

Senior Ladies' Gaelic Football Overview 2023

Ronan Magee (Manager)



Where do I start? What an amazing talented and hard working group of ladies that is Cumann Pheadair Naofa Senior Ladies' Gaelic Team.

From the moment pre-season in the club rooms started; back in December 2022, working on our fitness and then progressing out into St. Mark's to work on our ball work for the official start of the league to begin in April 2023, this group of ladies have worked tirelessly to improve themselves on the pitch in order to improve on their standards from 2022 and expand their goals.

This year we welcomed a few new faces to our panel of players; Melissa Murphy, Kelly Armstrong, Caoimhe Turley, Hannah Duffy and Roisin Kelly. We also had the very talented minors coming up through to play alongside our senior ladies: Cara Bradley, Lauren Quinn, Lillie McClorey, Erin Carr, Sydney Barnett, Murin Sneddon and Ria Cunningham, without whom our team wouldn't have been complete. A special thank you to our minor team management: Fergus Bradley, Mike Barnett and Caoimhe Shannon for allowing the girls to train and have match time with us and for their support throughout the year.

The year couldn't go by without a special mention to Kate Dinsmore and Ciara Downey who have been superb mentors for our ladies' team and play a very important part of the Cumann Pheadair Naofa ladies' football development, encouraging underage girls to train and work to achieve greatness. Here's hoping they haven't hung their boots up just yet!!!

Another thank you has to go to our supporters throughout the year who came out and watched the girls and travelled all over the county to watch them play, be it in the league, championship, or challenge games. Whether the rain be pouring down or the sun shining, they let people know Cumann Pheadair Naofa Senior ladies have the best supporters about.

This year the girls got their league campaign off to a tremendous start going unbeaten in the first round, fighting off the best of teams to make it to the league final which was played in Clonduff, against a very skilful Saul team. The rivalry between both teams is known far and wide and is always an intense watch whenever they meet. On the day Cumann Pheadair Naofa were the strongest team, with the girls playing with passion and determination to come out on top showing it on the score board to win the league over Saul.

After a week's break the girls started on their Championship campaign. Again they trained with their hearts on their sleeves in all conditions to prepare to come up against many skilful players. They got their campaign off to a great start. The girls made it to the semi-final in the A championship where they lost out to Carryduff under some of the worse conditions we have seen this year. Our ladies were deeply disappointed in their performance and knew this wasn't a true reflection of the team they had showcased all season. This result meant they would face Clonduff in the B Championship final. With a bit back and forth, Clonduff won the toss for a home advantage but this didn't dampen the spirits of the ladies and they went out onto the pitch and played to the capability they have trained for all year. They immediately took the lead in the first half and quickly settled into the game owning the pitch

and demanding the control of the game, this continued to the final whistle, where they got to lift the cup. Nothing else mattered that evening, the team only had one result in their sights. They wanted this not only for themselves but for management and for the support network they had built.

My thanks goes to Mike Barnett; ladies' co-ordinator within the club, sorting out pitch schedules to allow the girls to train. Our sponsor Derval and Mark at Bespoke, not only for sponsoring us but also being supporters of the girls as well. A special thank you Chairperson Paul McKibbin who has supported my vision for the girls from our first meeting and always being at hand whenever an issue aroused to help solve it also. We only hope we made yourself and the club proud this year.

I'd like to thank my team, Marty Carr, Noreen Farrell, Pauline Cunningham who have stuck by me from the beginning as well as the introduction of Ryan Haughey, Collette Lock and Ben Lock who slotted in, as though they have always been apart the senior ladies' management. As a management team, we all could see the full potential this group of ladies had and every week they encouraged me and the girls to strive to be better. I am forever in their debt for all they have done this year not only for me but for the senior ladies. Thanks also to this year's Captain; Tara Cunningham and Vice-Captain; Molly McNeela who have helped me out enormously and have lead the team to victory twice this year. Well done and congratulations girls.

Finally, to conclude, I believe the senior ladies' team has grown from strength to strength this year. If it wasn't for their sheer determination, self-belief, commitment and the appetite to win and their ability to take on board what is asked of them, they are truly an amazing group of girls.

Regarding 2024 season, the ladies will now progress into division 2 and this is a reflection of their eagerness to keep improving opportunities in ladies' football for the club and being role models for the younger girls that are traveling up through the age groups and will be a massive boost to ladies' football within the club.

This team has not yet reached their full potential, there is so much more these ladies can achieve and I believe under the right guidance they will be able to move in the right direction this year.

I would like to thank Paul McKibbin; chairperson, Cumann Pheadair Naofa and all on the committee for giving me the opportunity to manage the ladies' senior team this year it's an honour to manage such an amazing group of girls.

Ronan Magee.