

Hurling AGM Report 2022

Under 5&7

By Damien McConville

2022 has been a very successful year for the U7 and U5 hurlers. With the inclusion of Pre-school and P1's in our nursery setting, it has allowed an introduction to the skills of hurling at the most basic level. The opportunity to do this at an age when skills are easier to coach at that introductory level coupled with an absence of matches (except for a small number of games towards the end of the season) meant that coaches are teaching the basics in the correct manner without a win at all cost mentality. 2022 saw this age group coached at the same time as the U7's and U9's which has meant that coaches could rotate around to ensure that training was always delivered and to provide a variety of coaches to all U5 hurlers. High quality coaching was provided to this group of children from regular mentors Tom Daly, Conan O'Neill and Kevin Owens.

As with the U5's, the U7 hurlers have benefitted from a regular programme of age-appropriate training. This time matches have been introduced, with care taken from the coaches to play matches on a small-sided scale where all the skills can be developed. As an example, Warrenpoint U7's regularly played matches/blitzes with four teams of five a side, rather than larger teams of 7,8, 9 or even 10 a side as some clubs requested we do. The mentors deserve credit for taking this approach and losing some games rather than fielding less teams but keeping the 'stronger' players together in order to win. The emphasis has always been on player and person development, and this will continue to be the case moving into 2023. A big learning point in 2023 was the ability and enthusiasm of players to play full rules. The coaches had been concerned that this approach would see the 'stronger' players excel at the detriment of the so-called 'weaker' players. But this was not the case, with all players receiving a new lease of life, with effort visibly increasing any time full rules were introduced. Credit to Tom and Anthony for encouraging this with the children. Thanks to main mentors Anthony O'Brien, Damien McConville, Kieran McGivern ably assisted by Tom Daly on a rotating basis.

Under 9

By Sean Mallon

The Under 9 hurling year started off as always with pre-season training on Friday evenings in the lower sports hall of St Marks school. Attendance from the off was encouraging with great numbers regularly practising the basics skills in anticipation of the coming spring/summer outdoor season. Prior to the outdoor season we participated in a few Ulster council led indoor blitz's, at the DKIT facility in Dundalk. Memorably, on one occasion, we arrived to find that the Blitz had been postponed (without our knowledge), and so as not to disappoint the lads, and after some head scratching, we decided upon taking a mystery tour, where we eventually ended up at Templetown Beach, for an impromptu training session on the sand (and in the water!!).

The outdoor season started soon after the clock sprung forward, and Milltown was a regular hive of activity on Friday evenings. The first of the matches followed shortly after, with games against our local rivals Newry Shamrocks and Clonduff taking us into the first of the County Go-Games that were held on Saturday mornings (some very early) in St Patrick's Grammar School (Red High) Downpatrick. These games pitted us against the likes of the three Ards clubs, Leitrim, Castlewellan, Saul, etc and our winter preparations had done us good and was evident to see by all as we played some brilliant and skilful hurling.

Towards the end of the season and into the Autumn we were invited to a number of blitz's that cumulated in the final 3 weekends of our season in October, with the annual Ballycran fixture, unfortunately, having to be postponed, due to bad weather. Over the following 2 weekends we hosted our own blitz in St Marks, and on the final Saturday of our season we joined with the Camogs and played out a mini-All-Ireland blitz, in Moygannon, where the Down Junior Hurling Championship trophy was on display, along with members of the Senior Hurling Panel, who helped with managing the teams on the day. All of our players received medals for their endeavours on the day and during the year.

The U9.5 Management (Darren, Sean, Paddy & Stephen) would like to thank the Hurling Committee for their continued support during the year, but most importantly, we would like to extend our thanks to the players and parents for their commitment throughout the year. CPN Abú

Hurling AGM Report 2022

Under 11

By Fiona McBride

The U11 hurling team have developed greatly this year. Most notably, their lifting, blocking, and striking have improved immensely. They have become more confident at tackling and defending, but still need to focus on taking their scores.

They are a very young team, from a panel of 16 players, only 5 will move onto U13 next season.

Training sessions have been well attended on both Wednesday and Friday evenings.

The boys have competed well in all their fixtures, beating Shamrocka, St. Pats and drawing with Castlewellan. In friendly matches against stronger teams like Clonduff and Killeavy the boys have competed well but were unfortunately unable to convert scoring opportunities.

Under 13 & 15

By Colette Lock

2022 was our fourth year working with this group. Previously, we had amalgamated with Newry Shamrocks and after discussion agreed to amalgamate again at U13 and U15, under the name Patrick Rankins

Numbers were still tight, with our U15s having five players and Shamrocks six, and st U13 we had six players and Shamrocks five.

We knew this year was going to be a very tough year for both teams but with the commitment of our players, we were able to field with U13s stepping up an age grade to play.

We entered the Down GAA U13 HL (Division 2) against Kilclief, Ballycran Carryduff and Clonduff, And in the Down GAA U15 HL (Division 2), we competed against Kilclief, Ballycran, Clonduff and St Patricks (Ballela/Ballyvarley)

Indoor training commenced in January and then moved outdoors in April, with matches commencing in late April.

The team had a good season but were unlucky with results. Matches for U13 were played on a Friday night and U15 on a Sunday morning, which affected us for numbers, when players were away on weekends. Hopefully, the county board will review this going forward.

The 2022 Feile was in Ballycran and unfortunately, we had minimum numbers for a team and management agreed not to field. Outdoor training continued and due to light finished Wednesday 12th October due to weather and light.

An U14 training programme was provided by Down GAA, which Oliver Murdock and Jamie Lock attended, and concluded Saturday 22nd October with a blitz in Pairc Esler. We also had two players on the Down U15 panel Oisín McGivern and Ethan McFerran.

Going forward next year we have one player remaining U13, with four players moving to U15 and two players moving to U17.

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

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Under 17

By Dermot Donnelly / CK

In 2022, a relationship was forged with one of our nearest hurling neighbours, Craobh Rua Camlough, and we amalgamated under the name of Iveagh Gaels.

The team competed in Down U17 Division Two and in the Down Minor Hurling Shield competitions, as well as the Táin League. The Down league started in mid-April and consisted of four teams, Killeavy, Carryduff, Kilclief & Iveagh Gaels.

The early stages of the league saw wins away to Kilclief & Carryduff. A definitive and organised coaching plan was delivered throughout the year, that incorporated the best elements of the Athletic Development Plan the club has developed. As well as game-based coaching and good adherence to rest, recovery, and flexibility routines. Players also received two sessions focused on nutrition and the importance of hydration / eating before training and refuelling afterwards. Training was rotated between Warrenpoint and Craobh Rua throughout the season.

Unfortunately, like a lot of other teams, the Táin Óg fixtures were delayed and ended up moving to the middle of July, where we played, away to Craobh Ciarán (Middletown & Derrynoose amalgamation) & Carrickmacross, with a weakened team, resulting in two defeats and but then rebounded to defeat Naomh Moninne of Dundalk, with a near full roster of players.

Boosted by this win the team then went on to win the next four games, a (Táin Óg) game at home to East Cavan Gaels and all their round robin fixtures of the Shield Championship against Kilclief, Carryduff & Killeavy. Sitting at the top of the table this gave Iveagh Gaels home advantage in the semi-final against a good Killeavy team.

With a four-week break fixed in the playing calendar between the semi-finals & the final, we were once more hit with coach & player unavailability on the date of our semi-final, so had asked Killeavy for a refixed date. Despite requests both to the club and Down County Board a new date could not be found. This was very disappointing for management, players, and parents, particularly as we had been flexible with this club earlier in the year.

Unable to field, the game was conceded. This is not something we would like to repeat in the future and it is a shame a good team did not get a chance to finish the year on their own terms.

We were fortunate enough to have two boys, Senan Magone & Oran Murney selected to play on the county minor panel that were knocked out of the Leinster B Competition at the quarterfinal stages.

Also, in our playing ranks we had two boys from Craobh Rua that were on the Armagh Celtic Challenge team, that were also beaten at the quarterfinal stages of their competition.

Overall, the moral within the squad was excellent and the lads deserve credit for gelling so well as a unit. Thanks to all in the Craobh Rua club for making this partnership so enjoyable.

Management: Anthony O'Brien, Philip Duggan, Peter McCreesh, Lee McKeown (Craobh Rua), Paul Elshaw (Craobh Rua), Dermot Donnelly & Conor Keenan.

Under 19/20

By Paddy Lock

Down County board created a new U20 league with games being nine a side, starting in January 2022. With a panel of 14, myself and Gerry O'Neill were joint managers. Indoor training commenced in November moving outdoors in December.

Our First competitive matches were on 21st January in Cherryvale, playing two games claiming a first win against Michael Cusacks (Carryduff/Shamrocks) and a defeat to Bredagh. 2 more weekends of competition followed with games against Portaferry, Michael Cusacks and Ballycran.

Having finished joint fourth with Bredagh, the lads narrowly missed out on semi-final qualification due to Bredagh having won their match against us.

The team was young, but with their commitment and high standard of hurling, the team gave a good account of themselves. Looking forward to next year, three players are moving up but we also expect similar numbers moving into this group.

Many thanks to the senior hurlers and especial thanks to Ally Higgins, Chris, and Matthew Teague for their support in training and matches.

Hurling AGM Report 2022

Adult(Senior & Reserve)

By Dermot Donnelly

2022 will ultimately be looked upon as one of the most successful seasons in a long time for the Senior & Reserve hurlers of the club. For the third successive season a playing panel of around forty players had enabled us to field two teams. This year saw a change of management with Tom Daly & Sean Mallon stepping down after having brought the team to league success and promotion to Division 1, as well as a first county final appearance in over ten years. Taking over the reins were Sylvester McConnell & Marty Houlahan, both have vast experience at club and intercounty level, creating a great buzz within the club that we could finally bring some silverware back to the shores of Carlingford lough. Sylvester & Marty were supported in their management team by Liam Boyle and Gerry O'Neill with Adrian McNally in charge of the Reserves.

Having maintained our status in Division 1 last season, the 2022 league campaign started in early April and although the opening three games saw the seniors loose by narrow margins to Clonduff(A) & Ballycran(A), by the end of May Warrenpoint had wins over Carryduff(A), Shamrock(H) & Clonduff(H) and were happily sitting in second place, behind the eventual winners Portaferry. Our last league game on 18th July with a home win over Carryduff and in doing so saw the seniors finish in fifth place, pipped at the post by Kilclief on score difference.

This year saw the Reserves enter the Cuchulainn Div1B league and the extra games were great for the management to experiment. This provided opportunities for some of last year's minors, players returning from injury & fringe panel players, which in turn helped strengthen the panel & provide more game time for the large panel.

On 31st July, we saw the much-anticipated opening fixture of the Round Robin stage of the Junior championship. Cumann Pheadair Naofa had a big win over visiting East Belfast. Unfortunately, travelling to Kilclief two weeks later & the Castlewellan the week after, resulted in two defeats for the boys in blue. A final group stage win over Ballyvarley, secured a semi-final spot against Kilclief. By the time the semi-final came around in mid-September, Cumann Pheadair Naofa were a much improved and more disciplined side. A six-point win over Kilclief, under lights in Liatroim, saw us return to a county final for the second time in two seasons.

In a genius and most welcome decision the county board opted to play all the county finals over the first week in November, resulting in a festival of Hurling over the Friday, Saturday & Sunday evenings. First up was our own seniors, who took on Castlewellan in a repeat of the 2009 final, the last and only time the Blues had tasted county success. The game proved to be an absolute thriller, with Warrenpoint playing all the hurling in the first half to build up a five-point lead at the break, before Castlewellan staged a second half comeback. Thankfully, the Blues held out for a one-point win. Joint captains Mark Rafferty & Oisín Kelly lifted the JJ Mooney Cup aloft and in doing so sparked off tremendous scenes of cheers of exultation, joy and merriment within the club, as they had at last lifted the Junior title, a title that had for the last few years just eluded their grasp.

Special mention must go to our Senior & Hurling Committee's, as nothing that was asked for was refused, they went over and above to ensure no stone was left unturned in the pursuit of success. I'd also like to thank our sponsor PizzaPoint, our Physios Julie Fegan & Gerard Leddy, Stats/photos & match reporting Dermot Donnelly and all the other people in the background that helped along the way.

As I write this report, we are about to start our journey in the Ulster Junior Championship, a journey into the unknown, as we travel to Celtic Park, Derry on 6th November for a quarterfinal match with Na Magha.

Hurling AGM Report 2022

Chairperson's Address

by Colette Lock

I would firstly like to thank all the hurling coaches for their commitment each week as its invaluable to the hurling section in the smooth running of training and games.

To the hurling committee thanks for their support and dedication to ensure hurling continues and develops.

As chairperson it gives me great pleasure to see the number of hurlers attending training sessions and games on a weekly basis and these numbers are going from strength to strength and especially continuing with our senior hurlers in the quarter final of Ulster championship Sunday 6th November in Celtic Park, Derry facing Na Magha

Many thanks to our sponsors for new jerseys and equipment.

Also thanks to Newry, Mourne and Down District council for their support with our annual summer week, in which this year proved to be our most successful. It was a fun filled week led by our club coaches, who gave up their spare time whilst offering our kids, a week of hurling and camogie, whilst being backed up by province wide guest coaches.

As my fourth year as chairperson, we have as a dual club worked together in training schedules and pitch allocations.

Thank you

Secretary's Report

by Declan Doyle

Starting with some of the Thanks you's, I would like to thank Colette, Gerry, and the Hurling Committee for their support, throughout the year. Also, thanks go to Larry, Paul, Donal, and the Senior Committee for their support to the Hurling Section in 2022. Thanks to all the hurling management and coaching teams for their efforts throughout the year, and to Dermot Donnelly, in his role as Hurling PRO, for his continuous promotion of hurling within the area and well done on his further roles within the County setup. A mention to Mike and Colette, for co-ordinating the fixtures, pitches, and buses. The organisation that goes on in the background cannot be underestimated.

Also, thanks to Kieran Rice who continues as our hurling referee. Most notably Kieran has officiated at multiple championship finals this year at all levels in both Hurling and Camogie. Also, a big thank you to all our sponsors, especially our main Senior sponsor Pizza Point.

Moving onto our Seniors, it's great to see silverware with Blue & White ribbons adorned once again. Well done to all involved, and it's just reward for the efforts put in. Best of luck in Celtic Park on 6th November. Special mention goes to Gerry who does a lot of background work that sometimes doesn't get the recognition it deserves.

Our league campaign must also be mentioned as we achieved our highest ever finish. Hopefully 2023 will see more progress, as our younger members develop and get used to playing at a higher level. The Reserve team again competed in the Betsy Gray Shield and many seen game-time in the Ulster GAA led Cuchullian Cup competition.

From a juvenile perspective, thanks once again to all the management teams for giving their time and care to our kids. It is great to see our numbers growing, and for the whole section to share the common goal of providing a warm environment for our kids to enjoy and develop whilst playing and enjoying hurling. Thanks to the players and their parents for continuing to turn up. You guys are the most important element to keep the show on the road!

This year we had our most successful Hurling & Camogie Week, with nearly 200 children in attendance. These are valuable entry points for children into the world of Hurling & Camogie. It is a proud time when we see hurlers, camogs and coaches from all ages within the club coming together.