



**THE
CAMOGIE
ASSOCIATION**
An Cumann Camógaíochta

Coaching

www.camogie.ie

“Let them Play”

Remembering back to my primary school days, I cannot remember much of the specific Irish, English or Maths classes. I do remember after school hurling in the yard, lunch time hurling in the field, indoor hurling with a holey sliotar in the hall and then games we played at yard time that were of our own creation, playing with a half crushed drinks can or whatever was available to spark our imagination. That activity was all supervised by an adult but they allowed activity to flourish without interfering and putting adult constraints on them.

Kids play out on the road with not an adult in sight and they make up their own games, create rules, break rules and change the rules. They laugh, they smile and they have fun playing the likes of heads & volleys, kerbs, kick the can, World Cup. Whatever the game, they play it, enjoy it, get better and learn. The point is that kids want to play and do activities which bring them joy by allowing them to explore their imagination and become something more than they might appear.

Now this isn't the case in every camogie session throughout the country but I've often watched “coaches” deliver sessions that could conceivably be completed by robots, following instructions as laid out by the “coach”. Go to point A and do activity X, then move to point B and do activity Y. Why are some coaches trying to quench the imagination of children by making them follow dull instructions to conduct pointless drills, drills to improve skills in a manner that may never be transferable to a game situation.

Kids want to play, so why not let them play. Run your session in a manner that allows children to have fun and play. Allow them to carry out the skills of the game, the many wonderful skills of our great game. Girls are coming to camogie training for a number of reasons, two of the key ones are to enjoy the game of camogie and to play with their friends. So let them do that. Do activities with the girls that allow them to have fun.



Many of you are saying that if they just play games they will not improve as players and their skills will not develop. But here is where your role as a coach is important. The real duties of a coach is to enable the girls to improve as players so they can don the club colours and pit themselves against their counterparts from other parts of the county or country. The coach needs to create an environment where the girls are challenged with a chaotic yet comfortable environment which allows them to develop their various skills; camogie specific skills and game sense skills. How do you do this? Can you just “let them play”, set out games which allow them to use their capabilities to solve problems and scenarios. When they are struggling to deal with a scenario you need to point them in the right direction but allow them to steer themselves. Do not overburden them with adult language and restrictions.

Can you be a coach who understands when to give exact directions to the destination and when you can allow the girl to get lost and try a number of different routes to get to the destination? Can you assist them by identifying the problems in skill execution or making game decisions, then know how to impart this knowledge. And if you need to say nothing, then say nothing because the girls will play on their own without you. Let them do it, just “let them play”.



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