, we couldn't build on this progress in the knockout stages with our Senior A team losing at the





quarterfinal stages to Lucan by 1 point and our second team being defeated by Cuala's second team in the senior B county semi final.

At the end of the year our Under 14 and Under 15 teams remained in their premier competitions before the level 5 restrictions called a halt to the action. Particularly tough for our under talented 15 team who had been meticulously prepared and primed for their semi final only to have the entire competition cancelled by the Dublin County Board. Our Minor A Hurlers set out with a possible three in a row in their sights. Again on the cusp of the latter stages the doors slammed shut. However for the under 18 level there is hope that the competitions can be concluded and their A & B county finals have been deferred rather than cancelled. We hope to play the matches in the new year.

Of course, it has been a strange year. Frustrating and at times disappointing but we have seen some lockdown dividends. Holidays, gap years and J1s were cancelled. This gave players at all level an opportunity to train and play together in intact and consistent panels across the fine summer period. Even though they were deprived of go games, mini all Ireland's and many county trips the restrictions brought our under-age hurling panels together. Covid RTP protocols necessitated a broader panel of supervisors and volunteers. More parents were drawn into the fold. Friendships forged, connections deepened, adversity overcome - together. New skills and methods were learned. Old ones honed and adapted.

The yearlong restrictions could have very easily diminished the appetite and enthusiasm for the games and the club. But that is very much not the case. People are planning for the new year with enthusiasm and energy.

The matches not played, the trips not taken - what was lost in 2020 will be regained and exceeded in 2021 - when the

vaccine allows things reopen and resume safely. It has been often been said that never again will we take for granted the joy of the field or the feeling of camaraderie and competition forged on the pitch.

This very yearbook has been a great vehicle to pull together and position the Kilmacud Crokes hurling community for the year and decades ahead.

I would like to thank every player, parent, volunteer and activist for the part that they have played.

I would like to thank the Hurling Committee for their huge continuing efforts and work in supporting and developing our game.

To our mentors, from Nursery to Senior. Who should patience, imagination, perseverance and total commitment - to their players, their teams, our club. The volunteer effort is amazing. And has to be cherished and valued. Without this - there would be no matches or championships and fundamentally the friendship and fun of the games would be lost. You guys make it happen, week on week. And year on year. Go Raibh Míle Maith agaibh go léir.

Peter Walsh

Chairperson - Kilmacud Crokes Hurling





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COLÁISTE EOIN HURLING SUCCESS 2019/20

Dara Purcell



On the 23rd of February 2020, Coláiste Eoin won the Leinster Senior Hurling Championship 'A' final after defeating St Kieran's, Kilkenny, on a scoreline of 1-16 to 0-17. This was the first time ever Coláiste Eoin had won the Leinster Championship and the first ever Leinster title won by a school from Dublin in over sixty years.

There was a strong representation of Kilmacud Crokes players with fourteen members on the panel, from age groups ranging from under sixteen to members of the Crokes senior team. Aodán De Paor, former Crokes and Dublin hurler was in charge of the Coláiste Eoin side.

Many members of the Coláiste Eoin team had been part of the squad which had narrowly lost out to St Kierans the previous year in the Leinster Final, and this experience proved vital as Coláiste Eoin aimed to go one step further and attain their first ever success.

The Gaelscoil faced a tough draw with Wexford kingpins St Peter's College, North Dublin Colleges and St Kierans selected to face Coláiste Eoin in the opening rounds. Preparation for the upcoming championship had begun back in September with training on wet, wintery evenings in Ballinteer and Saturday mornings in Silverpark.

The first match was an eagerly anticipated contest against a strong St Peter's College from Wexford. Although facing stern opposition, Coláiste Eoin did not hit the heights expected of them and were left slightly deflated after conceding a last-minute free which resulted in the match finishing all square. The Coláiste Eoin contingency knew that an improvement would be required were they to obtain a Leinster Championship. However, the point secured would be crucial for Coláiste Eoin to advance to the knockout stages.

The second group match was an all Dublin affair, with Dublin North as opposition. The north Dublin team was an accumulation of all schools from the north of Dublin and Coláiste Eoin had a daunting encounter in front of them. Coláiste Eoin however proved to be up to the task and an

excellent first half showing allowed them to be comfortably in control at half-time. Although Dublin North staged a determined comeback in the second half, Coláiste Eoin proved to be too strong and recorded their first win of the year.

The final group match was against strong favourites and previous Leinster Champions St Kierans. The outcome of this game would decide who would top the group, but Coláiste Eoin needed at least a draw to guarantee qualification through the group. Aided by a strong wind, Coláiste Eoin put in an incredible performance in the first half and appeared to be in control of the affair. However, a resurgence from the reigning champions was almost guaranteed. Kierans showed just why they were reigning champions as they attacked their Dublin opponents right from the beginning of the second half. Coláiste Eoin initially struggled to deal with the onslaught. However, tactical changes allowed them to regain a footing in the contest. Towards the end of the match the Gaelscoil even spurned several chances to win the tie and the match finished a draw, with both teams qualifying for the semi-finals. Although Coláiste Eoin knew that they should have won the match, they were encouraged that they were finally capable of dethroning the reigning champs from their throne.

Coláiste Eoin finished second in their group, which meant CBS Kilkenny would be the opposition in the semi-final. CBS Kilkenny had won their group and would prove to be a stern opposition. Port Laois was the location of the semi-final and was a rematch of last year's semi final which ended in a victory for Coláiste Eoin. The Dublin school raced into an early lead but their momentum was stalled when midfielder Dónal Leavy was dismissed. Coláiste Eoin had to withstand a CBS revival, until Pádhraic Linehan's rasping effort regained control for the Dublin side. The final score finished 1-16 to 0-17 with some stellar performances from the Coláiste Eoin side. Michael Donnelly, Kilmacud and Coláiste Eoin goalkeeper, made some vital saves to preserve the lead, with Brian Sheehy and Iain Ó hEithir also prominent in defence. The freetaking and scores from Brendan Scanlon and Pádhraic Linehan were also crucial to ensure Coláiste Eoin marched onto the final.





St Kierans were the opposition in a repeat of the previous year's final. St Kierans were the undisputed dominant force of school's hurling in Leinster and Ireland and were looking to attain their 57th Leinster title, whilst Coláiste Eoin seeking to win their first ever and desperate to avenge their defeat from last year. Netwatch Dr Cullen Park, Carlow was the place to be as the two strongest teams in Leinster prepared to do battle and win the Corn Ui Dhuill title.

There was nothing to separate the two sides right from the beginning with both sides trading scores. The score-line was level at the interval with Coláiste Eoin's scores coming from Sean Cooney, Brendan Scanlon and an inspirational score from Pádraic Linehan off the hurl from the sideline. Coláiste Eoin's defence marshalled the Kieran's attack well and didn't allow Michael Donnelly's goal to be threatened. Séamus Fenton and Conall O'Toole proved dangerous and points from Brendan Scanlon and Luke Ward were also important. As the game entered injury-time, Coláiste Eoin faced a one point deficit, but as shown in previous matches showed incredible resolve. A

quick, skilful team-move, which began from their own half ended with Dara Purcell, who finished the ball to the back of the net. A goal worked through the whole team which proved to be the decisive score and deserving of winning the match. After a prolonged wait, Coláiste Eoin had finally achieved their goal of becoming Leinster Champions and captain Iain Ó hEithir accepted the Corn Ui Dhuill trophy for the first time in the school's history. This victory may be the catalyst required for more teams from Dublin to be successful at a provincial and inter-county stage.

With fourteen members of the panel and Aodán De Paor as manager, Kilmacud Crokes played a vital role in this victory. Seven members from the starting team are current members of Kilmacud Crokes. Michael Donnelly was goalkeeper, Luke O'Loughlin, Brian Sheehy and Cian O'Cathaigh in defence and Pádraic Linehan, Dara Purcell and Brendan Scanlon in attack. The other seven members of the panel were: Dara Mac Gabhann, Luke Ward, Breandán O'Conaill, Cian Donnelly, Conn Lohan, Colm Crean and Sean Delap.



Leinster Champions 23rd February 2020

Leinster champions return to Coláiste Eoin after beating St. Kieran's, Kilkenny in Dr. Leinster Park Cullen, Carlow - 23.02.2020. This is the first time a school from Dublin has won the cup since 1945!

Pictured, front row: Cathal Pléimeann, Seán Delap, Proinsias de Poire, Breandán Ó Maolalaidh, Br. de Barra, Seán Ó Leidhin, Micheál Ó Gairbhith, Aodán de Paor, Dara de Poire, Pádraig Mac Donnchadha and Cathal Mac Séaligh



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NIALL CORCORAN GAELIC GAMES PROMOTION OFFICER 2005-2020: A TRUE HURLING ICON



Tam Rack

When I was asked to write this profile of Niall's tenure with Kilmacud Crokes, I found myself conflicted in the sense that Niall and I have developed a close friendship over the years and I want to keep this summary of his achievements and work as objective as possible. I hope I can do this.

To put Niall's position in Kilmacud Crokes in context it is necessary to look back to the mid to late 1990s and through this establish a clear nexus between his current role and decisions then made by the club. At that time the club was growing in numbers, teams and players at a rapid pace. I was Chairman of the Club at the time and it was obvious to me that additional resources had to be put in place to service these newcomers and structure and streamline their admittance and development. The schools in the area were also reaching out for help and guidance.

When I introduced the concept of exploring the employment of a full time Games Officer to the Executive Committee this was met with the objection that the GAA was a voluntarily driven body and that was the way it should stay. As a compromise, I got agreement that the club would get a small select group to

come in to the club and examine our needs and report back to the Executive. I approached Albert Fallon, then Chairman of the Leinster Council, Liam O'Neill, then Chairman of the Leinster Games Programme (later president of the Association) and Cyril Duggan who was employed by the Leinster Council as games Development Officer. I knew and was friendly with all three and they readily agreed to come in to carry out a review.

As part of the review they met with all the stakeholders in the club and the teachers working on GAA programmes in the local schools. They then presented a detailed report to the Executive Committee. The key part of that report was that one full time Games Promotion Officer be appointed immediately with a second to follow when financial circumstances permitted. The Executive unanimously agreed to this proposal and also adopted the full report in its entirety.

Conor Deegan, Down footballer and then a player on the Senior Football team was appointed for a year and immediately began putting a concise plan in place for the club and the local schools. Conor left after a year to take up a new position to be replaced by Paraic McDonald. Paraic was working with Dun





Laoghaire County Council in the role of Sports Development. The club became aware of his good work and effectively poached him for our own position. Paraic brought new energy, ideas and focus to the role. It was quite evident however with the continued growth of the club particularly at Juvenile level that further help was needed.

At the turn of the Millennium, the Dublin County Board was also examining its structures particularly as it applied to Coaching and Games Development. They appointed Kevin O'Shaughnessy to administer this whole area of games promotion and games development. From Kevin's appointment the idea of GPOs came to fruition. Kevin took on the role of recruiting and training the Games Promotion recruits with the end game of allocating them to clubs on a part time or full time basis as needed.

Within Kilmacud, it was now becoming apparent that another Games Officer was required with the focus split between hurling and camogie and football and ladies football. By this time, Tom Barry had taken over as Chairman of the Hurling Committee and he made it a priority of his new position that a hurling games officer be appointed. I was Secretary to the Hurling Committee at this time and was tasked with linking in with the Dublin County Board and trying to get one of the new GPOs with specific hurling background allocated to the club. I met Kevin O'Shaughnessy on two occasions and explored this possibility. He provided me with all the details of the GPO scheme, their training programme and the individuals then involved.

One name that immediately shot out at me was Niall Corcoran from Galway. I did some background on Niall and found he had won an All Ireland Minor Hurling medal with Galway in 2000. I briefed Tom Barry and it was decided that an all out effort be made to secure Niall for the club. With Colm Maher, I again met Kevin. At that meeting Kevin agreed to allocate Niall to Kilmacud on a full time basis with the financials also agreed. What a lucky decision this was for hurling in the club.

Niall took up his position in August 2005 and received a very warm welcome from Tom Barry and all the hurling family. It was agreed between the sections that Paraic would now concentrate on football and ladies football reporting to the Football Committee and Niall would concentrate on hurling and camogie reporting to the Hurling Committee. Niall was given a specific role by the Hurling Committee and Colm and I were tasked to guide him through his early months. At that year's hurling AGM, Colm was given the role of Coaching Officer with a specific focus to support Niall in his new role.

To give some background on Niall. He was born in the historic parish of Clonfert which is part of the Meelick Eyrecourt GAA club in East Galway. This area had a very strong tradition of hurling from the 1870s with its neighbouring parish Killimor drawing up one of the first rules of hurling known as the Killimor Rules. Meelick contested the first All Ireland in 1887 representing Galway against Thurles Blues representing Tipperary. They were beaten by a strange score by today's standards of 1.1 to 1.0. The club has continued to be a major force in Galway hurling contesting and winning many





championships at all levels. It also gave to the game one of the greatest stylists and midfielders Joe Salmon who represented Galway in three All Ireland Finals in the fifties 1953, 1955 and 1958. In the 1980s the club was represented on Galway teams by Brendan Lynskey and Sean Silke who won three All Ireland Hurling medals between them. Niall continued to play with his home club and was also on the Galway panel until 2008.

When Niall joined us it was a positive time for hurling in the club. The then Hurling Committee was putting in a huge effort to re-energise hurling. In 2001, our senior team was playing at Senior B level which given the status of the club had to be rectified immediately and this was done. The Hurling Arena/Wall was completed in 2008, a key component in the development of young hurlers. On the financial front, the Punchestown Race day was started and became a key event to enable us to fund our plans. The All Ireland Féile (-14) was won in 2005, the first in the club's history and only the second time in Dublin's history. The Dublin Minor title was won in 2007 and in 2009. A small number of very talented hurlers from outside Dublin also joined us. These were all key components in the winning of the Dublin championships in 2012 and 2014.

In 2008, Tom Barry and I sat down with Niall and after a brief discussion he agreed to transfer his allegiance to Kilmacud Crokes and Dublin if required. On joining the club Niall brought a new dimension to our Senior team. He brought leadership, a hard work ethic and a winning mentality that this team needed at the time. As can be seen from his achievements listed below, he played a pivotal role in the winning of County titles in 2012 and 2014. On joining Kilmacud he was immediately asked to join the Dublin panel and again played a key part in winning National League titles and a Leinster title in 2013, the first win by Dublin since 1961. The following is a list of Niall's winning accomplishments on the playing field:

- Niall made his senior debut in 1998 with Meelick Eyrecourt GAA club at 16 years of age, under Brendan Lynskey as Manager
- He represented Galway at U14, U16, Minor, U21 & Intermediate level
- He won a Minor All Ireland Hurling Medal with Galway in 2000, beating Cork in the final





- After transferring to Kilmacud Crokes as a player in 2008, he played in 6 county finals, winning 2 (2012 & 2014).
- He played for Dublin between 2008 and 2017. He won two National Hurling League medals (1A in 2011 & 1B in 2013), 1 Leinster championship medal in 2013 and 1 railway cup medal in 2012
- He won An Ireland Hurling Sevens Medal with Kilmacud Crokes in 2014
- He was nominated for an All Star hurling award in 2011
- He was Head Coach with Laois in 2019 & 2020, when they won the Joe McDonagh Cup, beating Dublin in Preliminary Q/F but ultimately losing to Tipperary in All Ireland Q/f

While all of the above sets out in detail the playing and winning of games, Niall's role as Hurling Promotion Officer continued to grow as he developed new strategies and fresh ideas for his role. He is now responsible for the following:

- Promoting and developing GAA sports within the local schools through assisting and advising teachers on coaching activities.
- Providing strategic direction to Kilmacud Crokes in the area of coaching structures and the development of underage Gaelic Games activities. He is a key team member involved in the development of the Kilmacud Crokes Hurling Blueprint for Development.
- Developing, planning and organising of "Schools of Excellence" and County Hurling Development Squads.
- Co-ordinating, supervising and delivering coaching courses to coaches and young people wanting to become more actively involved in the coaching structure.
- Planning and co-ordinating all Easter and Summer camps.
- Planning and implementing specific Hurling and Camogie Development initiatives to promote GAA games within the county. These include:
 - Hurling / Camogie on the Green
 - Special Hurling and Camogie Competitions for Post Primary schools including traditional Rugby schools.
 - Skills competitions such as the UCAN awards.
- Preparing and submitting a monthly report to the club's steering committee.



- Planning and co-ordinating of a three week competition for 1600 children from the ages of 5-12. This annual competition covers Ladies and Men's Football, Camogie and Hurling.
- Instigating, developing and managing the UCD-Kilmacud Crokes Hurling "School of Excellence" in conjunction with UCD which included:
 - Organising a camp which was targeted at players from the ages of 12 to 16 years of age and was aimed at introducing a holistic approach to training including nutrition, lifestyle, strength, skills etc.
 - Organising camp delivery for over 64 players ensuring player access to top coaches, sporting experts and sporting facilities (in conjunction with UCD staff).
- Planning, co-ordinating and implementing the Nursery Coaching Programme for over 400 boys and girls between the ages of 4 – 7 years of age.
- Organising an Information Evening for new parents / coaches that were interested in joining the club.



- Recruiting of volunteers to assist with the weekly nursery sessions.
- Ensuring coaches are following “best practice” coaching procedures when it comes to working with young players.
- Co-ordinating, implementing and delivering of various GAA Coach Education Programmes such as:
 - GAA Foundation Award Coaching course with over 60 new coaches qualified through the club each year
 - GAA Award 1 Coaching course with over 50 coaches upskilled on a yearly basis
 - 4 Child Protection in Sports courses per year for parents and coaches that are interested in working with young players
 - Kilmacud Crokes annual Club Coaching Conference

Niall has also at all times ensured and enhanced his educational and personal development skills including completing the following:

- MSc Sport, Exercise & Performance Psychology (2016 – 2017, Ulster University Jordanstown)
- Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Management in Tourism and Sport (2004 – 2005, Athlone Institute of Technology)
- National Diploma in Business Studies in Sports Management (2001 – 2004, Athlone Institute of Technology)

- Advanced Trainer Skills (Sports Coaches) (2015, NUI Galway)
- Qualified Coach Award 2 (2013, Coaching Ireland)

While all of the above set out in detail his many achievements and roles this in itself does not give the full picture of Niall. He has also proven to be a great ambassador for Kilmacud Hurling. It amazes me at times the people who have approached me all over the country to ask about Niall and to compliment him on his personal skills and work.

This year Niall returned to his home club to help them return to Senior Status in Galway. This is typical of the man reaching out to help his home place and I have no doubt that before he retires he will have Meelick Eyrecourt back in their rightful place in Senior ranks. This week (i.e. week commencing December 7th 2020), Niall was also appointed as the Chief Coach to the Wexford Hurling team under the management of Davy Fitzgerald. This is a key appointment for Wexford and reflects the work he did with Laois in the past two years and his overall standing in the Hurling community..I wish him well in his new position.

We in the hurling section of the club are grateful that we have a man of Niall's talents to guide us on the way. We appreciate him and try to give him support as Niall's motto is excellence at all times. I regard him as a true friend and hope that he will have many more happy days and years in Kilmacud Crokes.





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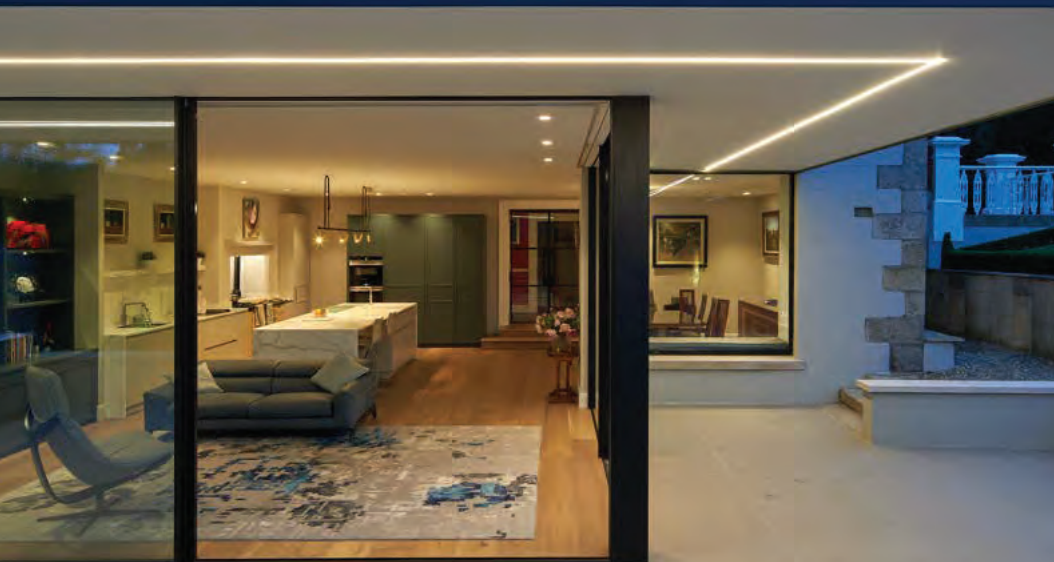


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Best of luck to everyone at Kilmacud Crokes



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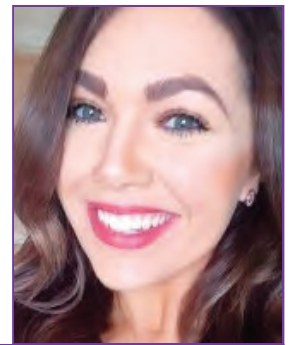
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THE IMPACT OF LOW ENERGY AVAILABILITY IN ATHLETES

Danielle Legue - PhD

Performance Nutritionist at Sport Ireland Institute



High training loads, restricted eating, unintentional under fueling and overtraining may put many male and female GAA players at risk of developing low energy availability (LEA).

In October of 2017, University College Dublin (UCD) School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science and Sport Ireland Institute (the body that leads the development of competitive and recreational sport in Ireland) published a review in the international journal Sports Medicine on LEA in athletes. The review summarises the prevalence of LEA and its association with health and athletic performance. The work on LEA is funded under the Irish Research Council Enterprise Partnership Scheme.

What is LEA?

LEA occurs when an individual has insufficient energy (calories) to support normal physiological function after the cost of energy expended during exercise has been removed. In a state of chronic energy deficiency, physiological adaptations can occur, including musculoskeletal (injuries) and reproductive dysfunction (absence or irregular menses). Energy availability (EA) can be calculated by subtracting energy expenditure during exercise from energy intake

adjusted for fat-free mass ($EA = \text{Energy intake} - \text{Exercise energy expenditure} / \text{fat-free mass}$). Although further research is needed, EA of at least 45 kcal/kg fat-free mass/day is recommended to ensure sufficient energy for normal physiological function. Reduced or sub-clinical EA ranges from 30-45 kcal/kg fat-free mass/day; this is appropriate for athletes aiming for weight-loss within a well-constructed dietary and exercise regimen over a short period. LEA occurs below 30 kcal/kg fat-free mass/day. Impairment to physiological function is seen below this level.

Causes of LEA

LEA may occur due to increased energy expenditure, decreased energy intake (either intentional or unintentional), or both. LEA (with or without an eating disorder) in combination with menstrual dysfunction and low bone mineral density is known as the female athlete triad. Any active female, regardless of level of competition and sport, has the potential to develop this triad. Furthermore, recent research indicates that males are susceptible to LEA although the level of EA at which unfavourable physiological adaptations occur requires further investigation.

LEA and eating disorders (EDs)/disordered eating (DE) behaviours

Athletic performance during high-intensity training and competition is heavily reliant on sufficient energy intake. Much of this energy is provided through consumption of carbohydrate, closely followed by protein and fat. For athletes to sustain optimal energy availability during periods of high energy expenditure, higher intakes are required. Many athletes, however, either deliberately or inadvertently fail to maintain adequate energy intakes.

Although the intentional restriction of energy intake (DE/EDs) is high among elite athletes, particularly females competing in weight-class, or sports that place emphasis on leanness (approximately 50%), this also occurs in male athletes. Those who experience pressure to improve performance, maintain a stipulated sporting appearance, or have an 'ideal' physique





are most susceptible to developing DE/EDs. Nearly one-quarter of male athletes competing in ED high-risk sports displayed DE behaviours associated with body image dissatisfaction.

The erratic restriction of particular food groups and or DE behaviours may be influenced by media-driven fad diet trends such as the 'gluten-free' and 'paleo' diets that promote the elimination of carbohydrate-rich foods. It is vital, therefore, for GAA players to recognise the importance of seeking appropriate nutritional advice from a qualified healthcare professional in the field of nutrition and dietetics to meet their individual nutritional needs relative to their sport.

LEA characteristics

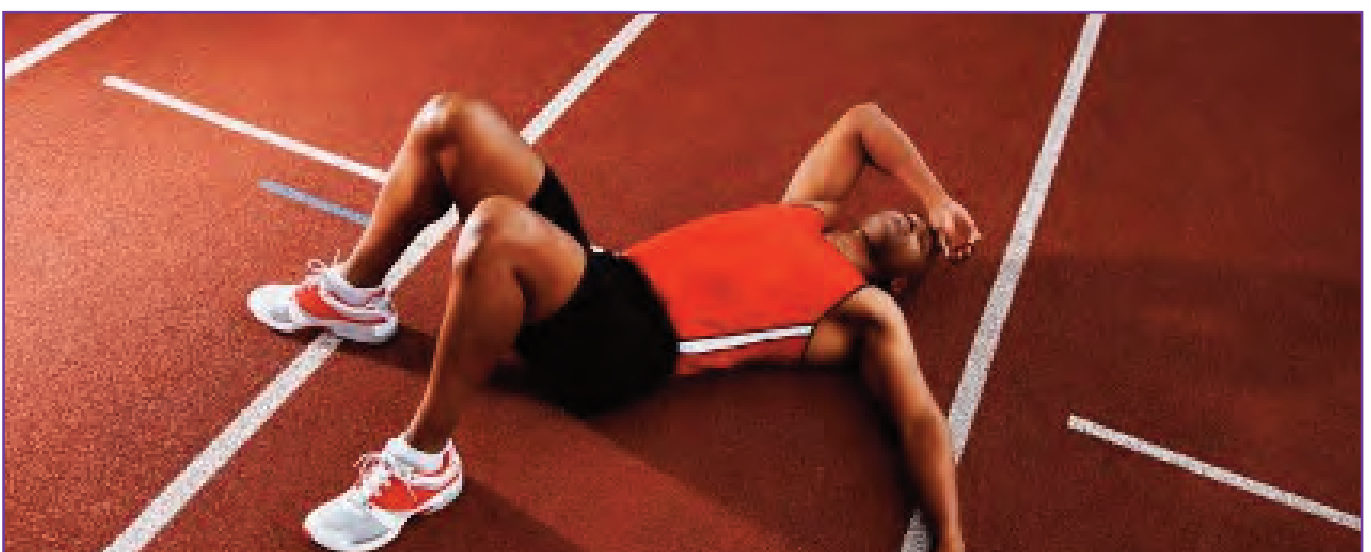
GAA players with LEA are more likely to be excessively lean, lose weight rapidly or have extreme weight fluctuations. It is important to note that body weight is not a reliable indicator of LEA as an energy-deficient athlete may maintain a low but stable body weight due to physiological adaptations such as decreased resting metabolic rate (RMR); thus, an athlete can be weight stable yet in an energy deficient state. The spectrum of DE behaviours is large and can range from preoccupation with weight, body image and/or food, including mealtime rituals, avoidance of team meals and/or secretive eating. Daily vigorous exercise to augment regular training sessions, frequent sore throats, soft baby hair on the skin (lanugo), fatigue, light-headedness/dizziness, low self-esteem and/or depression and more frequent stress fractures are common symptoms associated with LEA.

Practical treatment of LEA

Given the complex nature of LEA, it is important that healthcare professionals know about its multifactorial

aetiology. A multi-disciplinary team approach is essential to establish the underlying driver(s) for LEA i.e. over-exercising and/or DE, and to identify the intervention most appropriate to an individual athlete and his/her family. Knowledge of the signs and symptoms associated with LEA is important. A screening tool for LEA risk in females, the Low Energy Availability in Females Questionnaire (LEAF-Q), has been recently developed. It allows coaches and healthcare staff working with athletes to identify those at risk of LEA based on the physiological symptoms associated with this condition. The (LEAF-Q) includes questions on menstrual function, contraceptive use, injury history and gastrointestinal function. In 2018, we published the results of a large Irish study of LEA risk among elite, provincial, inter-county GAA players, and recreational females. 40% of active females in our study were at risk of LEA, with greatest risk identified among those competing at the elite and provincial/inter-county levels.

Our results demonstrate that LEA risk occurs frequently not only in athletes participating in weight-sensitive sports but also among recreationally active individuals and athletes competing in team sports such as GAA players, irrespective of the level of competition. The reasons for the higher risk of LEA among international and provincial/intercounty athletes compared with club-level athletes are unclear from the results of this study. However, the training intensity and duration of those competing at international and/or provincial/inter-county level is likely to be substantially higher than that of club-level athletes or recreationally active individuals. Therefore, it may be difficult for athletes competing at these levels to maintain adequate energy intakes, particularly in the absence of detailed, individualised dietary guidance. This research will contribute to the identification and management of LEA among females engaged in sport in Ireland and internationally.





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THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Paul Kilgannon

Paul Kilgannon is a coach, coach developer, author and creator of The CARVER Coaching Framework. Below is an extract from Chapter 5 of his latest book "Be the Best You Can Be in Sport- A Book for Irish Youth".

The book is available from www.carvercoachingframework.com



If you wish to be the best you can be, making a personal commitment to honing your craft is critical. To build skill, you need to take and sustain action. Collective training is one element, but Individual personal 'practice to get better' is a different thing and is rarely optimised. Great opportunity lies here. For example, if you wanted to work on fielding a high ball in Gaelic football you might get two or three 'reps' in collective training, whereas if you spend 5 minutes on your own you might do 50 reps. However, making them meaningful, quality reps is critical.

The reality is that every athlete can push their capabilities within skill execution, and one of the secrets to enjoying sport is to become more proficient in the fundamental skills of the game. The outcome of performance in competition is simply a by-product of the effort you have made to prepare, relative to your ability. Everyone has the will to win, but not everyone has the will and know-how to prepare to win.

All practice is not created equally. Simply repeating a skill, even over a period of many years, doesn't build expertise. Once you reach a reasonable level of competence the skill becomes automatic and 'mindless practice' will at best, maintain your abilities but not improve them. More isn't necessarily better-quality is critical. Effort and strategy are key. Though perfection is unattainable, aiming high allows you to surpass your own preconceived limitations. Run from your comfort zone. Strive to be 'brilliant at the basics'.

The key to effective practice is to make it purposeful and deliberate. Understanding the demands of your sport and the role or position you play, as well as learning how to properly analyse your performance, will help inform you of what parts of your game you need to focus on.

Deliberate Practice

Deliberate Practice is based on the research of K. Anders Ericsson. It refers to a special type of practice that is purposeful and systematic. Deliberate Practice requires focused attention

and is conducted with the specific goal of improving performance. It differs from 'regular practice' in that regular practice might largely consist of mindless purposeless repetitions. Deliberate Practice requires the learner to continuously challenge themselves, set goals and practice at the edge of their current ability. Too easy, and there will be no learning. Too hard, and there will no opportunity for feedback and improvement.

The greatest challenge of Deliberate Practice is to remain focused on improvement. The more we repeat a task, the more mindless it can become. Mindless activity is the enemy of Deliberate Practice. Feedback is essential. Measurement is one means of feedback. What we measure we improve.

Example of Deliberate Practice in Hurling:

Key Focus Skill- Striking off left and right hand side. Secondary Skill- Catching

- Stand 7 metres away from a wall and have two/three standard sliotars at your feet.
- Do 4 x 1 minute blocks alternating left and right hand side striking, catching the ball without taking it on the hurl as it returns to you from the wall.
- Only count the ones that go directly to your hand (without touching the ground).
- Count your score for one minute and repeat 4 times in total each day. If time and energy allow do 2 sets of 4. It doesn't matter how many you get, what matters is you focus on improvement.

The fact that you are 7 metres away from the wall using a standard sliotar means you must strike with conviction using 'strong hands' in a game like manner. Useful and meaningful feedback from a mentor allows you to adjust, refine and become more specific on the areas you are working on. You can also video yourself and compare your technique to a player whose striking you admire.



Below are principles you can utilise to practice deliberately.

- Desire and Motivation
- Set specific, realistic goals- Strategically identify areas for improvement and create a specific plan of action.
- Get comfortable with being uncomfortable
- Routine - Repeat and Persist.
- Seeking feedback from a mentor or trusted peer is essential in order to gain meaningful insights on your practice and progress. Technologies, such as video can be used.
- Find a player who is better at the skill than you are and use them as a model.
- Recover is crucial. This is not 'practicing all the time'.

Henry Shefflin is a former Kilkenny Hurler who won a record ten All-Ireland medals with Kilkenny. He is the only player ever to be named Hurler of the Year on three occasions and is viewed by many as the greatest hurler of all time. Here he shares with you the roll individual practice played in his success.

I played hurling. The technical demands of the game are huge. Being able to execute the appropriate skill, as simply and quickly as possible, in as tight a space as possible is often the difference between success and failure. Hurling is a team sport, but the team is made up of individuals. We train collectively, but will never reach our potential if we are not willing to practice individually. The game needs time and if you want to maximise your potential you must be willing to give it time.

I was born and raised above my parents' public house in Ballyhale. There was a squash court behind the pub and this is where I honed my skills as a youngster. For me, there was nothing like honing my skills- it drove my love for the game. As a youngster I practiced a lot with my brother Paul. We were very competitive and we would challenge each other, keeping scores and always looking for a winner. This period of my life undoubtedly laid the foundations for the hurler I would become. My skills were developed, my wrists and the hands were hardened and strengthened.

Throughout my underage club career we usually played in the B and C grades of the competitions. When I moved to secondary school in St Kieran's College there was a huge change in game-speed and a sharp rise in standard. This forced me to look at all areas of my play and improve my hand speed and indeed foot speed. Focused practice was given to both areas away from collective training. Counsel and feedback was sought from coaches and wise heads.



As I matured and joined the Kilkenny senior panel I became increasingly aware of the areas of my game that needed more targeted work. The higher the level, the greater the chance of any limitation in my game being exposed. My left side needed strengthening and was only a very distant second option to my right. I went after improvement with relentless practice. The more I practiced the more confident I became on it.

I always loved going down to the pitch by myself. It was a place that brought me to life. For shooting practice I would bring twelve balls and scatter them randomly around the field. I would approach each ball individually with a 5 or 10 meter full speed run up, jab lift and then execute the shot. Often, I would visualise the Cork half back Sean Óg Ó hAilpín breathing down my neck as I attacked the ball and took on the shot. I would count how many went over and as I walked in to gather the balls I would reflect on why I had pulled a ball on the near post or whatever. I was always asking 'why', always wanting to be better and willing to do what it took.

My individual free-taking practice would go hand in hand with my individual shooting practice. In my early twenties, it would be over an hour down the field by myself on the evenings we weren't training. I genuinely loved it. It was here I honed my routine: place the ball correctly on a nice piece of grass with the rim of the ball pointing in the direction of the target. Set my feet shoulder-width apart about a foot back from the ball with the ball placed centrally between them. Take two deep breaths, check that my shoulder and hurl are in line with the target. Chin down, jab lift and follow through. Each free was given focused attention; the routine I developed and practiced ensured this. Again visualisation played a critical role.

I loved practicing by myself. It was a habit I created as a child in the squash court and one that continued to develop and evolved as I met new challenges. My advice to any youngster who wishes to both enjoy their chosen sport and reach their potential in it would be to commit to practicing away from the crowds. Know your strengths but be willing to attack your weaknesses. Practice with purpose. Hone your craft and have fun along the way.