

Camogie Section – 2023 Season Report

Overall Commentary

In 2023 we had approximately 116 registered Camógs playing for Warrenpoint. This is a fantastic achievement for all those involved, and my first comment would be to thank all the camogie committee, head coaches and mentors for their tireless efforts with the ongoing progression and development of individual players, teams and camogie overall within the club.

The numbers at the lower age groups continue to grow and as expected we have lower numbers at the upper ages. Bearing in mind we have only been re-established with a camogie section for approximately 7 years we understand that it takes a good 10-12 years to achieve a full cohort of age groups, including senior, and it is still our goal to field a senior team within the next 5 years. The first stage of that goal will be to field our first full sided camogie team at U14 level next year.

We do however continue to struggle for both coaches and committee members, and this is partially due to a lack of ex-players within the club, who can bring experience to the coaching field and an understanding of camogie at county and level and beyond from a committee perspective. However, I have had several discussions with the county development officer and they have a strong focus to support growing camogie clubs like ourselves. It will be therefore be a major objective of the camogie committee next year to work with the county development team to put a development plan in place for coaches, to ensure that the senior team of the future is competitive. The immediate issues we face going into 2024 is the small numbers at U16 (which may again need to be solved by an amalgamation), a couple of areas requiring additional coaches (e.g. U16), and camogie committee members (this year has seen myself holding 4 positions plus coaching, this is clearly not sustainable and will be addressed at Camogie AGM).

2023 Season – by age group

U6 – player numbers 23

Head Coach – Kelly Mallon

Mentors - Sinead Cunningham

- Kelly Rooney
- Deborah McGivern

This year we commenced training indoors in St Marks with hurlers on 10th February - which was great for the kids who enjoyed the mix as did the coaches. The young camogs took part in the St Patricks Day parade and had our first match of the year against An Ríocht who travelled to St Marks in April 2023 for a great game. We had an away game against Ballyholland on 3rd June Clonduff on 12th June in which we fielded 3 teams and everyone enjoyed the match and treats afterwards.

A large number of our U6 girls took part in the Camogie week in the first week in July with many parents commenting how much the girls enjoyed the week and the parents enjoyed the opportunity to meet other parents at the BBQ which was arranged for the final night of the week. Following this we had another blitz against the Shamrocks and Mayobridge, which was an opportunity to showcase the skills we had developed over the year. Some of our girls went to the All Ireland Camogie Final on the bus with the older teams and had a great day out- thanks to the coaches who travelled. Our final blitz of the year was on Sat 9th

September in An Ríocht, in which we played really well against teams from all over the County in blistering heat. Camogie training moved indoors from Friday 13th October when the older girls joined in with the U7 hurlers.

We are looking forward to a great day out at the Mini All Ireland on Saturday 28th October and will continue with Indoor Training in St Marks until the end of November- then break until the new year.

Overall, despite few matches/ blitzes for this age group, (not all clubs have a nursery section) we had a great year. For more game time for our older experienced girls P3/4 girls moved up to train and play with the U8 girls during the year.

Thanks to coaches Kelly Rooney, Deborah Mc Givern, Sinead Cunningham and Kelly Mallon-along with the nursery hurling Coaches and U7 Hurling coaches, special thanks to the parents of our U6 girls who encouraged our girls and travelled to games.

U8 – player numbers 27

Head Coach – Mary Walsh

Mentors – Declan Doyle

- Niall Doyle
- Stephen Robinson
- Gemma McGrath
- Michael McGrath

Introduction:

The Under 8 Camogie Section has wrapped up an eventful and successful season filled with 51 training sessions dedicated to lifting, striking, and self-protection. Additionally, our young camogie players participated in 10 blitzes and matches, took part in a week-long hurling and camogie camp, made a memorable trip to the Camogie All-Ireland in Croke Park, and held their own Mini All-Ireland event. This report aims to summarise the highlights and achievements of the season.

Training Sessions:

Our young camogie players dedicated themselves to improving their skills and knowledge of the game throughout the season. A total of 51 training sessions were conducted, with a strong focus on lifting, striking, and self-protection. These sessions played a crucial role in developing the technical abilities and confidence of our players. The commitment and determination displayed by both the players and coaches were truly commendable.

Blitzes and Matches:

Our Under 8 Camogie Section actively participated in 10 blitzes and matches, which allowed the players to apply the skills they had learned in training in a competitive environment. The girls showed tremendous enthusiasm, teamwork, and sportsmanship in these encounters. We observed significant improvement in their playing abilities over the course of the season, which bodes well for the future of camogie in our club.

Hurling and Camogie Camp:

One of the highlights of the season was the participation of our girls in a week-long hurling and camogie camp. This camp provided them with a comprehensive and immersive experience in the world of these sports. They had the opportunity to learn from experienced coaches, engage in skill-building exercises, and enjoy a week filled with camaraderie and fun. The knowledge and skills gained during the camp have undoubtedly contributed to their growth as young camogie players.

Camogie All-Ireland Trip:

An unforgettable experience for our young camogie players was the trip to the Camogie All-Ireland in the iconic Croke Park. Witnessing the highest level of the sport and being in the presence of passionate and dedicated athletes served as a major source of inspiration for our girls. This trip expanded their horizons and ignited their aspirations to one day compete on the grand stage themselves.

Mini All-Ireland Event:

To conclude the season on a high note, we organised our own Mini All-Ireland event. This event was a fantastic opportunity for the players to showcase their skills and experience the excitement of championship-style competition. It was a memorable day for players, parents, and coaches, reinforcing the sense of community and enthusiasm that exists within our camogie section.

Acknowledgments:

We extend our sincere appreciation to the young players for their unwavering dedication, hard work, and passion for the sport. Our coaches also deserve special recognition for their tireless efforts in nurturing and developing these budding camogie stars. Furthermore, we would like to express our gratitude to the parents and guardians for their continuous support, from cheering on the sidelines to providing transportation and encouragement. Your involvement is invaluable to the success and growth of our Under 8 Camogie Section.

U10 – player numbers 26

Head Coach – Sarah-Jane Sloan

Mentors – Catherine Meehan

- Maria Farrell

The P6 Camogs demonstrated a good commitment to the scheduled training sessions. At this age the girls were developing their air striking, blocking, pucking, lifting and goalie skills.

Player numbers in this age remained high throughout the year- with a total of 15 girls.

Two of the u10 coaches attended a level 1 camogie course last Nov. This benefited the girls' training sessions as the coaches were organised with their training plan and drills show casing new ideas that they were shown.

The match season kicked off in June against Ballyholland and the u10 girls attended 2 blitz's one in Shamrocks in July and the other in An Ríocht in September.

Match schedule below:

Date	Team (u10)	Venue
09/06/2023	Ballyholland	St.Marks
12/06/2023	Clonduff	Clonduff
08/07/2023	Shamrocks	Shamrocks
08/07/2023	Ballyholland	Shamrocks
08/07/2023	Mayobridge	Shamrocks
02/09/2023	Mayobridge	Mayobridge
09/09/2023	Dromara	An Ríocht
09/09/2023	Portaferry	An Ríocht
09/09/2023	Ballycran	An Ríocht

The 2023 u10 camogie season ended mid-September. Both girls and coaches enjoyed the season. It is fantastic to see the girls' skills and confidence improving year on year. We couldn't do it without the support of all parents. We look forward to the 2024 season ahead.

U12 – team numbers approximately 17

Head Coach – Yvonne McFerran & Patricia Keenan

Mentor – Paul McCoy

Commenced indoor training late January and outdoor on 20th March. Our U12 team had a fantastic first season competing in a league format. The girls coming through from U10 had been developed excellently by their previous coaches so were ready for the next level of league rather than blitz format.

Before breaking into a league the girls played a blitz to allocate each team into a division and the girls did very well at the blitz, winning 2 of their 3 games, therefore placing them in a division 2 alongside Shamrocks, Castlewellan, Aghaderg, Attical and Dromara. The girls won all bar 2 of their games and topped the league. All players received a medal for this purchased by the club, and were rewarded with a small celebration in the club rooms.

The girls also had the privilege of being asked to play at half time in Parc Ester for Down Camógs game against Galway on 1st July, an experience the girls really enjoyed.

Next year the majority of these players will be moving up to U14, creating a team that will be well capable of playing and competing at full side level.

U14 – player numbers 16

Head Coach – Yvonne McFerran & Patricia Keenan

Mentor – Paul McCoy

Commenced indoor training late January and outdoors on 20th March. This was the girls first year at completely competitive level, and to be fair it was a steep learning curve. Due to numbers we entered the team into the ‘small-sided league’, which was played at mini blitz style events. We were in a league with Shamrocks, Dromara, Aghaderg, Attical, Kilclief/Ben Derg and Kilcoo. Some of these teams were most definitely of a high calibre and the girls struggled against most. However, after a very difficult start to the season in the first couple of blitzes they developed over the season more than could have been expected. The last blitz they played was at St Mark’s and the girls won all but one game, showing a massive amount of progress on many levels including skill, team play, fitness and understanding of the games. All 3 coaches are immensely proud of these girls, they showed such courage in the face of many difficult challenges and that it paying off for them.

Next year the majority of these girls will be staying at U14 level, so when combined with the U12s from last year we should have a squad of approximately 30 players, which is a real milestone for the relatively newly formed camogie section.

U16 – player numbers 7

Head Coach – Brigid Carr & Olivia Rooney

Mentor – Paddy Lock

Our u16 camogs had a great season. Due to issues in numbers as a result of Camogie reverting to even numbers (u12/14/16 for eg) our U16 camogs merged with Shamrocks for this season to create Brigini Og Camogs (Young Brigid).

The girls all gelled well together, some knowing each other from school. The girls trained on a Tuesday in Warrenpoint and a Saturday morning in Newry, allowing those with other commitments to get at least one training session a week.

The girls entered a small numbers league with other teams facing the same age related issues eg Ballyholand, Attical, Kilcoo. Each game day this meant the girls played 2 other teams in shorter halves. Whilst the layout did suit the smaller team groups perhaps a longer half (currently at 10mins) would have been more suitable to girls of this older age group.

The girls all developed their skills and fitness benefitted from the two training sessions a week. This age group is hard to keep them at times with the likes of exams. County took the decision for no

matches to be played over the exams period in May-June which worked well as otherwise some may have sat games out due to exams.

We would love to see the girls staying on next season however with the issue of numbers and age with the even numbers structure there will be some girls without a team to play within the club next season. Hopefully they will return when the numbers catch up as the numbers in the younger age groups are excellent.