



Coaching Guidelines

U8

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1 Prerequisites

It is necessary that all members of the coaching group have familiarised themselves with the Pasaiste Og Player Pathway [here](#).

2 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide coaches with the necessary tools, resources, contacts and direction for the U8 age group in Hurling and Football. It will also make coaches aware of the responsibilities required for this age group. This document is based on the Player Development pathway which provides the overall direction for Pasaiste Og for all age groups.

This guidelines document will include direction on the following:

- Management Structure
- Age Specific Objectives
- Communication Protocols
- Required Coaching qualifications, courses etc.
- Where to source equipment
- Contact Numbers
- Recruitment considerations
- How to manage Parents
- Session Planner Template /Examples
- Essential Skills
- Fundamental Movements
- Links to Resources containing
 - Fun Activities
 - Conditioned Games
 - Drills



Note: It should be noted that these are guidelines and recommendations for coaches, managers, mentors and parents and may be used with a degree of flexibility.

This guideline document along with a book called ‘Give us a game’ will form a coaching pack that will be provided to coaches at this age group.

3 Vision

“To provide players to the senior section of Passage West developed to their full potential“

4 Mission

“To provide excellent coaching that provides all kids the opportunity to be the best player they can be. To further cement the friendships and camaraderie already developing within the team. To be fair and give equal chances to all kids regardless of ability. To ensure that as many kids as possible are retained within the club. To further impart to each kid a sense of honour and integrity and most importantly a strong measure of self-worth.”

5 Goals

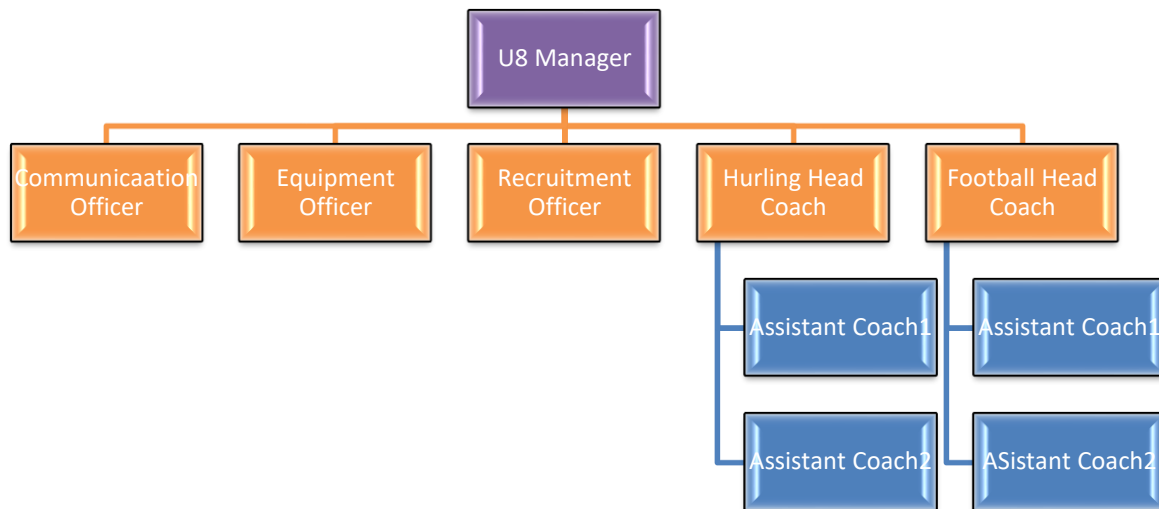
Under 8 Core Management and Coaching Objectives

- Recruit as many kids as possible within the club
- Encourage all kids to play both hurling and football
- Have cohesive and cooperative coaching teams
- Provide excellent and evolving modern coaching.
- Impart a sense of honour and discipline.
- Develop kids self-worth and self confidence
- Help all kids develop and maximise their own personal potential.
- Above all else to have **FUN**

6 Management

6.1 Structure

There should be a designated manager responsible for assembling and coordinating the coaching team. The manager should recruit as many coaches as possible with the simple objective of enabling more people to do less. Depending on coach numbers the following is the recommended management structure for the U8 group. Where coaching numbers are limited the same person may perform multiple roles.



Role	Responsibilities
Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach recruitment • Player Recruitment • Coach Training • Ensuring Coach and Team compliance with club policy and Player Pathway directives • Parental Management • Player Attendance and player retention • Matches
Head Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with Player Pathway Directives • Season objectives • Session planning (FUN) • Session Execution & Coordination (FUN)

Assistant Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Session Training• Skills training• Adherence to session plan
Communications Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parental Communication (Matches/ Training)
Equipment Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical Bag and medical stock• Training Equipment (Poles, Cones etc)• Footballs/Hurleys Stock & Sales

6.2 Competing Sports

Passage West provides rich opportunity in terms of sporting choice for our children. However this presents a challenge for the club in that we are very sensitive to player numbers. A guiding principle is that Passage West GAA manager work with the managers of other sports in the community to avoid and resolve training and match conflicts. Managers need to work to avoid situations where players and parents are forced to make a choice as to what training session to go to When this happens both sports suffer. Resolve by choosing training days that conflict as little as possible with other sports. If match days collide, try moving times or changing the day. At this age playing two matches in a day while not desirable is possible. Include parents and managers from other codes when these issues occur. Affected players could have reduced playing time.

6.3 Recruitment

Recruitment at this age group is a critical task. The manager is responsible for ensuring that this activity is performed. Leaflet drops to the schools Star of the sea, Monkstown and Educate Together along with leaflet drops to the estates is essential. The Juvenile committee will provide a lot of support here.

6.4 Parental Management

At this age its common that parents are new to the club and may not know too many people. Parents bonding with the club and enjoying their interactions with coaches and other parents is an essential part of player retention. For home blitzes the club can be opened for teas/coffees to help parents develop these relationships.

Take every opportunity to tell parents how well their child is improving regardless of the facts. Remember players develop at different speeds. A seemingly weak player at this age could be your best at U12 or U14.

6.5 Communication

Communication to kids regarding matches and training must be conducted through parents only. It is recommended that two WhatsApp groups are created which will cover both hurling and football.

- Coaches Group
Used for communications within the coaching group. Availability of coaches, session planning etc.
- Parent Group
Used for training and match notifications.

7 Coach Training

All coaches involved with children under the age of 18 need to be Garda vetted and will need to also complete a child safeguarding course.

7.1 Garda Vetting Process

All coaches involved with children under the age of 18 need to be Garda vetted. The passage west child protection officer is on hand to guide coaches through the following process.

Unfortunately at present if a coach has been vetted for another sport this does not count. This can be done online using the following procedure:

1. Initial Application at club level.

You must in the first instance complete the [GAA E-Vetting ID Form](#). This form compels you to provide proof of your identity to the Club Children's Officer, who must verify that they have received the ID verification as required. The ID verification may be retained by the Club Children's Officer for the duration of the e-vetting process or it may be attached by you at Step 2 to the On Line Vetting application Form. The primary purpose of this form is for you to provide your name, address, club, role for which you applied, and to present your ID (e.g. copy of your passport plus a utility bill showing your current address) plus a valid email address for future reference. The full list of documents which are accepted for verification can be found here [Click here for the GAA E-Vetting ID Form](#)

2. Completing the Vetting Application form

Following completion of the initial process you will then be directed to www.gaa.ie where the GAA on-line E-Vetting Application Form is available to download. Once you complete the GAA on-line E-Vetting Application Form the information provided is forwarded to the NVB by the GAA and you will receive an on-line NVB Vetting Form to complete. The details entered will be emailed back to you, for your own records. Your Club Secretary will also receive an email informing him/her that you have applied as a member of the club, to be issued with the NVB Vetting Application Form. [Click here for GAA on-line E-Vetting application form](#)

3. NVB Vetting Application form

The NVB will issue you with the NVB Vetting Application form. This will be issued to the email address you provided in Step 2. Completing this form is a confidential matter between you and the NVB. All sections of the form including current and previous addresses, email address and contact telephone numbers, information on

convictions and prosecutions (if any), plus other information will be required when completing the form. Once all sections of the form have been answered this then completes your application process for E Vetting in the GAA and within a short period of time you shall be contacted by the GAA to informing you as to the outcome of the vetting application.

You and your Club Secretary will be notified when the vetting process has been completed.

7.2 Safeguarding

The safeguarding course is initially a classroom based course. The child protection officer will organise this. Refresher courses (every 3 years) can thereafter be done online through a GAA portal using the following link : <https://learning.gaa.ie/safeguardingrefresher>

7.3 Coaching Skills Training

A foundation course is available for new coaches at this level. It covers both codes on how to teach the basics skills of the game. Contact the Juvenile secretary to get details of when the course is next available.

7.4 First Aid Training

A first aid training course will be organised by the Juvenile committee and provided to all coach. This will enable coaches to be able to treat basic injuries and how to use the Defibrillator which will be located on the wall outside the clubhouse.

8 Discipline

Simple discipline rules need to be introduced from the very beginning and apply to any GAA activity. These rules include:

- no talking under any circumstances to any referees
- no use of bad language
- no spitting
- no sledging or slagging of other players
- only encouragement to your own teammates allowed
- respect for all coaches.

Breach of rules by players means taking some time out at training or coming off for few minutes in a match. As they get older running helps.

Players will follow a coaches/parents lead so we need to make sure all coaches do not criticize referees. The focus is only on participation and keeping as many players as possible. We must have the silent side-lines from parents. Before each match, team manager to remind parents about silent side-lines. Let the kids play.

9 Session Training

9.1 Principles

- Equal focus on the development of both weak and strong sides in both hurling and football during all sessions.
- Guide children . Don't tell them
- Set FUN activities.
- All sessions to include 10 minutes of warm up, core exercise and fundamental movement skills & stretching.
- No Queues. Every player should have a ball or at the very least ball between two.
- Certain parts of sessions to include breakup of group into different abilities. To focus on level of ability specific skills. I.e., Advanced skills for better players, fundamental skills for weaker kids.
- All sessions to include a match at the end. Multiple games. Small groups. Max 6 V 6. Again, groups may be split to ensure all kids have maximum chance and touches on ball.
- Commit to assess skills at start and end of season.
- Commit to minimum 20 sessions in both hurling and football annually.

9.2 Session Management

Players at this age have a very short attention span. To optimise training sessions it is recommended that at this age level the group be split into pods with a max ratio of 1 coach to 5 players. Each pod is managed by a different coach . A different skill/activity/game taught at each pod for a specific time. Players rotate through the pods during the session with all players having completed all skills by the end of the session.

9.3 Session Planning

Section 11.1 identifies the skills that should be developed at this age group . The Head Coach will need to design session plans that develop these skills. It is important that session difficulty is aimed at just above the average ability of the team. The head coach can draw

from the following resources when designing session plans. The following links provide access to a Session Planning template, Skill Cards, Activities etc.

Link	Description
Munster GAA	Session Planning Template, Skills, Activities, Skill cards. Etc.
Learning GAA	Age specific GAA planner facility
Coaching Resource	Covers, how to create a positive environment, how to develop the skills of the game, Communication, Physical fitness , first aid.
Hurling Resource	Age Specific skill for Hurling
Football Resource	Age Specific Skills for Football

9.4 Development Windows

The player pathway identifies development windows at specific age groups. Research has shown that development windows present at particular stages in human development where the development of a specific capacity has an optimal effect. For the U8 age group there are two development windows. Suppleness and Speed. Therefore it is essential that stretching and speed training is incorporated into every session plan.

10 Matches

Matches at the age are 7 a side. Rebel og will provide a full schedule of games throughout the year at this age level. Usually hurling and football rotating every second week throughout the summer. The Manager can also organise challenge games with other clubs. Games create excitement, enthusiasm and a bond to the club for both players and parents. When organising matches the following is recommended:

- All players play equal time as much as possible
- Winning is NOT the priority
- Participation , player development and FUN trump winning
- Coaches from opposing teams welcomed and greeted before the game
- All player line up shake hands (non-covid) or elbow bump (Covid) at the end of the game

- Young Whistlers encouraged to referee home games.
- Goalie position rotated

Match Day Tips

- While coaches may not keep track of the score , kids often do. While winning is not the priority, try to avoid heavy defeats
- A player with a good puck/kick out needs to play in goal. (Essential to avoid heavy defeats)
- Stronger players should be aligned up the middle of the pitch with weaker players filling the gaps. (This will enable a more structured game)
- Coach's communication should always be encouraging. NEVER GIVE OUT.

10.1 Challenge Games

All challenge matches at these age groups should be both hurling and football. This gives the best chance of keeping all kids playing hurling. Contacts for other clubs can generally be found on club websites. It is also recommended that these challenge matches should include the different groups at the same time as much as possible (u5/6 and u7 and u8). It creates excitement if multiple ages are playing at the same time in hurling and football. It is also as easy, to bring 2 or 3 age groups from a club as one and it helps develop coach familiarity across age groups.

11 Equipment

The Juvenile committee will ensure that coaches at each age group have the equipment they need. You can find a list of contact numbers of committee members on the Passage GAA website [here](#).

Other useful contacts below.

Item	Contact	Email
Sliotars	Dave Maxwell	Dave_Maxwell@trendmicro.com
Medical Bags	Billy Cotter	billy@pharmacare.ie
Young Whistlers	Damien Taff	damientaaffe@gmail.com

U8 DEVELOPMENT PILLARS

Player Characteristics

- Only Goes flat out
- Needs Approval from Coach or Parents
- Likes to show off individual skills
- Small group session vital for skill improvement
- Imagine themselves as intercounty players to improve skills

Challenges for Coach

- Set FUN Activities, involving adults
- Variation. Coach open to trial and error
- Well organised planned sessions
- Guide Children. Don't tell them
- Be a role model
- Convey Enthusiasm
- Awareness of LTAD Speed and Suppleness window

Environment

- FUN Number 1 Priority
- Coach to Player Ratio 1:5
- Every Child has their own ball
- Be sensitive to every players development needs
- Actual Game results are secondary

Hurling Core Skills

- Striking (Ground, Air Strike both sides from Midway U8 onwards)
- Frontal Ground Block. Intro to Shoulder Clash.
- Handling (Grip, Ready, Lock, Swing, Catch, Mid, Low, High)
- Roll Pitch, Jab Pick

Football Core Skills

- Kicking - Punt Kick on run (Both Feet)
- Handling - Hand Pass off both sides , Catch Body, Low, High
- Movement – Use four steps, One handed bounce, Solo both sides, both legs
- Tackle - Near hand tackle

Game

- Small sided games 3x3, 4x4, 6x6 MAX
- Player fouled takes free
- Players sample all positions
- Sliotar/Football Per child at all sessions
- Every player has their own ball at home
- Play against a wall, with a friend, with group of friends

Physical Fitness

- **Running (Speed developed through fun games, races – 4 sprint > 40Mtrs) (LTAD Speed Window)**
- Jumping Landing (1 leg, both legs/variety of directions)
- Agility (chasing games, evasion games, sidestep evasion, Balance)
- Coordination (Hand Eye - Hurley and Bean Bag, Eye Foot - Dribble)
- **Stretching start/end every session - (LTAD Suppleness Window)**

Psychological Focus

- Ask player to imagine themselves as role models to improve skills
- Use trigger words to develop concentration

Team Play

- Zones (Use for positional sense understanding)
- Small Sided games only (More touch time for all)
- Basic Communication (Call for the Ball)

Tactical - Decision Making

- Devise games that require players to look up
- Encourage to move into space

