

In association with



Code of Behaviour for all Persons Working with Young People

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GAA



CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR ALL PERSONS WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



This Code of Behaviour complements the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and addresses the appropriate levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from our young players, coaches, mentors, supporters, parents/guardians and clubs.

The Code of Behaviour is promoted by the following National Governing Bodies so as to enable and assist those who promote and deliver our games as we comply with the highest possible standards in our work with children and young people.

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael	(The Gaelic Athletic Association)
Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael	(Camogie Association)
Cumann Peil Gael na mBan	(Ladies Gaelic Football Association)
Comhairle Liathróid Láimhe na hÉireann	(Irish Handball Council),
Comhairle Cluiche Corr na hÉireann	(The Rounders Council of Ireland)

Everyone involved in our sports and activities should accept the roles and responsibilities that they undertake as we commit ourselves to maintaining an enjoyable and safe environment for all. The safeguarding of our members will always be a key priority as we recognise that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance in our work.

It is recommended to use this Code in tandem with each National Governing Bodies own Codes of Best Practice or Codes of Ethics that outline in greater detail our roles and responsibilities when working with children and young people.

We wish to see this code developed, promoted and implemented as an initiative that encourages fair play, respect, equal opportunities and safety.

Let us ensure that everyone working on our behalf emphasises FAIR PLAY, RESPECT, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES and SAFETY in all aspects of our work with children and young people.

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**FAIR PLAY
RESPECT
EQUAL
OPPORTUNITIES
and
SAFETY**

**FAIR PLAY
RESPECT
EQUALITY
SAFETY**





YOUNG PLAYERS

Young players can benefit greatly from sports in terms of personal development and enjoyment. As part of their participation our players must be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat others with fairness and respect. With rights there will always be responsibilities.

There will be a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby young people agree to abide by the Code of Behaviour and to any other policies and codes in your Club and National Governing Body.

YOUNG PLAYERS should be entitled to:

- Be safe and feel safe.
- Have fun and experience a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment.
- Be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity.
- Comment and make suggestions in a constructive manner.
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
- Participate in games and competitions at a level at which they feel comfortable.
- Be listened to.
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Be protected from abuse.

YOUNG PLAYERS should always

- Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves.
- Respect fellow team members regardless of ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.

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- Support fellow team members whether they do well or not so well.
- Represent their team, their club and their family with pride and dignity.
- Respect all coaches, mentors, officials and their opponents.
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
- Shake hands before and after the game irrespective of the result.
- Inform their coach/mentor/manager when they are unavailable for training and games.
- Talk to the Club Children's Officer with any concerns or questions they may have.
- Adhere to acceptable standards of behaviour and their Club's Code of Discipline.
- Tell somebody else if they or others have been harmed in any way.
- Take due care of club equipment.

YOUNG PLAYERS should not:

- Cheat – always play by the rules.
- Shout at or argue with an official, team mates or opponents or use violence.
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage or isolate other players.
- Spread rumours.
- Tell lies about adults or other young people.
- Play or train if they feel unwell or are injured.
- Use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian references.

YOUNG PLAYERS - Definition

The term Young Players is frequently used throughout this Code of Behaviour. For the purpose of this publication, a Young Player is defined as any person under the age of 18 years of age, who is not or has not been married.





COACHES, MENTORS AND TRAINERS

All Coaches, Mentors and Trainers (referred to hereafter as Coaches) should ensure that young people and children benefit significantly from our games by providing a positive, healthy and encouraging ethos for all. In developing the skills levels of every player you should always encourage enjoyment, fun and participation in our games and activities. Coaches should always remember that they are role models for the players in their care.

Recruitment of Coaches

As a Coach working with young people and children you are required to be suitable for your chosen role(s). Appropriate training and supports will be provided so as to ensure that Coaches are suitable, comfortable and qualified to fulfil their roles. All persons working or volunteering for such roles will also participate in agreed recruitment and selection procedures as outlined in the policies and procedures of each National Governing Body.

Maintaining a child centred approach:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities so that participants always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
- Recognise the development needs and capacity of all young players, regardless of their ability, by emphasising participation for all while avoiding excessive training and competition. Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition.





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- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that you have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.
- Don't equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by young players is the best indicator of effective coaching.

Coaches should lead by example

- Avoid smoking while working with young players.
- Do not consume alcohol or non prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while young players are in your care.
- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures to a player, opponent or match official.
- Only enter the field of play with the referee's permission and should not question a referee's decisions or integrity.
- Encourage players to respect and accept the judgement of match officials.
- Promote Fair Play.
- Encourage parents to become involved in our activities wherever possible.

Conduct of Coaches when working with young people

- Don't shout at or lecture players or reprimand/ridicule them when they make a mistake. Children learn best through trial and error. Children and Young people should not be afraid to risk error so as to learn.
- Never use any form of corporal punishment or physical force.
- Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc that could be misinterpreted.
- Ensure that all physical contact is appropriate and has the permission or understanding of the young person.

Let us ensure that everyone working on our behalf emphasises FAIR PLAY, RESPECT, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES and SAFETY in all aspects of our work with children and young people.





- Never undertake any form of therapy – hypnosis etc, in the training of children.
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with children based on mutual trust and respect.
- Challenge bullying in any form whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour be it from a young person, mentor, parent or guardian.

Avoid compromising your role as a Coach

- Avoid a situation where you are alone in a car or dressing room with a player.
- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own.
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with a player or away from others.
- Avoid taking young players to your home.

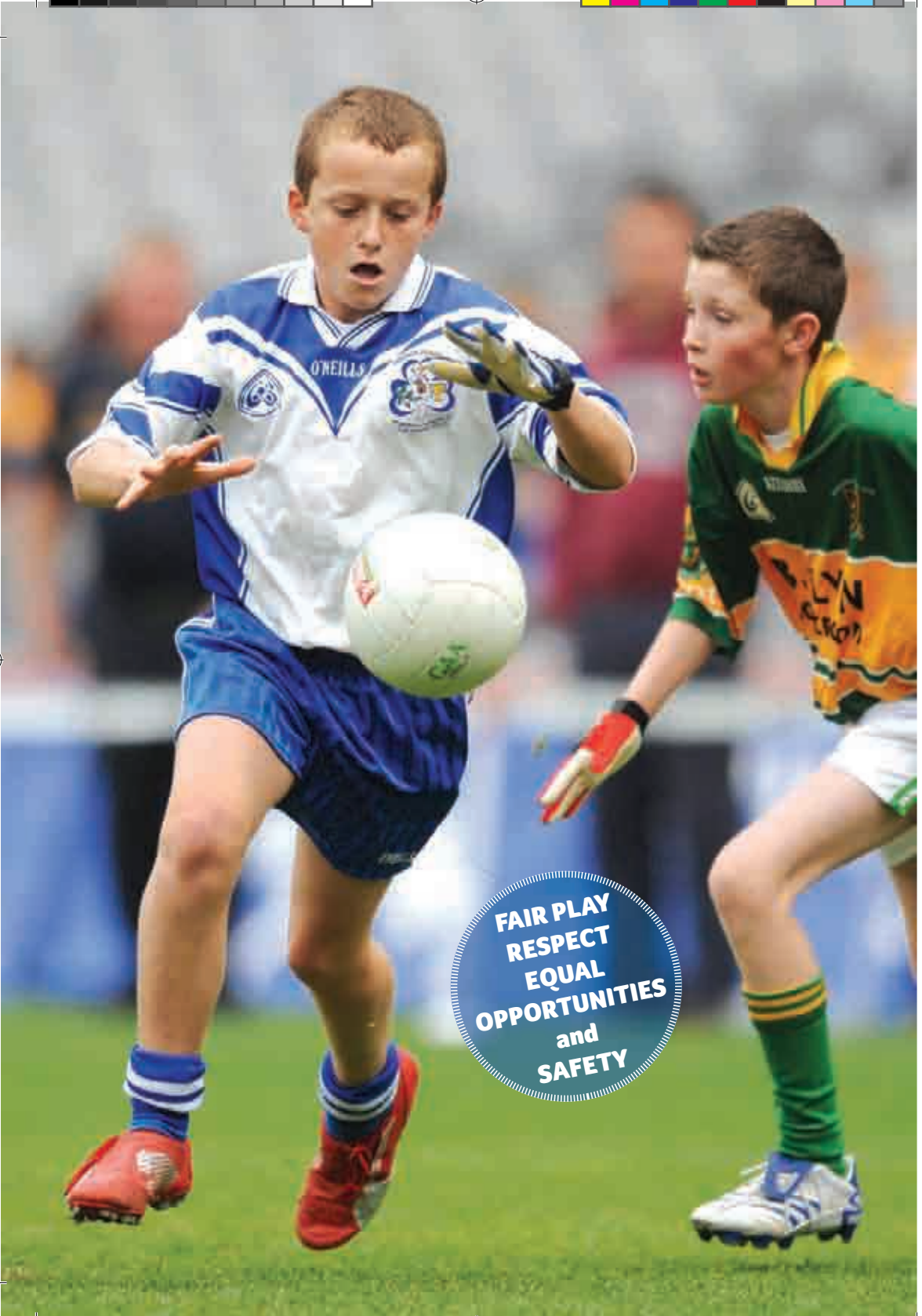




Best practice

- Ensure that all players are suitably and safely attired to play their chosen sport.
- Keep a record of attendance at training and at games by both players and coaches.
- Be punctual and properly attired.
- Rotate the team captaincy and the method used for selecting teams so that the same children are not always selected to the exclusion of others.
- Set realistic – stretching but achievable – performance goals.
- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your club.
- Use mobile phones, if deemed appropriate, only via a group texts system for communicating with the parents/guardians of players and receive such permission at the commencement of each season.
- Do not communicate individually by text with under age players.
- Keep a record of each injury and action taken. Ensure that another official referee/team mentor is present when a player is being attended to and can corroborate the relevant details.
- Ensure that all dressing rooms and the general areas that are occupied by your players and other club personnel, prior to, during or immediately following the completion of any match are kept clean and are not damaged in any way.
- If it is necessary to transport a child/young person in your car, ensure that they are seated in a rear seat with seat belts securely fastened.
- Make adequate provision for First Aid services.
- Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured.





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PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents/Guardians have an influential role to play in assisting and encouraging their children to adopt a positive attitude and in encouraging them to maintain an involvement in sport. They should always be a good role model for their children.

Parents/Guardians should encourage their child to:

- Play by the rules.
- Improve their skills levels.
- Appreciate everybody on their team, regardless of ability.
- Maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle with regard to exercise, food, rest and play. Seek advice if necessary from club officials on this issue

Parents/Guardians should lead by example:

- Respect officials' decisions and encourage children to do likewise.
- Do not exert undue pressure on your child.
- Never admonish your own child or any other child for their standard of play.
- Be realistic in their expectations.
- Show approval for effort, not just results.
- Never embarrass a child or use sarcastic remarks towards a player.
- Applaud good play from all teams.
- Don't criticise playing performances. Identify how improvements may be made.
- Do not seek to unfairly affect a game or player.
- Do not enter the field of play or play area unless invited to do so by an official in charge.

Parents/Guardians should:

- Complete and return the registration/permission and medical consent forms for their child's participation in the club.





- Inform the mentors of any change in their child's medical or dietary requirements prior to coaching sessions, games or other activities.
- Ensure that their child punctually attends coaching sessions/games or other activities.
- Provide their child with proper clothing and equipment.
- Ensure that the nutrition/hydration and hygiene needs of their child are met.
- Avoid asking a child or young person, 'How much did you score today or what did you win by or what did you lose by.' Ask them 'did they enjoy themselves'.
- Listen to what young people have to say.
- Show approval whether the team wins, loses or draws a game.
- Never attempt to meet their own needs and aspirations for success and achievement through their children's participation in games.

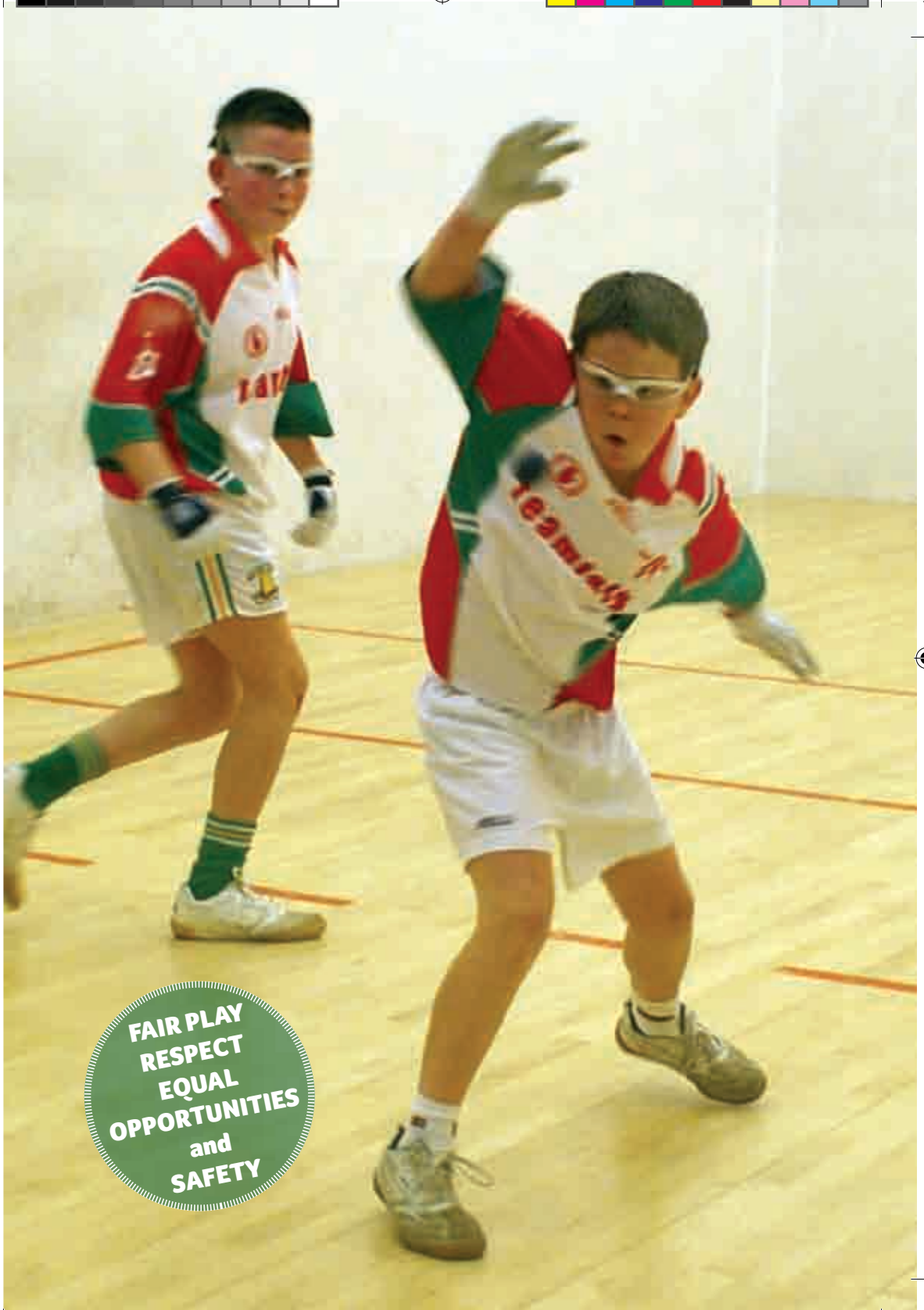
Parents/Guardians should assist their club by:

- Showing appreciation to volunteers, mentors and club officials.
- Attending training and games on a regular basis.
- Assisting in the organising of club activities and events as requested.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.

Parents/Guardians have the right to:

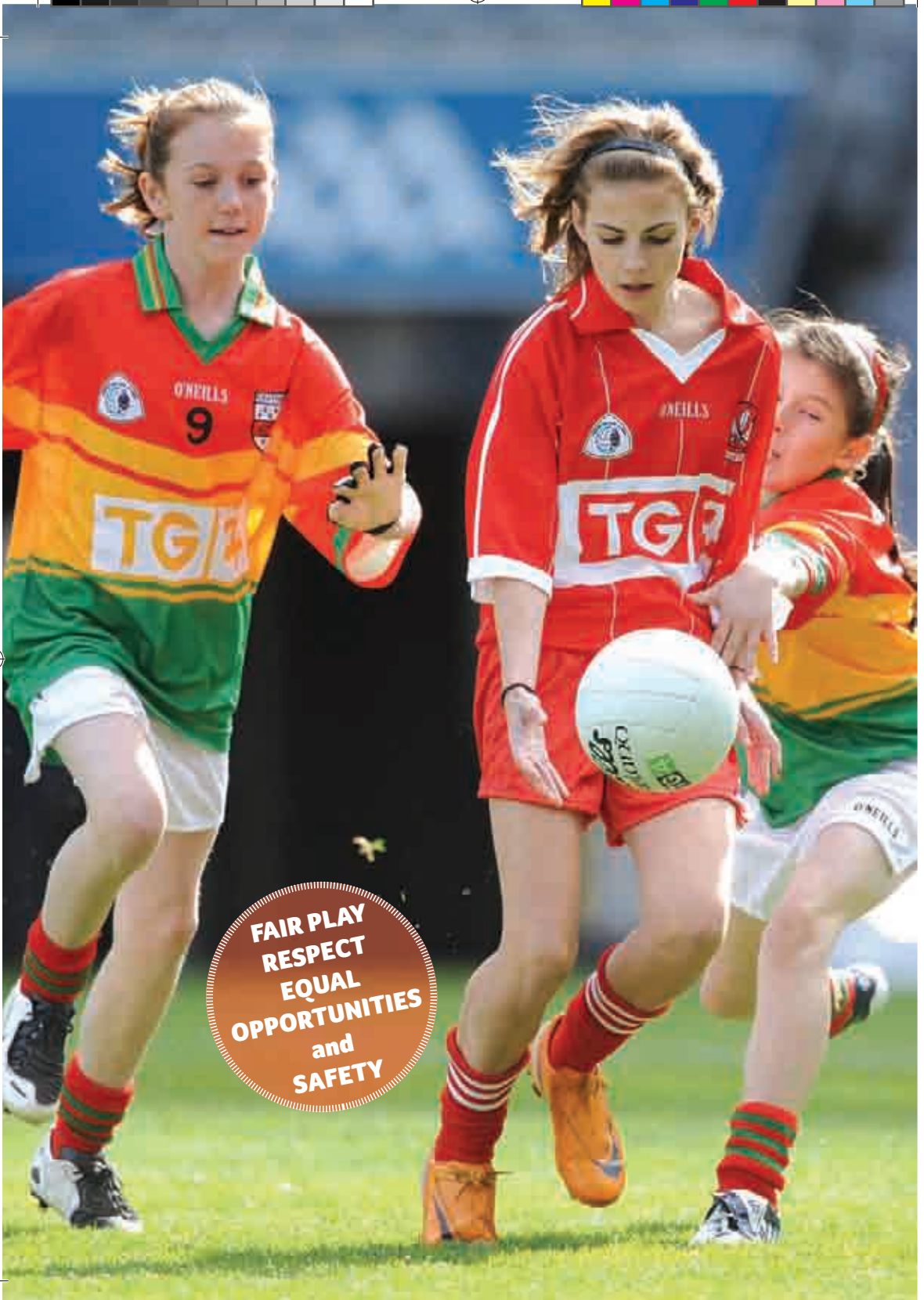
- Know their child is safe and to make a complaint if they believe that their child's safety is in any way compromised.
- Be informed of problems/concerns relating to their child.
- Be informed if their child gets injured.
- Complain if they have concerns about the standard of coaching.
- Have a say in relation to decisions being made within the club.





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SUPPORTERS

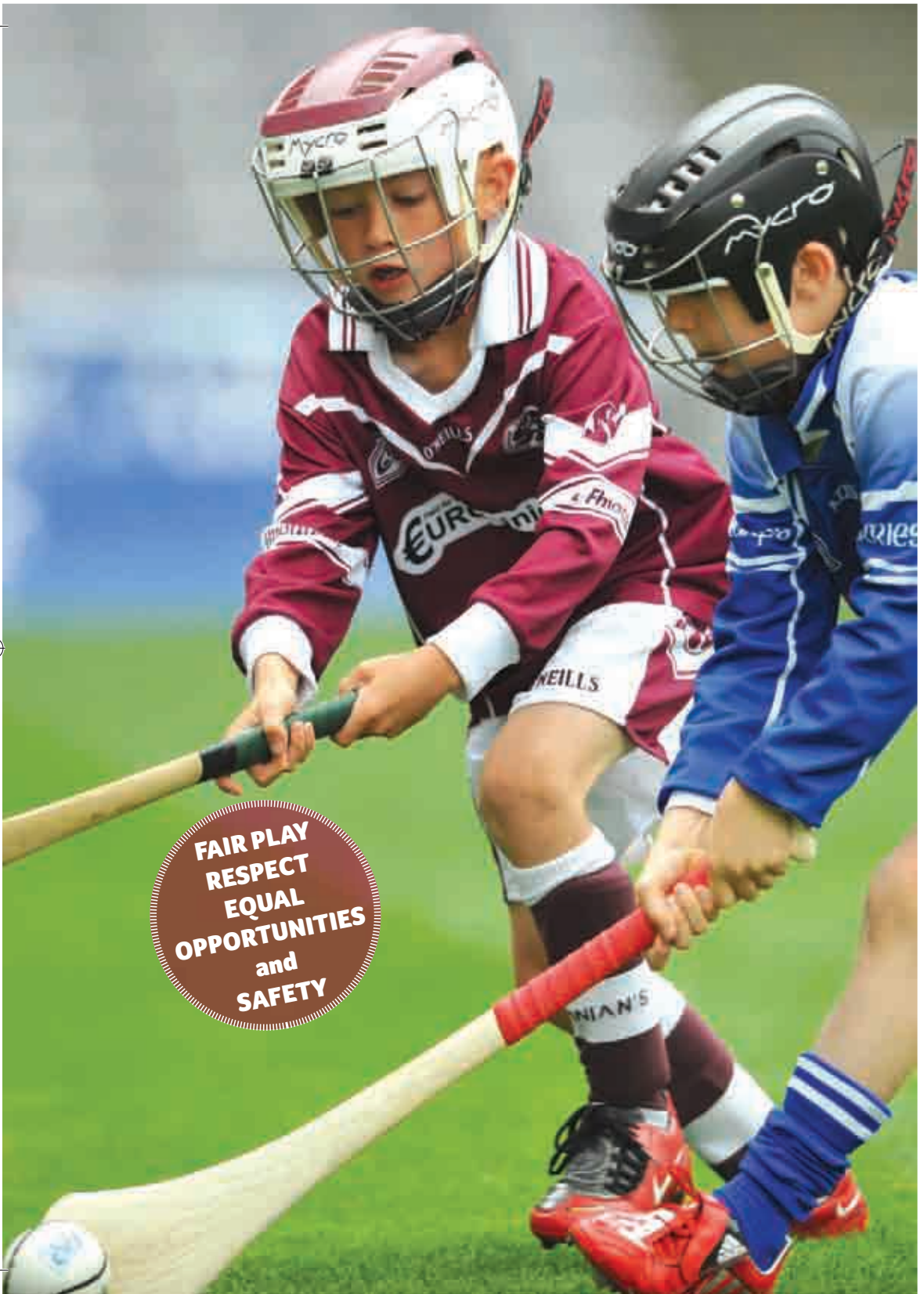
Young players are eager to enjoy and benefit from the support they receive from parents, guardians, friends and other members of the club who attend our games as spectators. Active, loyal and well behaved supporters are always welcome to attend and support our games but should be aware that their conduct will always reflect upon the team, players and clubs that they support.

Fellow supporters have a responsibility to ensure that all spectators conduct themselves in an acceptable and well behaved manner at all times when attending under age games and competitions.

Supporters should always realise that young players participate in organised sport for fun. Supporters add to the enjoyment of our games by:

- Applauding good performance and efforts from your club's players and from your opponents, regardless of the result.
- Condemning the use of violence in any form, be it by fellow spectators, coaches, officials or players.
- Encouraging players to participate according to the rules and the referees' decisions.
- Demonstrating appropriate social behaviour by not using foul language or harassing participants, mentors or officials.
- Respecting the decisions of all officials.
- Never ridiculing or scolding a player for making a mistake during games or competitions
- Showing respect to your Club's opponents. Without them there would be no games or competitions.
- Upholding the principles of FAIR PLAY and RESPECT for all.





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THE CLUB

All clubs that cater for under age players must do so with a child centred approach and philosophy that recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount, thus ensuring that those chosen by them to work with children and young people are at all times competent and confident as to their roles and responsibilities.

Clubs must provide these people with the necessary supports and ensure in the best interests of the child, the young person and the adult that all those chosen to work on the club's behalf have been selected following thorough recruitment, selection, training and coaching procedures.

Promote Quality Participation by:

- Adopting this Code of Behaviour as a basic level of agreement between the club and their players, their mentors, parents/guardians and supporters.
- Leading by example and ensuring that you have a user friendly and child centred approach to your work and that you provide an equal opportunity to all who wish to participate in your games and activities, regardless of an individual's ability.
- Developing effective procedures for responding to and recording all attendances, incidents, accidents and injuries.
- Accessing relevant information on Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Programmes and promoting relevant training in this area of health awareness for relevant club personnel.
- Distributing information on Anti Bullying strategies in our work with young people and by adopting and implementing an Anti Bullying Statement in the club.





Encourage the Participation of Club Members by:

- Communicating regularly with your Mentors and clearly agree and define their roles.
- Ensuring that the Irish Sports Council and Sport NI Code of Ethics training is undertaken by all persons working in an official capacity with children and young people on behalf of the club.
- Adopting and implement clearly defined recruitment and selection procedures when choosing mentors to work with children and young people.

Encourage the Participation of Young Players

- Ensuring that the types of programmes, rules, equipment, length of games and training schedules are structured to facilitate greater participation by all young players, are suitable to all age categories, and to the ability and maturity level of young players.
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of all players by treating them equally regardless of their age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Creating pathways for young people to participate in your games not just as players but afford other developmental opportunities including training to become a referee, coach etc.
- Ensuring that on the occasions when the team may travel away and stay overnight that separate sleeping facilities are provided for all adults and for young people. Similarly, for mixed groups separate sleeping quarters for males and females shall be required.
- When your group consists of both males and females you are required to have male and female leaders/mentors present.





Encourage the Participation of Parents/Guardians by:

- Encouraging parents/guardians to become members of their club and to make themselves aware as to the running of juvenile games and activities and to the rules and codes that direct us in our work.
- Encouraging the participation of parents and guardians in all aspects a club's activities and events and in the organising and delivery of our games.
- Welcome all parents/guardians to attend the games and training sessions that relate to their children. Information relating to such events should be made known to them at all times.
- Informing parents/guardians as to the identity of their Children's Officer. This person should be available to assist with any concerns or enquiries that parents/guardians may have regarding the welfare and safety of children and young people in the club.

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Develop Best Practice in Club Structures and Administration by:

- Ensuring that the Juvenile Section of the club is structured in accordance with good practice guidelines and that young people are afforded a role in decision making at an appropriate level.
- Ensuring that all club members are aware as to their responsibilities to all children and young people.
- Appointing a Children's Officer whose role shall include the monitoring of the child centred ethos of the club and compliance with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice (Irish Sports Council/SportsNI) and with any policies and guidelines as issued by the club, by their National Governing Bodies, or by statutory authorities and agencies.
- Appointing a Designated Person whose role shall include liaising with Statutory Authorities and their Governing Body in relation to the reporting of allegations and/or suspicions of child abuse.
- Ensuring that all players are covered by their relevant Injury Scheme and that all premises etc in use by your club and players are equally covered for property/liability insurance as deemed necessary.
- Seeking the agreement of parents/guardians when their sons/daughters under 18yrs of age are invited into adult squads. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to under age teams and squads.





Produced by the
 GAA in association with Cumann Camógaíochta na nGeal,
 Cumann Peil Geal na mBan, Comhairle Lúathróid Láimhe na hÉireann
 and Comhairle Cluiche Corr na hÉireann
 April 2009

PLEASE CUT OUT THIS PANEL AND RETURN IT TO YOUR CHILDREN'S OFFICER OR OTHER NOMINATED OFFICIAL IN YOUR CLUB.

This Code of Behaviour addresses the minimum levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from our young players, coaches, officials, team mentors, managers, supporters, parents/guardians and clubs.

DECLARATION

I _____ (print name) acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Code of Behaviour for all persons working with Young People, which I have read and understood in full. I agree to be bound by the principles set out in the Code while acting in any capacity or performing any related duties with young people on behalf of my club.

Club: _____

Role: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____