

# CARRYDUFF GAC PLAYER PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES



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## Purpose

The intention of this policy is to provide clear, consistent and fair team structures that will foster the participation and development of all players, regardless of skill or ability, in line with the values of the Club. We strive to retain players into adult competition whilst helping them to achieve their full playing potential.



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Coaching principles that underpin our player participation guidelines:

- Our Club values of Respect, Honesty, Effort & Inclusion.
- We coach people not players.
- Head coaches are coaches of squads, not individual teams.
- We seek to maximise opportunities for players to play in competitive games.
- Challenge and encourage each player, in an age-appropriate manner, so they can achieve their full potential on and off the field.



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Juvenile teams up to and including U12  
(GAA go-games guidelines)

## Training:

- All players in the squad should train as one squad. Players of similar ability may be paired in drills and/or game-based match scenarios if deemed to aid development.
- To maximise ball time per player we strive to minimise the numbers per side in training and challenge games, coach numbers permitting.

## Games:

- Selection of teams is based on providing an appropriate level of challenge for players, whilst allowing teams to be competitive within the league structure provided by County boards.
- Coaches should endeavour to give equal attention and development opportunities to all players. Playing time in matches is an important part of this.
- Players should be intentionally rotated through different playing positions, including goal keeper, and different teams within the squad to give them the best chance to develop.





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Juvenile teams up to and including U12. Playing up:

Playing up an age is only permitted when:

- The team above is short of numbers.
- There is agreement of the head coach of the age group below. Such agreement not to be withheld if it hinders the ability of the age group above to field a team.
- It is in the best interest of the selected player to optimise their development as a player. Players develop at different ages and not all will be ready for this challenge.
- In the spirit of providing equal development opportunities for players who are deemed ready to play up, it is good practice to rotate those players selected. A record of players selected to play up must be maintained on a match-by-match basis by the head coach of the younger age group and be available to share with the coaching development officer upon request.
- Only older players in the younger age group should be considered to play up.
- If a second, third or fourth team of the older age group is in place, players of the age will be selected in preference over players being played up.



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Teams from U14 to U18

Training:

- All players in the squad should train as one squad. Players of similar ability may be paired in drills and/or game-based match scenarios if deemed to aid development.
- It remains good policy to include small-sided games within coaching sessions to maximise ball-time, decision-making opportunities and enhance long-term athletic development.
- All players within a squad should be afforded an equal opportunity to develop during training sessions.



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Teams from U14 to U18

## League:

- Graded A and B teams can be selected, and indeed must be, to fulfil GAA, camogie, hurling and LFCA rules whereby the top 13 in each squad are named.
- The ethos of the club is to maximise opportunities for players to play in competitive games. Therefore, to maximise player game-time consideration should be given to having multiple teams within a squad where possible, even when there may not be enough players to field two (or more) full squads. For example, if there were 27 players in a squad, and where coaching numbers allow, two teams could be entered. It is acknowledged that this may require support from younger teams to fulfil fixtures and field teams. The minimum number of players within a squad required to enter more than one team may vary according to code, age and County board regulations. The coach of the age group below should be involved in this conversation and decision as their support is vital to ensuring both teams field.





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## Teams from U14 to U18

### League:

- All players within an extended squad of two or more teams should: train together; be afforded the same training opportunities and warrant the same input & attention of the entire coaching team.
- Head coaches are coaches of the entire squad, not individual teams, and attendance at matches for teams within a squad should reflect this.
- Players should be selected on a basis of challenging them at the level they are at and where they will have the best chance to develop. This needs to be clearly communicated to the players and their parents.
- Whilst every team should aim to be competitive in every game, league matches are deemed 'player-developmental' and all players should be given at least a half a match of game time in every fixture. The same players should not routinely start as substitutes. Players should be intentionally rotated through different playing positions to give them the best chance to develop.





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## Teams from U14 to U18

### Championship:

- Championship is deemed 'team developmental' and the team deemed most likely to be competitive by the coaching team should be selected, whilst adhering to GAA, LGFA and Camogie Association rules. To reflect the values of the club, selection should reflect honesty of effort and commitment in training and matches and not be based solely on ability.
- Graded A and B teams can be selected, and indeed must be, to fulfil GAA, camogie, hurling and LGFA rules whereby the top 15 in each squad are named. Any player that plays in one grade cannot play in a lower grade. For example, players that play in a Division 1 Championship match cannot then play for another team in a lower tier.



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## Teams from U14 to U18

### Championship:

- If a team in a lower tier is beaten in the championship, whilst a team in a higher tier remains the competition, then players should continue to train with the whole squad.
- Playing time cannot be guaranteed in Championship matches and this should be communicated to players and parents in advance of the championship. Coaches should still endeavour where at all possible to use as many players as the championship rules allow.
- Players playing up in a competitive situation will normally require some level of participation in training with the higher age group squad. Again, this must be with agreement of the head coach of their own age group team.



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Teams from U14 to U18. Playing up an age is only permitted when:

- The team above is short of numbers.
- There is agreement of the head coach of the age group below.
- It is in the best interest of the selected player to maximise their development as a player.
- Players playing up must be rotated. A record of players selected to play up must be maintained on a match-by-match basis by the head coach of the younger age group and shared with the coaching development officer.
- Older players in the younger age group should be given first consideration for playing up.
- If a second, third or fourth team of the older age group is in place, players of the age will be selected in preference over players being played up.
- Players who do not regularly train and play for their own age group will not be considered for playing up.
- Players should prioritise playing fixtures at their own age bracket.



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## Player Load

Coaches should be aware that players within squads may play for multiple teams, including different codes and County teams, as well as Club. It is the responsibility of Coaches to make being a dual player as easy as possible. Coaches should be aware of the challenges that these players face and recognise that these players may have a higher load than others. When there are two separate management teams in different codes or different age groups there should be close communication between coaches and parents to ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of the player.





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## Feile na nGaeil/Feile Peil na n n-Og:

Although a festival of football/hurling/camogie, with inclusion and participation as key values, this is a competitive tournament with the winners of the County Féile representing the Club and County on an All-Ireland or Regional stage. Selection for County, Regional and All-Ireland Féile tournaments should be line with rules laid out by organising committees and the Féile Charter. The following guidance should apply to selection of the squad:

- Selection should not be solely based on ability, but also strongly reflect attendance at training and the player's commitment, attitude and effort at training.
- Players within the age group should be given first priority in squad selection ahead of players in younger age cohorts.
- The ethos of the Club is to maximise opportunities for players to play in competitive games. Therefore, to maximise player game-time, consideration should be given to having multiple teams within a squad where possible. Given this is a competitive tournament, graded A and B squads may be selected.
- Communication with parents to explain selection criteria should be as early as possible.

