

HURLING REPORT

UNDER 5 by Anthony O Brien

Warrenpoint Under 5 hurlers have had a fantastic year learning the basic skills of the game, training with each other on a regular basis and playing games against teams from around the county. The numbers attending training sessions have been very high throughout the year with their enthusiasm and energy clear to see. The boys are developing a keen bond with each other, and this has been shown by their displays on the pitch during games. The hurlers played three games over the season and exhibited their skills and their sportsmanship on both occasions. The games against Clonduff and Ballycran showed how far the boys have developed and the boys were extremely competitive in both games. We were able to field two teams in these fixtures and were very well supported by the boys' parents and guardians. The boys ended the year playing the U5 camogs. This was a fantastic way to end the year. The hurlers have been ably supported by a wealth of volunteers who have guided and supported the hurlers fantastically well. I look forward to seeing how this group of hurlers develop over the winter months and into next season.

UNDER 7 by Damien McConville

With the disruption of 2020 the U7 management and players were glad to have a more stable and consistent playing season. This allowed the managers/coaches to plan a programme of fun-based activities and training that would allow us to concentrate on the CPN hurling pathway. 2021 offered us the chance of a full season of relatively uninterrupted training and matches on which to do this. Coaches placed a big emphasis on three sections; Developing the hurler, developing the athlete and developing the player. This encompasses games development as a key aspect. Our coaches focused on the first and most important point in the CPN hurling pathway for children aged 6 – 7, i.e. FUN with activities based on individual skill development in a non-competitive environment.

Throughout the season the U7's consistently attracted 20+ players to training and matches. This is consistent with the trend across our U5's to U9's. Encouragingly the fun enjoyed by players continued throughout the year which then led to an environment where every player was able to develop under our three headings of hurler, athlete and player.

Moving towards 2022 the management are keen to increase numbers, skills of players and variety of games/teams played (games were limited in 2021 to geographic locations due to reduced travel and Covid). The return of indoor training in November 2021 will allow a different aspect of our hurling programme to be delivered with these young athletes.

UNDER 9 by Damien McConville

The U7 and U9 management teams work very closely together to deliver a training/skills development schedule that ensures ongoing progression through the CPN hurling pathway. This U9 team is considered by many to be the product of the original hurling academy/U6 structures that the hurling section have put in place over the past 5 years. As such their progress is watched with great interest to help monitor and adjust the wider programme delivery. It is encouraging to see that the majority of the young P1's from 2016 have continued to play and enjoy hurling, indeed the number of players has grown in this time to 22 players which is very encouraging as the young lads move up the different age groups when numbers matter as much as quality. This past season has seen a continuation in the improvements of the U9 hurlers. In line with the CPN hurling pathway the U9 training focus followed the three pillars of hurler, athlete and player. And just like the U7's focusing on the first point in their pathway the U9's built sessions that followed the first point on the U9 pathway, i.e. building movement, pace and speed into skills execution. In short do it right then do it right with speed.

Moving towards 2022 the U9's will benefit from a more varied fixture list. The final year U9's will be playing U11's in 2022 and will benefit from the mini league based structure and regular training with the older players.

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UNDER 11 by Liza Friel

The covid pandemic continued to impact this year but the coaches were keen to make up for lost time and to seek as many games and matches as possible. The u11s faced several challenges this year, the most difficult being consistent numbers. There were only 8 official u11s at the start of the season with us. As the season progressed, we lost one and gained one. This meant that we were constantly relying on the u9s to field a team week after week. It is worth noting that Lorcan Rowntree played up with the u13s for most of the season. The boys attend no less than 5 different schools, coming together each Friday night to train.

Despite these challenges the u11 spirit never dwindled and even though they were small in number they had teamwork in bucket loads and were keen to mix with the u9s in order to put forward the best team that they could.

We took every opportunity available to us to attend matches and tournaments even though we knew that the boys faced difficult challenges within these matches. Despite some unforgiving score lines in the season the boys persevered on. The boys battled in near 30 degree heatwaves in Craobh Rua right through to the Gerard Mc Grattan Memorial Cup in Portaferry. The boys were keen to attend all matches, which is true reflection on their dedication.

This u11 team played all 6 HL South league matches alongside tournaments in both Portaferry and Shamrocks and friendlies with Clonduff.

These challenging matches will stand the boys in good stead for years to come and is proof that they have a love of hurling

UNDER 13 by Paddy Lock

2021 was my third year working with U13. Unfortunately, due to Covid outdoor training stopped in October 2020 and no indoor training was permitted.

Tuesday 13th April was our first back to outdoor training. We had seven registered players.

We investigated our options and discussed an amalgamation with Newry Shamrocks and after consulting parents, players, and committee it was agreed to amalgamate, and the newly formed U13 Patrick Rankins team evolved with management, myself and Ronan Sheehan.

We entered the Down GAA U13 HL (Division 2) with Kilclief, Bredagh, Craobh Rua (amalgamated with Ballyvarley), Ballela and Clonduff.

Friday 14th May was our first match and the newly formed team travelled to Kilclief. Home and away matches ensued over the next couple of months. The Patrick Rankins team finished fourth in the group.

2021 hurling shield the teams were split into two sets with Patrick Rankins facing Kilclief and Clonduff. We finished second in the group and played the winners from other set which was Bredagh unfortunately Bredagh after beating them twice in the league took a defeat and that was the end of the championship.

Friday 17th September Patrick Rankins played Clonduff in The Tony Carr Cup which with a great display of hurling they lifted the cup.

Outdoor training continued and due to light finished Wednesday 20th October.

Down development is currently running an U13 training programme in which six players are attending.

Going forward next year we have six players remaining U13 and two moving to U15.

I would like to thank management, players and parents for their continued support and ensuring safe training as always.

UNDER 15 by Conor Keenan

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In 2021 our U15 hurlers competed in Division Two in the county. Although we finished bottom of the division, we were competitive in games and were 2 results away from a league final such was the closeness of our games with Ballyvarley.

The pick of our league play perhaps came in a superb home win against Kilclief. The u15 team was supported by a number of U13 hurlers who should be congratulated for the efforts namely Jamie Lock, Eoin Campbell, Ciaran McGivern and Oliver Murdock. Oliver deputized in goals for a few games and performed very well while Jamie and Eoin were flexible all over the field.

In the same way, many of the players were able to train and assist with the preparation of the U-17 side which has great success this year. Mikey Keohane also proudly represented his club as a member of the Down Emerging talent Squad for 2021, competing in a number of national blitzes. The squad has a number of versatile players, in defence mainly was Ethan McFerran, Oisín McGivern, Jack Cole, Connaire McMahon and Tommy Vorobjov. Midfield was often manned by Mikey Keohane and Oisín Gambold. Forward line was Sean Crawford, Shea O'Hare, Tiernan Trainor and Niall Howlett.

It should be noted in general terms that Ballyvarley competed in this league as an amalgamation between themselves and Craobh Rua in Armagh. Not competing in any division were Newry Shamrocks, it may be possible that as a club we can offer the remaining Newry players some competitive hurling in 2022.

In championship play, we were defeated in our semi-final by Carryduff having won the previous fixture against Kilclief. The club were approached by Ballyvarley who had questioned about the fairness in Division One teams playing in the lower grade championship. The shield final was played between two division one teams, Carryduff and O'Rahilly's.

2021 saw the welcome return of Féile na nGael to the hurling calendar. Féile was ably hosted by Portaferry on Saturday 21st August. Unfortunately the weather and results were not on our side, as we did not progress beyond the group stages in the competition. This group was a competitive 4 team group with Bredagh B replacing Killeavy from the Division 2 teams. Ballyvarley competed in Division two in this competition. Congratulations to the division winners who received a game at Croke Park as their reward, in lieu of national finals.

A note to wish Connaire McMahon well in his recovery from a bad ankle injury that he picked in a league game against Ballyvarley.

Sincere thanks go to the players and parents for their dedication through the year, the lads put great time in improving their skills at the ball wall, and in supporting the other teams in the club. Thanks also to Maria Keohane who washed the team jerseys all year.

Well done to the lads on a great year with many individuals showing great improvements.

UNDER 17 by Adrian McNally

Our year was a bit in and out off form. with just 4 teams in our league program we had 3 good wins ballyvarly twice and Craobh Rua once. this was off set with three defeats one narrowly to Craobh Rua and 2 more comprehensive though hard fought against Iaitrim.

We also took part in the tian Og competition which proved a bit difficult to get teams to travel to us for our home games. that said we done very well on finals day winning our semi final very well then losing out to a very much older and physically stronger Niamh monnie side by 8 points.

Championship was played between 6 teams 3 ards teams Iaitrim Cuhullions (Breadh/carryduff) combined split into 2 mini leagues. we where beaten well by Cuhullions and Portaferry in round robin then played for the shield v Ballycran who finished bottom off there group. this ended being very much the highlight off our year with an excellent display and effort from all our young men to earn a one point victory after extra time.

Hopefully 5/6 off these young men carry on to senior hurling as they are quite Capable to do so onward and upward to the future.

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CHAIRPERSONS REPORT by Colette Lock

Entering my third year of Chairperson of the Hurling section it would not be possible without the support I receive in which I'm very proud of. The coaches and management give up their valuable time to ensure training and matches continue to run smoothly and safely. Throughout this unprecedented period we all have worked closely to ensure COVID guidelines have been adhered and COVID Supervisors providing great support to each team. Thank you Many thanks to all our sponsors for jerseys, equipment and refreshments it has been a challenging year so we really appreciate the support.

Final thanks to all committees who work together for a smooth running of games and development ensuring we work together from pitch allocation to maintenance providing each team with training. Thank you