



PLAYING RULES OF  
**LADIES**  
GAELIC FOOTBALL

2009



## **INTRODUCTION**

This booklet contains a brief version of the playing rules of Ladies Gaelic Football. The full version of the Playing Rules is contained in the Official Guide.

Its aim is to try to ensure that all players and officials read and learn the rules. It is important that teachers and coaches ensure that all their players have a copy of this booklet. This will improve their understanding of the game and help them to accept the decisions of the officials without dissent.

*This booklet emphasises the importance which the Association places on promoting a better understanding of our game.*

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## FIELD OF PLAY

Ladies Gaelic Football is played on a full size GAA pitch from Under 14 upwards. The pitch may be reduced in size for Under 13 and younger grades.

The dimensions of the field of play scoring space and the duration of the game may be reduced by the organising committee for competitions less than 15 a side.

## PLAYER

A player who may be pregnant, suffering from concussion etc. should not play Ladies Gaelic Football. However should she play, she shall do so entirely at her own risk, and the Ladies Gaelic Football Association cannot be held responsible for any consequences that may arise.

## PLAYERS ATTIRE

1. The attire for playing Ladies Gaelic Football is jersey, shorts, socks and boots. Players cannot be allowed to wear jewellery, ear rings, hair slides or other items that may cause injury whilst playing Ladies Gaelic Football
2. Bicycle shorts are prohibited except with doctor's certificate and must be the **same colour as the shorts**.

## DURATION OF GAMES

1. The duration of Competitive Games from and including U14 upwards is 30 mins, per half - 1 hour.
2. 7 a Side & Blitz Competitions are exempted - the duration of same shall be determined by the Organising Committee.

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3. The duration of games from U13 downwards may be reduced as determined by the Organising Committee.

## **TEAMS**

1. Teams shall consist of 15 players a side unless deemed otherwise by the organizing body.
2. In 15 a side competitions a team must have 11 players to start a game. They may finish with 11 or less.
3. Duplicate list of players giving full christian names and in the case of Inter County games the clubs to which the players belong must be given to referee before game.
4. Five substitutions are allowed in Provincial and National Competitions, including the Quarter Finals, Semi Finals and Finals of the National Leagues. However in all other National League fixtures Unlimited Substitutions shall apply.  
For games under the jurisdiction of the County Board, the number of subs can be increased.
5. A size 4 football is used in all competitions from U-11 upwards. A smaller size 3 may be used in younger age groups.

## **SUBS & EXTRA TIME**

1. In Provincial and National Championships apart from up to the Quarter Finals of the National League, 5 subs are allowed during the normal course of the game. An additional 5 subs are allowed where Extra Time, which consists of 10 mins each way is played. Where a Second Period of extra time is played an additional 5 subs can be used.
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2. For games that are played at club level within the county, the number of subs can be determined by the County Board. However they cannot be less than 5.
  3. A player sent off for a Red Card offence in Normal Time may be replaced by a Sub for Extra Time. A player sent off in the First Period of Extra Time may be replaced by a Sub for the Second Period of Extra Time.
  4. Where Extra Time is played in a game, a player sent to the "Sin Bin" for a **First** Yellow Card offence in Normal Time, can be replaced by a substitute for Extra Time until she has served her 5/10 minutes **Playing Time** in the "Sin Bin". However her team shall be deemed to have used a Normal Substitute.

Should the Sin Binned player resume playing after her "Sin Bin" time has expired and having been replaced by a substitute for Extra Time, her team shall be deemed to have used a Second Substitute

A player sent off for 2 Yellow Card offences in Normal Time can be replaced for Extra Time.

## **BLOOD RULE**

1. A player who is bleeding, has blood on her body or playing attire, as a result of an injury sustained during play, shall, on the instructions of the referee, immediately leave the field of play to receive medical attention.

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She shall not return to the field of play until the bleeding has stopped, all blood cleaned off and the blood stained attire cleaned or replaced.

2. The injured area should be covered where possible. The injured player may be replaced by a Blood Substitute who shall notify the referee in writing, that she is a Blood Substitute.
3. The Blood Substitute shall NOT count as a substitute allowed under the normal substitution rules, if or when the injured player returns to the field, as a **Direct Replacement** for the player who replaced her.
4. Where the injured player returns to the field of play as a replacement **for any other player**, apart from the Blood Substitute that directly replaced her, her team shall be deemed to **have used a** Normal Substitution.
5. Where a Blood Substitution is **sent off**, her team shall substitute another player if they wish to bring the original player back onto the field of play. This shall NOT count as a Normal Substitution.
6. Where a team has used their Full compliment of Normal Substitutions in either Normal or Extra Time and a player suffers a blood injury, she may be replaced with a Blood Substitute.

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7. When the player who had the Blood injury is ready to resume playing, she shall present herself to the referee during a **stoppage in play**. The referee should ensure that the bleeding has stopped, the attire is replaced or cleaned and that the Blood Substitute has left the field. Where the injured player resumes with a different numbered jersey, the referee should note the new number

## **PLAYING RULES**

1. A player may pick the ball off the ground with the toe or with one or both hands, providing she is in standing position.
2. A player while on the ground may play the ball away from her, but cannot bring it into her possession.
3. The ball when caught may be: kicked, struck with the fist or open hand; hopped **once** with one or both hands or solo it toe to hand.
4. A ball that has **not** been caught may be bounced more than once in succession with one or both hands.
5. A player may change the ball from one hand to the other **once**, provided the original holding hand maintains contact with the ball until the change is completed.
6. A player may not kick the ball as an opponent is **about** to pick it up or take it into her possession.

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7. The ball cannot be held longer than it is necessary to kick, fist, hand pass, hop it away, or move **four** steps.  
A player may carry the ball for 4 steps and kick it off on the 5th step
  8. A player may not throw the ball.
  9. All **deliberate** bodily contact is forbidden but (a) Shadowing an opponent (b) Fielding (c) Blocking the delivery of a ball by an opponent shall be allowed.
  10. Shouldering is not allowed.
  11. Where a referee stops play to deal with an injured player(s), the team in possession of the ball at the time the referee stopped play, shall retain possession on the restart. Play is restarted with a kick ball to the team that had possession.  
  
However that team cannot score directly from the kick ball and all players must be 13m from the ball when play is resuming.  
  
Where none of the teams had possession of the ball when the referee stopped play, play is resumed with a throw in between one player from both teams.
  12. When a player is handpassing the ball, there must be a visible striking action with the passing hand.
  13. Showing the Ball or Turning Twice with the ball is **NOT** a foul providing it is done within the 4 step rule.
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14. A player may toss up the ball with one hand and play it off with the same hand.
  15. Underage Intercounty players can only play in their own age group and one grade above it. ( eg Under 14 player can play at U/14 and U/16, but not U/17 upwards. An Under 15 or 16 player cannot play at Junior, Intermediate or Senior level).
  16. Clubs, Counties or Provinces must supply to the organising Committee or Council, team lists of their starting fifteen players and their substitutes, where required for publication.

**A.N. Other** is not considered as a playing member and must not be included. Failure to do so will result in a fine at the discretion of the Committee or Council in charge of the fixture

## **THE TACKLE**

1. A player **holding the ball into her body cannot be legally dispossessed.** Any attempt to do so will result in a free for her and her team.
2. When making a tackle to dispossess a player of the ball, it must be timed when the player in possession is soloing, bouncing, kicking or passing the ball. The ball must be knocked from the opponents hand by flicking it with the **open hand.**

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## ADVANTAGE RULE

1. The Advantage Rule applies in Ladies Gaelic Football. However it is not a licence to let fouls go unpunished. Disciplinary action as warranted may be applied to the offender after playing the Advantage Rule
2. The Advantage Rule should be applied when the player in possession of the ball is **Free** and **Capable** of taking the Advantage ie. The Advantage has to be obvious.

## COMMENCEMENT OF PLAY

At the commencement of play the referee shall throw the ball in between two players from each side and all other players shall be behind the 45m line.

## BALL IN PLAY

1. The ball is in play once it has been thrown in or kicked after the referee has given the signal to start play.
2. The ball is in play until the **whole** ball has passed over the goal line, end line or side line, or the referee signals a stoppage in play.
3. If the ball strikes the referee, in general play, a throw in should be given. However if the team that had possession of the ball retained possession of it the referee should allow play to continue. If it strikes the referee from a free, the free shall be retaken.

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4. A referee must extend time in each half for delays or extend time for a free to be taken.
  5. When a clashed ball crosses the end line it shall be regarded as a wide.

## **BALL OUT OF PLAY**

1. The ball is out of play when **all of the ball** passes outside of the boundary lines of the field of play.
2. Should the ball strike any of the flags it shall be deemed to be out of play. If the ball strikes the **corner** or sideline flags it is a **line ball**.

## **SCORES**

1. A score results when the ball is kicked, flicked, fisted or palmed in flight by **any part of the body**, except when thrown or carried over the line by the Attacking Side.
  2. A goal **is not** allowed if the ball is fisted or palmed directly from the hands over the goal line.
  3. Any player who falls or is knocked to the ground whilst in possession of the ball may fist or palm the ball away **on the ground** and may score by doing so.
  4. Should a **defender** play the ball in **any manner** through her own scoring space it shall count as a score.
  5. A ball carried or thrown over the goal line by an **attacking** player is not a goal.
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6. When the ball hits the uprights or crossbar and rebounds back onto the field of play, it is still in play.
  7. A point is allowed, where an **Attacking Player** is inside the “small square” and the ball goes over the bar, providing that the Attacking Player did not interfere with the defence and that the ball was out of the reach of **All** players
  8. Where a ball goes over the uprights, it is not a point - all of the ball must be between the uprights.

## **SIN BIN**

A “Sin Bin” Rule shall apply in all grades of football from **Under 14 upwards**.

Where a player commits a First Yellow Card Offence, she shall have her name taken and sent off the Field of Play for **10 minutes Playing Time (Sin Bin)** in games of 1 Hour Duration or more. She may remain with her substitute colleagues.

In games of **less than 30 minutes** a half from **Under 14 upwards** she shall be sent to the Sin Bin for **5 mins Playing Time**. Where such a game goes into Extra Time that may exceed 1 hour duration, the Sin Bin time shall be for 5 mins for ease of Implementation purposes.

She may resume playing after the 5 or 10 minutes **Playing**

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**Time** has elapsed and **only with the consent of the referee or designated official.**

## **FOULS**

A critical factor in deciding the difference between the three categories of fouls ie Ordinary Fouls, Yellow Card Offences and Red Card Offences is the question of Intent.

### **Red Card Offences**

- I. The following fouls shall be penalised by a free being given to the opposing team and the offending player being shown a red card and ordered off the field.
  - (a) *Striking an opponent or colleague with hand, arm, elbow, head or knee.*
  - (b) *Kicking an opponent or colleague.*
  - (c) *Striking or interfering with a match official.*
  - (d) *Deliberate charging of an opponent or colleague.*
  - (e) *Deliberate High Tackle*
  - (f) *Spitting at an opponent or colleague*
  - (g) *Deliberate frontal charge on an opponent.*
  - (h) *Deliberate pulling of an opponent or colleagues hair*
  - (i) *Biting an opponent*
  - (j) *Stamping on an opponent or colleague.*
  - (k) *Using threatening or abusive language to a match official*
  - (l) *Using racist language or gestures towards an opponent, colleague, mentor, match official or spectator.*

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## **Yellow Card Offences - Sin Bin**

2. The following fouls shall be penalised by a free being given to the opposing team and the offending player's name taken and shown a Yellow Card and sent Off the Field of Play (Sin Bin) in grades from **and including Under 14 upwards**.

If she repeats any of these Cautionable Offences upon her resumption, she shall be shown a Second Yellow Card, followed by a Red Card and Sent Off the Field of Play for the duration of the game, which shall include Extra Time where played.

In any competition up to and including the **Under 13 Grade, the Sin Bin Rule shall not apply**.

In competitions up to and including **Under 13** the player shall be shown the Yellow Card and if she repeats another Cautionable Offence, she shall be shown a Second Yellow Card, followed by a Red Card and sent off the field of play for the duration of the game and any Extra Time that may be played.

- (a) *Deliberate Pulling Down, tripping by hand or foot or jumping at an opponent.*
- (b) *Threatening or using abusive language or gestures towards an opponent or colleague.*
- (c) *Blocking or Attempting to Block an opponent with the boot, as that player is about to kick the ball from her hands.*

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- (d) *A Sliding Tackle with the boot.*
  - (e) *Attempting to Strike or Kick an opponent.*
  - (f) *Dissenting with, or challenging the authority of a Match Official.*
  - (g) *Persistent fouling*
  - (h) *Kicking the ball with intent as an opposing player is about to pick it up*

**3.** The following fouls shall be penalised by a free being awarded to the opposing team. Repetition of these fouls shall constitute a Yellow Card offence with penalties as outlined at No 2 above.

- (a) *Pushing or holding an opponent.*
  - (b) *Bringing the hand or fist in contact with the body of an opponent for the purpose of dispossessing her of the ball.*
  - (c) *Third player tackle, including body checking an opponent*
  - (d) *Diving on the ball as another player is picking it up.*
  - (e) *Deliberately delaying the Kick Out.*
  - (f) *Kicking the ball away when a free is awarded against the team in possession of the ball.*
  - (g) *Not releasing the ball to the opposing team when a free is awarded against the player in possession.*
  - (h) *Deliberately not moving back to allow a quick free to be taken.*
  - (i) *The use of foul or improper language*
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- (j) *Interfering with a free taker by jumping up and down, waving or clapping hands, or any other physical or verbal interference aimed at distracting the free taker.*

*Should this occur when an Attacking Team is awarded a 13m free in front of their opponents goal, a penalty shall be awarded. A player may hold her hands upright.*

- (k) *Player in Possession of the ball leading with her elbow.*
- (l) *Pushing off a player in the chest.*
- (m) *Chopping down on the arms of an opponent.*
- (n) *Provoking or intimidating players by verbal or physical actions.*
- (o) *Straddling an opponent.*

#### **4. Technical Fouls**

- (a) *Overcarrying the ball*
- (b) *Throwing the ball*
- (c) *Lying on the ball.*
- (d) *Picking the ball off the ground whilst not in a Standing Position.*
- (e) *Bringing the ball into her possession whilst on the ground.*
- (f) *Changing the ball from hand to hand more than once in succession.*
- (g) *Hopping the ball more than once in succession after Catching it.*
- (h) *Handpassing the ball without a Visible Striking Action.*
- (i) *Fisting or Handpassing the ball up and catching it before it touches the ground, or before being touched by another player*

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## FREE KICKS

1. The penalty for mostly all breaches of the rules is a Free kick. Exceptions - throw in given for retaliation, foul at the same time, quick free deliberately played against an opponent and continuous breach of rule for frees awarded.
2. Once the referee has blown for a free, the ball may be kicked, from the hand, or off the ground, from where indicated by the referee, If a free has been taken from the incorrect position, the free should be retaken from where indicated by the referee. Continued breach of this rule shall result in the free being disallowed and the ball thrown in between a player from each side and all other players shall be 13m from the Throw in.
3. 45m Kicks may be taken from the hand or off the ground up to and including the **Under 14 Grade**. They must be taken off the ground in Under 15 Grade upwards.
4. A player has the option of taking all free kicks from the hand or off the ground.
5. Penalty Kicks must be taken off the ground In all grades of competitions.
6. The ball shall be stationary, before a free kick, sideline kick and 45m kick is taken from the ground, failure to do so shall result in the Kick being retaken. However persistent breach

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of the Rule shall result in the Kick being disallowed and play resumed with a Throw in ball.

7. When a foul occurs, the referee may allow play to continue if he/she considers this to be an advantage to the offended team. Once the referee has allowed play to continue he/she may not subsequently award a free for that foul.
8. For the sake of **continuity of play**, all free kicks, except penalty kicks and free kicks on the 13m line, may be taken immediately at the spot indicated by the referee.
9. All opposing players must be 13m from the ball when a free kick is being taken.
10. Should a player taking a quick free deliberately play it against an opponent for the purpose of gaining an advantage, she shall lose her free and the ball shall be thrown up between a player from each side.
11. Should an opposing player stand nearer than 13m, when a freekick, side line kick, or 45m kick is being taken or illegally charge a free, the opposing team shall be awarded a free kick from where she stood or illegally charged.
12. When a free kick has been given and the taker passes to a colleague who is less than 13m from the ball, the opposing team shall be awarded a free kick from where the recipient stood.

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- 13.** A free taker may not play the ball again until another player has touched it except where it rebounds off the crossbar or uprights. Should she do so, the referee shall award a free to the opposing team from where the foul occurred. Should the foul occur inside the 13m line the referee shall award the free on the 13m line opposite where the foul occurred.
- 14.** If a foul is committed on a player after she has played the ball;
- (a) *A free shall be awarded from where the ball lands.*
  - (b) *Should she have scored the score shall be allowed.*
  - (c) *Should the ball cross the end line or land inside the 13m line, a free shall be awarded on the 13m line opposite where the ball landed or crossed the end line.*
  - (d) *Should the ball cross the side line, the free shall be awarded from the point where the ball crosses the line*
  - (e) *If the ball crossed the side line between the 13m line and the end line, the free shall be taken from the 13m line.*
- 15.** Should a player from each side foul at the same time, the referee shall throw the ball over the heads of one player from each side. All other players shall be 13m away.
- 16.** Once the referee has awarded a free, and prior to it being taken, if a player on the team awarded the free fouls in retaliation, the free shall be disallowed, and play restarted by the referee, by throwing the ball over the heads of one player from each team where original foul occurred.
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- 17.** Should a player show dissent with the referee's decision to award a free to the opposing team, the free kick shall be awarded from a point 13m more advantageous up to the 13m line. Should the original free be near the sideline, on or inside the 13m line, the referee shall place the ball on the 13m line, 13m nearer to the centre of the goal.

## **PENALTIES**

- 1.** A penalty should be awarded when:
  - (a) *Any foul is committed by the defence within the small parallelogram.*
  - (b) *A personal foul is committed by the defence on an attacking player within the large parallelogram.*
  - (c) *Where an Attacking player in the large parallelogram has her **hands on the ball** and the opponent kicks the ball, the referee shall award a penalty even though the boot may not have come in contact with the players hand.*
- 2.** Where a defending player charges illegally a 13m free kick directly in front of the goal, a penalty shall be awarded.
- 3.** Penalties shall be taken from the ground at the centre point of the 13m line. All other players except the goalkeeper shall be outside the 20m line.
- 4.** The goalkeeper may move along her goal line but cannot advance from the goal line until the ball has been kicked.

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5. If the goalkeeper moves forward before the ball is kicked and the ball goes wide, she saves it or deflects the ball over the bar, the penalty should be retaken.
  6. It is only the player wearing the distinctive jersey enjoys the rights and privileges of a goalkeeper.

### **PARALLELOGRAM**

1. Should an Attacking Player be within the small parallelogram before the ball enters it during play, the Defending Team shall be awarded a free out from within the small rectangle.
2. Should an Attacking Player legally enter the small parallelogram after the ball and the ball is cleared from the area but is returned before the Attacking Player has had time to leave the area, she shall be deemed not to have committed an offence provided she does not play the ball or interfere with the defence.

### **KICK OUT**

1. For the Kick Out from goal after a wide, in competitions from Under 15 upwards, the ball may be kicked from the hands or off the ground, from within the Small Rectangle.
2. All players except the kicker and the goalkeeper shall be outside the 20m line when the kick out is being taken
3. The ball must travel at least 13m and cross the 20m Line, before being played by another player.

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4. In competitions up to and including Under 14, the Kick Out after a wide, may be taken from the hands or off the ground **from the 13m line** and must cross the 20m line before being played by another player. All players must be 13m from the ball when the kick out is being taken.
  5. Where another player offends, a free shall be awarded to the opposing team on the 20m Line opposite, to where the foul occurred.
  6. After a score, the kick out should be taken from the 20m line.
  7. The player taking the kick out, may play the ball more than once before any other player plays it, providing, she does not take it into her hands.

## **REFEREE**

1. Referee shall tog out or wear a tracksuit.
  2. A referee's requirements are: Whistle, watch, coin, pencil, pen and paper, red and yellow cards, pencil sharpener.
  3. A referee must:
    - (a) Arrive at the pitch on time
    - (b) Have a thorough knowledge of the rules of Ladies Gaelic Football
    - (c) Be physically and mentally fit.
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- (d) Be fair and courageous
  - (e) Communicate decisions clearly
  - (f) Have regular observation with umpires and linespersons
  - (g) Use common sense
- 4.** The duties and the powers of a referee in addition to those outlined in the playing rules shall be;
- (a) To **protect** players who want to play the game in accordance with the rules and to **penalise** those who infringe them.
  - (b) Sign and give a copy of team lists to the opposing team before the commencement of the game.  
Report any failure regarding receipt of lists to the committee in charge.
  - (c) See that players are properly attired and report on the same.
  - (d) Obtain, if requested by the captain or official, the signature, full address and club of any player whose name appears on the official list and that of any substitute taking part.
  - (e) Allow or disallow scores.
  - (f) Consult with umpires and linesperson when occasion demands and replace any of them should they withdraw before the end of the game.
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- (g) Deal with intrusions of unauthorised persons on the playing pitch.
  - (h) Take the names of any players or officials interfering during the course of the game.
  - (i) The referee shall decide whether the pitch is suitable for play, to terminate a game because of darkness or for any other reason.
  - (j) The referee cannot make an award of a game, but may give the final score if requested.
- 5.** When a player, players or team refuse to continue with a game the referee should give the captain of the team approximately three minutes to decide their final intentions.
  - 6.** If the team still refuses to play, any player willing to continue should give her name to the referee.
  - 7.** Report the names of any players who get injured and the nature of the injury.
  - 8.** The referee shall take serious regard of personal fouls and in the case of rough or dangerous play shall caution or send off the player depending on the seriousness of the offence.
  - 9.** The referee shall have the power to overrule a linesperson or umpire.
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10. In the event of a team failing to participate in a game the referee shall count to ensure that the team present has 11 players and obtain a Team list
  11. After the game the referee should send on a detailed report to the Committee in charge on all aspects of the game.

## **UMPIRES & LINESPERSONS**

1. The umpire and linesperson should work with the referee as a team and bring to the attention of the referee any incidents that the referee may not have seen. The umpires and linespersons have authority to take corrective action on any incidents that may occur and admonish any players who commit any off-the-ball offences.



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