

# HURLING AGM REPORT 2024

## **U6's by Michael Murphy**

Under 6 Hurling started indoors, on the 23rd February, at St Marks along with the Camogs. The amalgamation of both groups at this age group has continued to be a great success. This season we were delighted to gain three additional coaches at U6 and I'd like to express my thanks and gratitude to all of our coaches and mentors who have supported this group throughout the year.

Across the ten-month season over 40 children at Pre-school, P1 and P2 have been provided a fun, safe and welcoming environment facilitating the development of their physical, mental and social skills. During the season our U6s represented the club at five blitz's, with the highlights being the two hosted in Warrenpoint. And finally, a special thanks to all the parents and guardians who travelled to training and matches each week and provided lots of encouragement for the group.

## **U8's by Anthony O'Brien**

A fantastic season for the U8 hurlers this year in Warrenpoint. The season started indoors in St Marks where the foundation skills learned last year were both copper-fastened and developed. These sessions were vital for the team and the indoor facility provided a great environment for the boys to enjoy their sessions. The training sessions then moved outside to the pitches in St Marks and the boys were able to practise their skills on grass and with the proper goals. We were delighted with the consistent numbers of boys who attended training with numbers being up and around 16 boys.

Throughout the summer the boys played both regional and all county blitzes across the county. We fielded at least one team in each blitz which was a great achievement for the club. The boys were very competitive against every team they played, and their skill levels were progressing each week. Most boys are now confident to jab lift and hit the ball in the air. This is consistent with all the other clubs at this age grade. The standard of the blitzes across the county have most definitely improved in terms of the numbers of teams and the organisation of the blitzes also.

Many of the boys attended the Summer Hurling week which was an excellent opportunity for them to develop their team bond and learn from various coaches from other clubs around the county. A highlight for the boys was to meet members of the All-Ireland winning U20 team. Most of the boys will now progress onto U10 next year and I am confident that they will continue to develop the skills and the love of the sport.

## **U10's by Sean Mallon**

The Under 10 hurling year started off as always with pre-season training on Friday evenings in the sports halls 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.

The outdoor season started after Easter this year with St Marks being the regular hive of hurling and camogie activity on Friday evenings.

# HURLING AGM REPORT 2024

The all-county blitz were held on the first Saturday of the month and a regional blitz were held on the third Saturday. We started the year off away to Laitrim for the first all-county blitz, and then attended blitz's hosted by An Ríocht, Portaferry, Shamrocks, Carryduff, Bredagh, Clonduff Castlewellan and Glasdrumman.

Saturday 7th September was our turn to host the all-county blitz which again was to be the biggest (and best) blitz of the 2024 calendar hosted in St Marks. This year we had 14 pitches playing simultaneously as for the first time we had invited u6 participants. Our juvenile volunteers refereed the u10.5 matches.

During the course of the day I had time catch a glimpse of the U6 teams competing, and my lasting memory was of Tom Daly's excitement and joy at the sight of such young hurlers competing in and enjoying their matches, little was I to know this day would be the last time I personally got to have a chat with Tom (RIP).

Over the course of this year our u10 hurlers played teams from the Ards, Antrim, Armagh, Monaghan, Louth, Belfast, Saul, Kilclief, Liatrim, and our near neighbours Shamrocks, Clann Mhurn, Clonduff. and a Hurling/Football challenge with Ashbourne from Co. Meath.

This year we were delighted to be invited to Feile An Fhómhair hosted by Eire Og in Carrickmore. This is a prestige's annual tournament, and our boys played up to the potential that we all know they had. Beating the hosts in the first game they went on to beat other teams from within Ulster including the eventual shield winners. The Cup semi-final line-up was Cushendall v Loughguille, Eire Og v CPN, but unfortunately our lads were beaten by the smallest of margins (1pt). Each and everyone of the squad played with skill and bravery and should be extremely proud of their achievement.

Despite scores not being recorded in the county blitz's, it was noted by coaches, players and parents alike that the number of games that finished in disappointment during the course of the year could have been counted on one hand, and as such the progress made by the boys from 2023 was also very evident for all to see and their skill levels have increased to the extent that a number of u10.5's were given the opportunity to play up with the U12 teams, whilst the rest have shown marked improvement and will be available for playing up if required in 2025.

The U10 Management (Sean & Kieran) 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. We would also especially like to thank all who helped with the organising, officiating and smooth operation of the blitz in St Marks on 7th September and those who provided the catering on the day.

CPN Abú

## **U12's by Damien McConville**

The U12 hurlers had a fantastic season in 2024. Approaching the 2024 season the management team knew that we had an extremely talented team, albeit low in numbers with only 10 actual U12 players. Much effort has been made to increase playing numbers via primary school programmes in both St Dallan's and Carrick PS, but numbers continue to be a problem. To counteract this, a number of older U10's (children who would be U12 under the date of birth rules) were called up to the U12 hurling squad, on the basis of clashes with football were

## HURLING AGM REPORT 2024

avoided. As was portrayed in the U10 report, we are fortunate that the work over recent years is beginning to show, with a talented group of U10's to call upon. The U10 lads did not look out of place with the U12's and when managed correctly these players excelled with both U10's and U12's.

Throughout the season the U12's competed against the best teams Co Down has to offer, and we can deservedly be considered amongst the strongest teams in the county at this age group. U12 sport is not about winning, and scores are not kept, it is with great pleasure that we witnessed every player improve throughout the season. This team possesses a group of determined and committed players, with several very talented players who can continue to improve and compete with anyone in the county.

Regarding the afore mentioned primary school hurling programme, credit must go to the hurling committee for committing to regular hurling in both feeder schools, St Dallan's PS and Carrick PS. The management were pleased to see Carrick PS finish top of the South Down indoor blitz and qualify for the all-county finals. St Dallans too should have joined Carrick in the final and only missed out on qualification by 1 point. We have high hopes for St Dallans in 2024/25 Primary School hurling and we expect Carrick to also come close when winners are decided.

### **U14's by Damien McConville**

Much like the U12's, the U14s do not possess many players, as such the decision was made to amalgamate with local rivals Newry Shamrocks to form Patrick Rankin. This has ensured that U14 hurlers from CPN have been afforded regular hurling at their correct age group, and without having to rely on U12's to field a team. This is the second year of the amalgamation and credit must go to both clubs for making a union of two traditional rivals to flourish. With a playing panel of 15 between both clubs, only two are over age in 2025, as such hopes are high for next season already that this team can compete and challenge in Division 1. Back to 2024 for now, the U14's played in Division 2 of the Down league and for such a young team we competed well in the league, mainly playing teams with older players. We played 14 league games and won 7, this left us 4th in a table of 8 teams. During the league we had some very encouraging displays against Kilclief, Castlewellan and Killeavy (Armagh). This set us up nicely for the championship where we go to the final of the shield but unfortunately lost narrowly at home to Ballycran in the semi final.

The U14's provided four players to the County Down 'Be Better Programme' set up to promote hurling across the county and a precursor to potential future county juvenile teams. We look forward to seeing how these young lads and all the players progress in the coming years.

The management would like to wish the team every success in the future and believe with hard work, next year's report will be telling a story of a team who excelled in both league and championship.

One final note, in the absence of an U15 report, well done Jamie Lock on participating in the Down U15 hurling squad in 2024! This included much game time and point scoring for Jamie in the Red and Black!

# HURLING AGM REPORT 2024

## **U18's by Dermot Donnelly**

2024 saw the minor hurlers play in an all-county league format with every team playing each other once. We were joined by five lads from Ballyvarley and, in total, had a panel of fifteen players. Unfortunately, we were only able to have the full fifteen lads available for two matches throughout the whole season.

In the league we ran Carryduff very close and although losing by just a few points, had we taken our chances, it was a game we could've won. A win against Clonduff followed, but defeats against the 'Ards teams left us in the bottom half of the league and into a Div2 semi-final against Kilclief which ended our league campaign.

The Championship format involved CPN, Carryduff, Kilclief & Clonduff. Having once again beaten Clonduff in the group stage we were beaten by the remaining two teams and although we did qualify for a semi-final, again injuries hit us hard (a broken collar bone, broken finger and concussion) which basically robbed us of our older more experienced players.

On a positive note, three of our minors stepped up and played for the senior team this year, who were unlucky to be beaten by Bredagh once more at the semi-final stage of the IHC.

I hope to see some of these older lads make the next step up to county U20 level next year, as the experience & quality of training would see them develop as players for our future senior club side.

Management: Dermot Donnelly, Paddy Lock & Terry Lennon (Ballyvarley)

## **Senior's by Michael Murphy**

For our Senior Hurlers this was their second season at intermediate after winning the Junior in 2022. Building on the progress from last year Sylvester McConnell and Marty Houlahan continued for a third year supported in their management team by Liam Boyle, Dermot Donnelly, James Doyle and Gerry O'Neill. A massive thanks has to be given to the management team for their effort and commitment to the panel, without them the significant progress made this year wouldn't have been possible.

This year the team retained league status in Down Div1, came second in the Div2 Ulster Cuchulainn League and after some tough challenges in the championship round robin due to injuries, qualified for the intermediate semi-final.

Although disappointing to lose the championship semi-final, significant progress has been made across the whole panel and we were delighted to see our goal keeper Joey Beggs nominated for a Down GAA Club All Star. Our best wishes to him on the upcoming awards night on the 16th November.

We must also recognise and thank our sponsor Pizza Point (Gabriel), our Physios Julie Fegan & Gerard Leddy, Stats/photos & match reporting Dermot Donnelly, Gerry O'Neill for being the glue that keeps it altogether and all the other people in the background that helped along the way.

# HURLING AGM REPORT 2024

## **Chairman's Report by Sean Mallon**

The Hurling Committee would very much like to thank the senior management team and all who helped during the year in preparing the team for the league and championship campaigns. We also need to recognise the efforts put in by the players, young and not so young during the year and their drive to keep CPN in the top 8 teams within the county.

A special note to Joey Beggs on his nomination as goalkeeper for all county team of the year, much deserved recognition for his performances between the posts for the past couple of years.

On reflection the hurling section have had a very successful year and continue to prosper with new talent and coaches picking up their hurls.

We did however experience one of our toughest and darkest periods during the year, when we lost a very good friend in Tom Daly. He had hurling in his veins and had helped, nurtured and steered hurling in the South Down area and especially in Warrenpoint for several years. It was also testament to the man that even when he moved to start and encourage hurling in the Mourne area he was still included in various Warrenpoint hurling management team What's App groups and was always on the end of the phone for a discussion or to bounce ideas off, especially regarding the promotion of underage groups.

His loss will ripple through the hurling fraternity in Down and especially South Down for many years to come.

We wish to extend our deepest sympathies to Maria, Cara, Conor and Shay.

Tom (Tommy) RIP.

Finally, I wish to extend my thanks and appreciation to all coaches, mentors, parents and players from nursery to senior, for their commitment in attending training, completing courses and fulfilling fixtures across the county and further afield. I would also like to congratulate all players and coaches who represented their school, college, university and not forgetting those who played for our county teams.

We look forward to 2025 with confidence that we can carry on the great work that has went before, and continue to promote our national game and participate at the highest levels possible.

Go Raibh Maith Agat

Sean