

Ladies Gaelic Football Overview 2020

By Mike Barnett

Ladies' Gaelic Coordinator/LGFA PRO



With over 120 registered players in 2020, the club was able to field Ladies' Gaelic football teams at U10, U12, U14, U16 & senior levels.

The management teams for the U10s & U12s worked closely together throughout the season, with U10 manager Ciaran Rice & U12 manager Brendan Rice, ably assisted by Lisa O'Loughlin, Annette Elmore, Kevin Fitzpatrick & Darren Rice. Despite the somewhat curtailed season, the U10s were still able to take part in a number of friendly encounters, both home & away. Great numbers were seen at all games & it was very clear to see that the young Blues very much enjoyed themselves.

The U12s could not have asked for a more experienced person to take charge, than Brendan Rice & this certainly showed in their performances throughout the season. U12s is the first stage for the girls in their progression into fully competitive matches. The development of the girls in terms of skills & team play was clear for all to witness in the matches they played. No matter the result, the girls always gave it their all & showed some excellent play. There is certainly a lot of promise coming out of this team.

The girls at U14, were under the guidance of a new management team. Declan Carvill taking charge of a team for the first time, assisted by Martin Carr, Paula Fegan & senior players Kate Kelly & Ciara Downey. Initially, the girls had a very challenging start to the recommenced season, but as the year progressed & the hard work they had put in at training started to take effect, the girls had some great results in their championship. At the time the season was put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the girls were as good as guaranteed a place in the championship final. Excellent progression for a debut year as a team manager, for Declan Carvill.

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic were probably felt the most by our U16s. Before the pandemic took hold, the U16s missed out on an opening league encounter, due to a water-logged pitch. Once activities resumed, the girls were placed in a group of 4, for warm-up games. The match against Castlewellan was cancelled due to an outbreak within the Castlewellan club, then a few weeks later a challenge match against Clonduff, had to be called off, for the same reason. For the championship campaign the U16s were in a group of 3. One victory & one defeat saw the season come to an end for the girls. After 2 years of an amalgamation with Mayobridge at U16, it was good to be in a position to field a team from within the club, albeit with considerable support from the U14s.

The senior team saw new manager Ronan Magee take charge, supported by Martin Carr & Aileen McAteer. Early season performances were certainly impressive & this good form was carried through into the championship campaign. Excellent wins against Saval B & Tullylish saw the senior ladies through to a semi-final, against Bredagh B. Despite giving it their all, it was just a step too far, against a strong & experienced opposition team. Perhaps the most pleasing thing about the senior team this year, is the enthusiasm of the players & the great

turnout at both training sessions & matches. A number of the U16s got good game time for the senior team, which will greatly help their development.

On the county scene, with all underage county competitions cancelled early in the year due to Covid-19, there was very little competitive action. A number of girls from the club were selected for county panels, before activities were brought to a halt. Cliodhna Martin & Sydney Barnett made the U14 panel, with Cara Bradley being the sole club representative on the U15 panel. Three girls made the U16 panel: Anna Craven, Enya Quinn & Caoimhe Quinn. At minors, Siofra McAteer continued her run of county representation.

I would like to conclude by thanking a number of people for their important contributions throughout the year. Firstly, to Liam Howlett for his continued work with the club's Athletic Development Programme. This programme has brought some excellent structure to early season training & really helps to kick start the year. Next, Paul McKibben & Anne McCormack, for their advice & guidance in this, my first year in the position of LGFA Coordinator. Taking over the position from Noreen Kelly was somewhat daunting, but the support of both Paul & Anne has made the transition a lot easier. Finally, I'd like to thank my predecessor, Noreen Kelly. Even after stepping down from the role after 5 years, to take a very well earned break, Noreen has still made herself available to answer questions, fill in any gaps & help point me in the right direction, should I be unsure which way to turn.

Le Mise

Mike Barnett
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