



# LEVELLING THE FIELD

The Next Steps in Inter County  
Female Gaelic Games



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The WGPA are delighted to present our 'Levelling the Field' Report. It represents an up to date picture of the challenges and priorities for female intercounty players. This research was completed at the start of the year. Since then, the landscape for the 2020 inter-county championships, women in sport and the sports industry as a whole has changed utterly due to COVID-19. This impact will be felt beyond the current season. However, this is a timely opportunity to reflect and consider what the future could and should look like for female inter-county players. This report presents a platform to ensure the voices of our members are heard and can be considered by decision makers - a chance to ensure we build back better.

Since the launch of the WGPA 'Making Things Better' report in 2015, there has been unquestionable growth in the popularity of female gaelic games. Investment, participation, attendances, sponsorship and media coverage have all increased, as has the profile and experience of female intercounty players. Players worked in collaboration with the Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA) and the Camogie Association to establish the Government Grant Scheme, supported and administered through Sport Ireland, which aims to support female intercounty teams reach their potential. At the same time, WGPA provision of professional and personal development opportunities to our members in the form of scholarships, counselling, coaching, team development and leadership training have steadily grown. Unwavering support from the Gaelic Players Association (GPA) has been critical to this. The GPA has been a fantastic ally for the WGPA, and we look forward to working ever closer with them in the future to be a leading voice on equality and cooperation in the gaelic games family.

At the same time, many of the challenges remain for female intercounty players, borne out through the data collected for this report. Most notably, players invest a significant amount of time and energy in order to represent their county but yet are consistently at a financial loss paying for fuel, medical expenses, gym access and playing equipment. It has become increasingly challenging for players to meet these costs. Players have expressed the impact it has on their lives and their careers.

However, our members continue to play because of their love of gaelic games. They are proud to represent their families, clubs, communities and counties. They relish the chance to challenge themselves against the best in the country. It is an honour to be seen as a role model and the chief exponents of our indigenous games. The friendships, memories and craic are all invaluable. Players can still love the game and be looked after better.

It is the responsibility of the WGPA to ask how we can continue to increase minimum standards and improve the playing environment for female intercounty players? Continued investment is needed to ensure that both our games and players can reach their potential. We need to keep analysing the reality of playing experiences. We need players and all stakeholders to take responsibility for ensuring our games are left in a better place for future generations. We need to be innovative, open-minded, collaborative and solution focused in our approach to overcoming the challenges.

The strength of a united family in gaelic games has been demonstrated this year more than ever. The ongoing alignment of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), LGFA and Camogie Association will be a key factor in advancing the experiences of female players. Issues such as accessing facilities, fixtures clashes and developing commercial opportunities would all be better tackled with an integrated approach.

Now is the time to push on and 'level the field' for female intercounty players. While challenges remain in the short term, this is the priority for the WGPA going forward. We look forward to working proactively with all involved, to ensure current and future female inter-county players have the best possible experiences in our games.

Ní neart go cur le chéile.  
Le Meas,

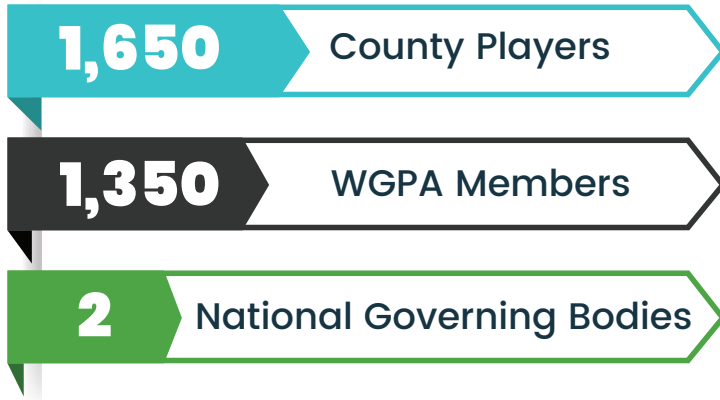
Maria Kinsella  
Chair WGPA

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# Executive Summary

## Female Gaelic Games .....



## Why do this research?

First player survey 'Making Things Better' carried out in 2014.



Timely to describe the current commitment of players and their current playing environments.



Findings will inform future priorities of the WGPA in relation to improving the playing experience of inter county ladies footballers and camogie players.



## How was data gathered?

**Online Survey:** completed by 543 of 1350 members

**Reps Day Workshop:** 94 players from 31 counties



**Desk Based Research:** case studies from six county players



## Results showed...



### FEMALE PLAYERS

participate in some form of county training on almost six days per week



TOTAL CONTACT TIME for county training is at least **3.7 HOURS** per day



#### Recommendation 1

Develop Best Practice for Supporting the High Performance Female County Player through all of their Playing Commitments

**52%**

of players are not satisfied with the current split of their time to club and county



Players have an average round trip of **80km TO TRAINING**



**€55** weekly fuel cost (per week) for player residing in county.



**7% OF PLAYERS** get travel expenses



#### Recommendation 2

Prioritise the Development of a Practical Player Expenses Model



**69%** of players pay gym fees



**60%** of players contribute financially to their recovery costs



**55%** of players pay for medical services



#### Recommendation 3

Continue to progress and evaluate progress in minimum standards for Female County Players



**65%** of players do not receive compensation for commercially linked activity

## Results showed...



### THE COMMITMENT OF FEMALE & MALE PLAYERS

is comparable, with players training on **5.6 v 6.1** days per week respectively



### MALE PLAYERS

receive over four times more government funding than female players per year, **€3million** compared to **€0.7 million** in 2019



#### Recommendation 4

Strive for Equitable Funding and Investment for Intercounty Female Players



## 94%

of players feel that a formal partnership between the **GPA** and **WGPA** will have a **positive impact**.



#### Recommendation 5

Finalise formal partnership with GPA in order to establish a single players voice



# WHAT IS THE PICTURE LIKE CURRENTLY FOR FEMALE GAELIC GAMES?

The Women's Gaelic Players Association (WGPA) previously conducted a survey of female gaelic games county players in 2014. The 'Making Things Better' report provided the first representation of its kind of an adult county player in ladies football and camogie and provided a sound rationale for the formation of the WGPA. The report confirmed the commitment of players, described their training and playing environment and presented a clear focus for the WGPA.

WGPA's provision of player support services ranging from student scholarships, to career support, leadership programmes, and counselling are each embedded in data presented in 'Making Things Better'. Over 400 players have already been individually supported through work with the GPA as well as our partners in business and education. However, the priority for players, and thus the WGPA, was supporting and establishing minimum training and playing standards at county adult level. WGPA members are governed by the LGFA and Camogie Association, separately to the male players who are affiliated to the GAA; three separate National Governing Bodies (NGB's) presents challenges around issues such as access to facilities, fixture clashes, commercial partnerships and other shared resources.

Government grants were developed in 2017 for ladies football and camogie was developed to raise standards and provide an enhanced playing and training environment for Inter County players and teams. The principles of the scheme include; (i) it is a team based grant, (ii) it provides ringfenced funding for Injury Prevention and Medical Cover, Maximising Performance and Access to Training Facilities,



and (iii) it is intended as additional rather than replacement funding for county teams. This investment by the Government through Sport Ireland displayed recognition and acknowledgement for the female county player in gaelic games and more importantly, signified a commitment 'to invest to improve' the playing experience at this level aligned with the principles of a high performance training environment. There have been two subsequent evaluations of the Government Grant Scheme, in 2018 and 2019, both indicating a positive impact of the Scheme and highlighting a case for further investment.

This report is a second formal iteration of engagement with female county players by the WGPA. Data was collected through an online survey, a workshop at the annual Reps Day, desk based research and individual player profiles; all led by a sub group of inter county players. The aim of this research is to describe the current playing commitment of players and their current playing environments. The findings of this research will be used to inform future priorities for the WGPA in relation to improving the playing experience of inter county ladies footballers and camogie players.

# WHAT WERE THE STEPS INVOLVED IN GENERATING THIS REPORT?

At the outset of this process, a sub group of players from both codes, across grades and representing a geographical spread gathered to discuss a way forward for the WGPA in terms of supporting players. The group were facilitated by former WGPA chair Aoife Lane and the profile of the group included:

## GAELIC FOOTBALL

**Sinead Aherne**      **Dublin**

**Sinead Burke**      **Galway**

**Melissa Duggan**      **Cork**

**Maria Kinsella**      **Carlow**

**Jennifer Rogers**      **Westmeath**

**Aisling Tarpey**      **Mayo**

## CAMOGIE

**Sara Louise Carr**      **Down**

**Fionnuala Carr**      **Down**

**Collette Dormer**      **Kilkenny**

**Niamh Kilkenny**      **Galway**

**Aoife Murray**      **Cork**

**Niamh Rockett**      **Waterford**

At the first meeting of the sub group, an up to date context for players was presented, using data from the 'Making Things Better' and Government Grant Scheme Evaluation reports, as well as available detail of the financial context for Gaelic Games. Subsequently, a discussion was facilitated about current priorities for players. There was a consensus around working to generate more financial support for players, individually and collectively. To this end, it was agreed that data needed to be collated to generate an up to date representation of the female inter county player. There were three separate data collection elements to this research.

### These included:

#### ONLINE SURVEY

Data was collected in January/February 2020

This survey was adapted in part from the ESRI Survey (Kelly et al., 2018) of Senior Male Intercounty Players, the 'Making Things Better' survey, and included questions developed by the working group.

#### REPS DAY WORKSHOP

This involved a workshop with 94 players from 31 counties across discussion areas such as making the case for player expenses and proposed working models for player expenses.

#### DESK BASED RESEARCH

Six players recorded the costs incurred in general day to day playing and training and also, for special circumstances, such as promotional activities. Three of these case studies are included within the report.



# WHO ENGAGED WITH THE ONLINE SURVEY?

- Over 800 (n=807) players responded to the online survey from a total of 1,350 members. This represented 60% of the membership.
- Over 500 (n=543) fully completed the questionnaire, leaving a final response rate of 40%.
- The average age of respondents was 23, ranging from 17 to 36.
- Over half (55%) of respondents are students, which reflects proportions in the overall membership (56%) and 37% of these reported that they do engage in some part time work.

**Table 1.1: Description of Survey Respondents**

AGE GROUP	%
17-21	44
22-25	29
26-30	18
31+	9

**Table 1.2: Description of Survey Respondents**

		%
<b>Code</b>	Ladies Football	57
	Camogie	40
	Dual	3
<b>Grade</b>	Senior	49
	Intermediate	38
	Junior	13
<b>Main Occupational Status</b>	Secondary School	12
	College Student (Undergrad/Postgrad)	43
	Employed	44
	Unemployed	1
<b>Student Part Time Working Status</b>	Yes	62
	No	38
<b>Living Status</b>	In your own county	68
	Outside your own county	8
	Outside your own county (college term only)	24

# WHAT IS THE CURRENT TRAINING AND PLAYING EXPERIENCE OF PLAYERS?

The majority of players (86%) now commence their preparation for their upcoming county season in October–December of the previous year with the remaining 14% starting in January. Junior Grade players and Camogie players were more likely to start training in January than their Senior/Intermediate and Ladies Football counterparts respectively.

Players represent an average of three teams with a noted gradient across age groups, represented in Table 2 below. Trends are comparable with data presented in the ESRI Report on male county players (Kelly et al., 2018). In addition, dual players on average represented six teams.

**Table 2: Male v Female Participation in Teams**

AGE	17/18–21 (%)		22–25 (%)		26–30 (%)		31+ (%)	
	NO. OF TEAMS	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
2	7	10.1	48	36	65.3	60	81.6	66
3	41.3	22.3	41.3	45	23.2	30	12.1	25
4	23.9	25.8	6.7	14	8.4	7	*	*
5	13.5	24.9	*	(<3)	*	*	*	*
6+	14.7	16.9	*	(<4)	*	*	*	*

The percentages in brackets () are based on smaller numbers of players and should be treated with caution.

\* Number of players used to calculate this percentage is too small for the results to be reliable.



Players engage in both group and individual county training sessions each week. Despite differences between grades and codes in relation to season starting times, there is no difference across grade or code in relation to the extent of training during the season. Across a typical mid-season training week, female players engaged in 5.6 total sessions per week for inter county team preparation. Males reported 5.4 on a match week compared to 6.8 on a non-match week (Kelly et al., 2018). This distinction was not made in the female survey. Females took part in 3.4 group and 2.2 individual sessions in a typical mid-season training week. Male players reported an average of 3.9–4.9 group sessions per week and 1.5–1.9 individually instigated sessions per week; lower and higher ranges conform to match and non-match weeks respectively (Kelly et al., 2018). Overall female players participate in 5.6 sessions per week compared to an average of 6.1 for males across match/non match weeks

**Average of 3.4 group and 2.2 individual sessions per week**

Kelly, E., Banks, J., McGuinness, S. and Watson, D (2018). *Playing Senior Inter-County Gaelic Games: Experience, Realities and Consequences*. Dublin: ESRI. Male data was collected in May/June 2016.

**Table 3: Average Weekly Time Commitments of Female Players**

	<b>GROUP SESSIONS PER WEEK AVERAGE (RANGE 1-6)</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS PER WEEK AVERAGE (RANGE 1-6)</b>
<b>All Players</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>Ladies Football</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>Camogie</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>Dual</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Senior</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>Junior</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.1</b>

In addition to profiling training sessions, players were also asked to report overall time commitments across a typical week. This included time dedicated to professional activities, such as work and study, sport commitments, and time spent relaxing, socialising and with family and friends, as well as average sleep time.

Most time was spent in sleep and professional activities followed by discretionary time and finally an allocation to county sport, which is just under four hours per day\*.

**Table 4: Daily Hour Allocation to Different Activities \***

	<b>Hours per day</b>
<b>Sleep Time</b>	<b>6.9</b>
<b>Total professional time (study, work, housework)</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<b>Total other time (relaxing, socialising, family, friends)</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Total sport time</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<b>Total Sport Travel Time</b>	<b>1.0</b>



**Table 5: Age Comparison of Daily Activities\***

AGE	SLEEP (HOURS/DAY)	PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENTS (HOURS/DAY)	COUNTY TRAINING (HOURS/DAY)	COUNTY TRAVEL (HOURS/DAY)	OTHER (HOURS PER DAY)
17-21	6.9	4.6	2.6	0.9	3.7
22-25	6.9	7.4	3.2	1.2	3.2
26-30	6.6	8.2	3.1	1.0	3.1
31+	6.7	9.2	3.2	1.0	3.7

An age comparison of daily activities is presented in Table 5 with little variation in sleep and county travel time across groups and a clear age related increase in time spent on professional commitments. In line with this, employed players work an average of 8.8 hours per day while students reported studying for 4.5-5 hours daily. Time for socialising, relaxing etc was up to 30 minutes lower in the 22-30 age groups. County training plus travel time was lowest in the youngest age group (3.5) but was consistent at just over four hours in those aged 22 or over.

Figure 1 provides an overview of a typical training day for female players presenting a proportional allocation for each activity.

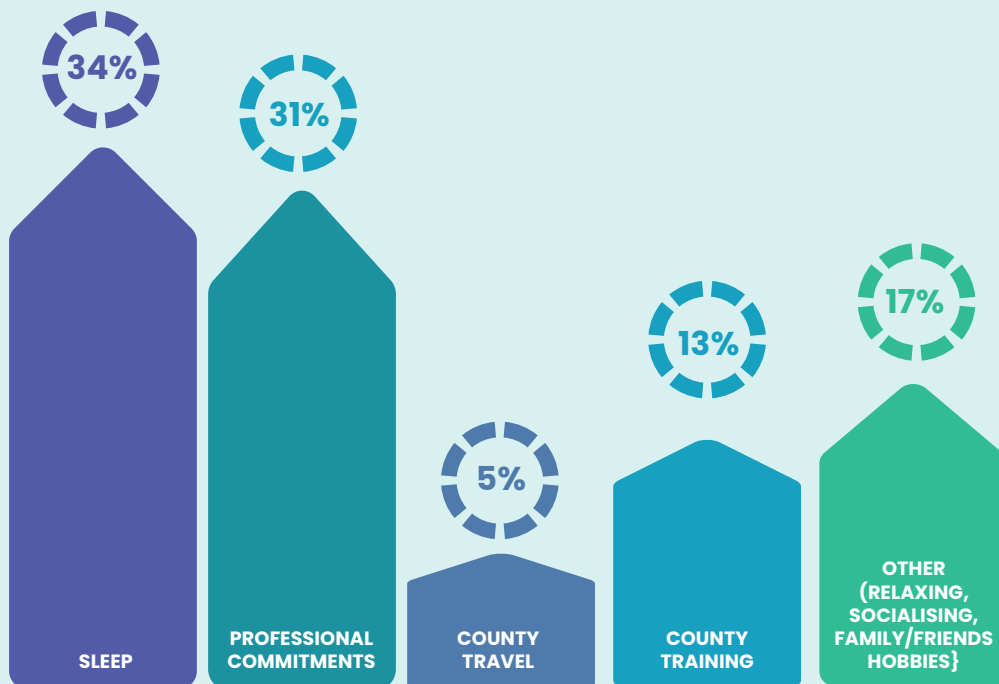


Figure 1: 24 Hour Time Allocation During a Typical Mid-Season Training Week

**74%** are so tired from the mental demands of the game that they have a negative impact on their concentration in work or studying



Table 6 presents a comparison of daily activity time for female and male (Kelly et al., 2018) county players. Overall among female players, 31% of time was spent in professional commitments, including work, study and general home duties compared to 33% for male players. Female players also spent more time in discretionary activities, and county travel time was lower. These differences are likely linked to the high proportion of students in the female playing group (females; 55% incl 12% secondary school, males; ~33% - GPA Student Report, 2019). Also, 8% of females are resident outside of their county full time, compared to 24% of male players (Kelly et al., 2018).

Finally, it was noted earlier that female players spend 3.7 hours per day on county commitments (travel and training). This compares to 6 hours in male players (Kelly et al., 2018), which includes a 5% (approx. 1 hour) time allocation for food and gear preparation. This was not addressed explicitly in the female analysis and may be reflected in 'other' time. Also, as noted above, travel time is markedly lower among female players. The specific allocation for training time for male players at 12% is comparable with the female equivalent of 13%.

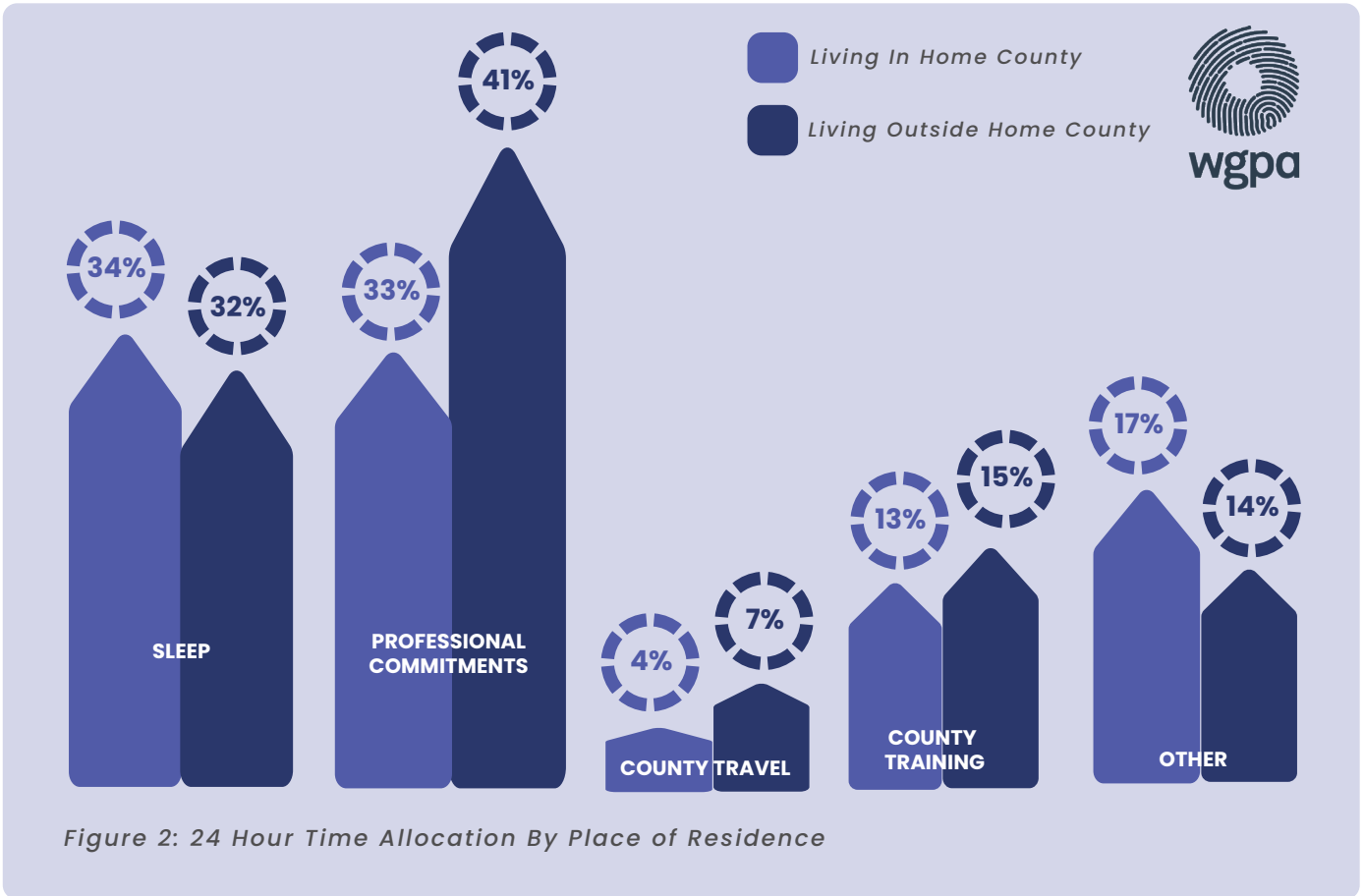
**Table 6: Male v Female County Player 24 Hour Time Allocations**

	FEMALE COUNTY PLAYERS (%)	MALE COUNTY PLAYERS (%)
Professional Commitments (work, study, house duties)	31	33
Sleep	34	31
Other (Relaxing, Hobbies, Socialising, Family/Friends Time)	17	10
County Travel	5	9
County Training	13	12

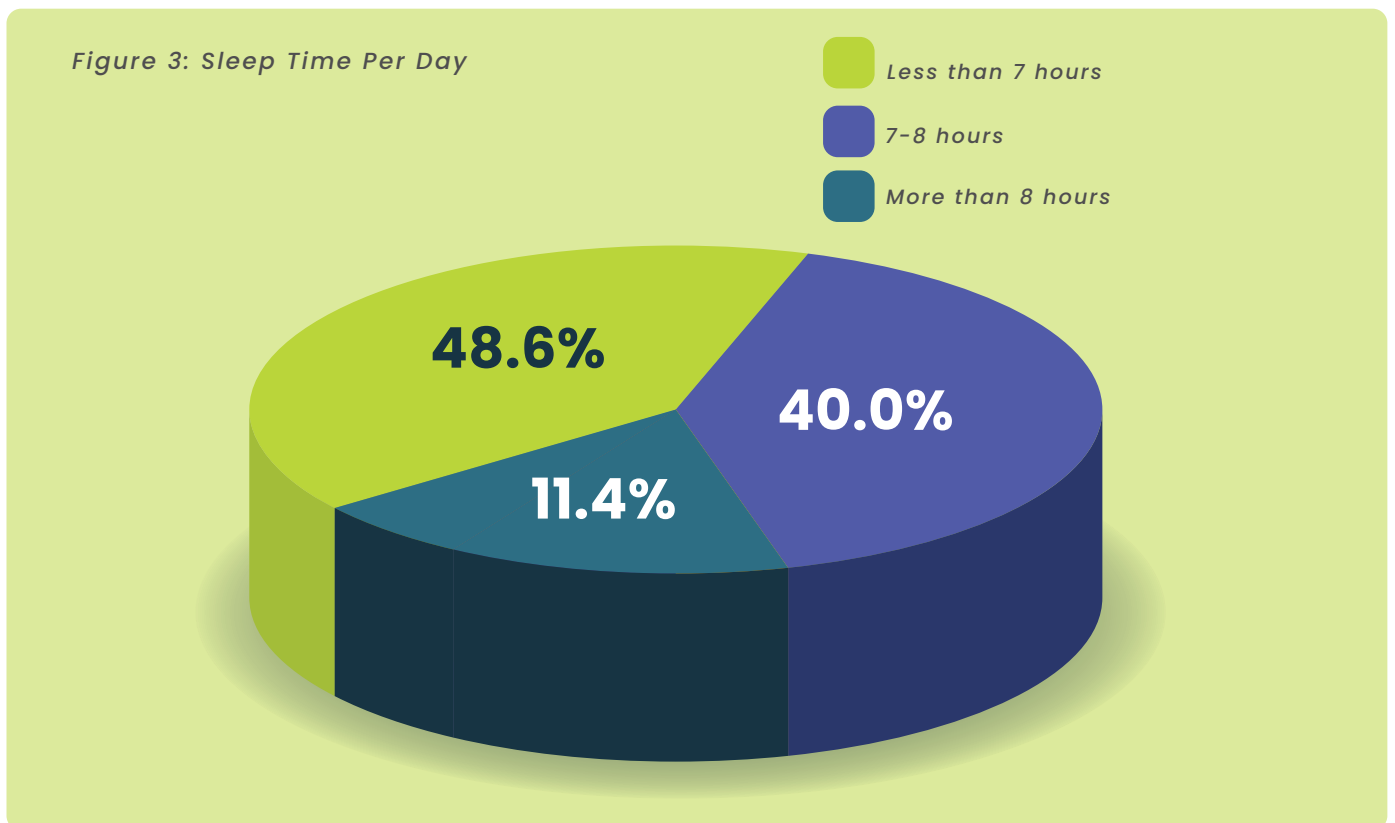
An additional 5% of a male player's day was allocated to food and gear preparation

Not unsurprisingly, players living outside their county report more county travel time than players living in their own county (1.5 v 0.9 hours per day). This group also maintain higher amounts of professional work (8.5 v 6.8 hours per day) offset by less sleep (6.6 v 6.9 hours per day) and discretionary time (2.9 v 3.4 hours per day) compared to players resident in their own county. Figure 2 compares total daily activities among players living in and outside their own county.

Living Outside Home County (Full Time)



Bird (2013) indicated that athletes need at least 7-9 hours sleep per day. Just over half (51.4%) of the respondents get at least seven hours sleep per day with the remainder achieving less than what is deemed the required amount for optimal recovery.



Bird, S (2013). Sleep, Recovery and Athletic Performance. A Brief Review and Recommendations. Strength and Conditioning Journal, 35(5); 43-47.

# HOW DO PLAYERS FEEL ABOUT CLUB PARTICIPATION?

Players were asked to indicate how many days per week that they train with their club with results showing engagement on an average of 1.8 days per week. This was lower (1.3 days per week) among those living outside their county and higher for Intermediate and Junior county players compared to Senior inter county players (2.0 v 1.5 days per week). Club engagement was also higher for secondary school students at 2.5 days per week. Male players undertook an additional 2.1 training sessions per week with another Gaelic Games team, most likely their club team (Kelly et al., 2018)

46% of players indicated that they would like to spend more time with their club. Secondary school students spend more time with their club and as a result, 60% are satisfied with club engagement, compared to 53% of employed players and 45% of undergraduate/postgraduate students. It is notable that less than 10% of players in any group expressed a desire to spend more time with their county team. While these trends are comparable with male county players (57% are satisfied with time spent on both club and county, 8% would like more time with their county and 35% would like more time with their club (Kelly et al., 2018)), female inter county players are slightly more likely to prefer more time with their club team.

## WHAT ARE THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH PLAYING INTER COUNTY GAELIC GAMES?

Over 70% of players own a car (Table 7) and use this car to commute to training with an average round trip of 80km, ranging up to 400km. The average spend on fuel per week is €55 and ranges up to €200. Distance and cost are higher for those living outside of their own county (average distance is

168km and average fuel spend is €79 per week). While the majority of players pay for travel costs through work, one third of college students rely on their parents for money to travel to training, 12% used scholarships and grants and the remainder sourced money from part time jobs. There is no trend in allocation of travel expenses across grades, nor indeed playing code. Almost all (90%) players living outside their own county stated they would travel home for weekends even if they were not playing with their county team, and 35% of this group do not travel home for midweek training.

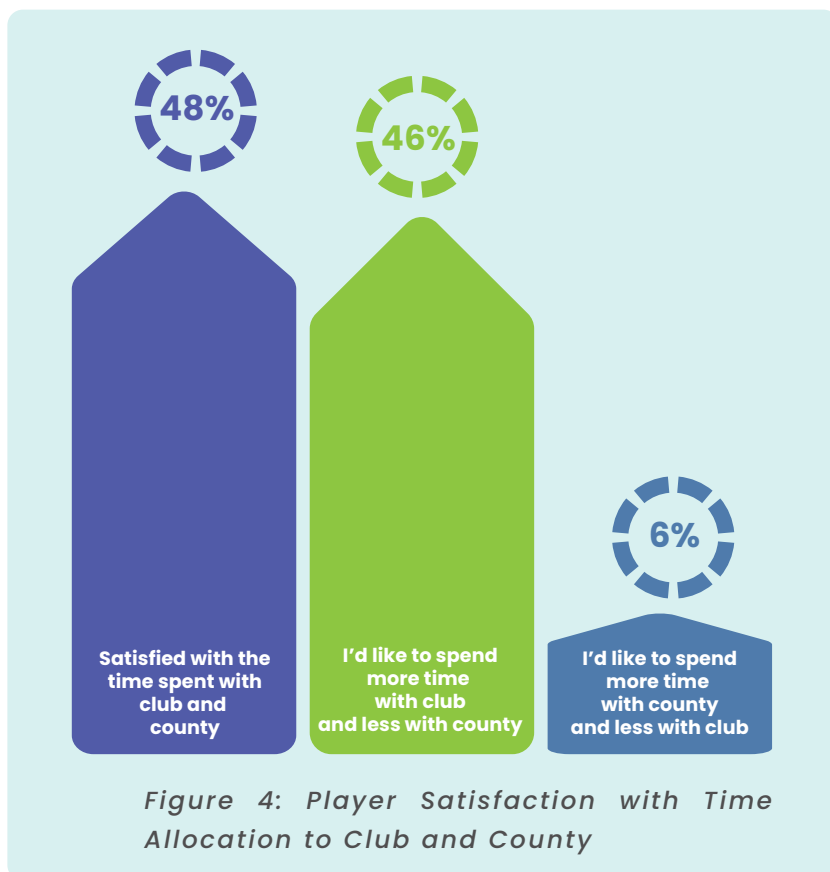


Figure 4: Player Satisfaction with Time Allocation to Club and County

**AVERAGE DISTANCE TRAVELLED**

to county session by players based outside home county is

**168KM****80KM****AVERAGE DISTANCE TRAVELLED**

to county session by players based within their home county

**Table 7: Travel to Training Profile**

		%
<i>Commute to Training</i>	Own Car	71
	A Lift	27
	Public Transport	2
<i>Travel Expenses (Own Car)</i>	Yes	7
	No	93
<i>Travel Expenses (Public Transport)</i>	Yes	1
	No	99
<i>Travel Money</i>	Parents	21
	Work	70
	Grant/Scholarship/Other	9

A number of players submitted monthly schedules of their travel related to county activities (Table 8.1 - 8.3). Using the 0.65c/mile rate available to male players, the total costs incurred were calculated across the months of January and / or February 2020.

**Table 8.1: Case Study / January 2020 / Intermediate Ladies Football Player / Living in Own County / No expenses received for any of the following:**

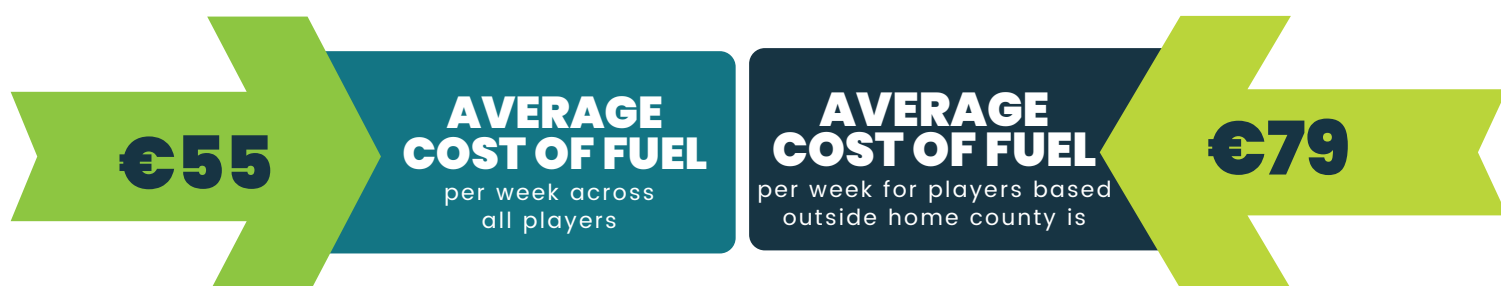
DATE	PURPOSE	PASSENGERS	MILES
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Pitch session	3	20
5 <sup>th</sup>	Challenge game	3	151
6 <sup>th</sup>	Gym session	0	20
11 <sup>th</sup>	Sponsor launch	0	37
12 <sup>th</sup>	Challenge game	3	42
13 <sup>th</sup>	Gym session	0	20
14 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch session	3	46
19 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch session	3	46
20 <sup>th</sup>	Gym session	0	20
21 <sup>st</sup>	LGFA National League Launch	0	42
26 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch session	3	46
27 <sup>th</sup>	League Round 1	3	46
28 <sup>th</sup>	Gym session	0	20
28 <sup>th</sup>	Collect team mate with no car	1	13
28 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch session	1	32
<b>Total County Mileage January</b>			<b>601</b>
<b>Total Expenses at GAA Rate .65c / mile</b>			<b>€390.65</b>



**Table 8.2: Case Study / January & February 2020 / Senior Camogie Player / Living Outside Own County / No passengers / No expenses received for any of the following:**

DATE	PURPOSE	MILES
January 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Challenge Match	129
5 <sup>th</sup>	Fitness Testing	115
7 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training (Pitch A)	87
10 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training / Analysis (Pitch B)	96
12 <sup>th</sup>	Challenge Match	133
14 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training (Pitch A)	87
17 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training (Pitch B)	96
19 <sup>th</sup>	Challenge Match	117
21 <sup>st</sup>	Field Training (Pitch A)	87
24 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training / Analysis (Pitch B)	96
25 <sup>th</sup>	Challenge Match	117
27 <sup>th</sup>	Sports Psychologist	107
28 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training (Pitch A)	87
31 <sup>st</sup>	Field Training / Analysis (Pitch B)	96
<b>Total County Mileage January</b>		<b>1,450</b>
<b>Total Expenses at GAA Rate .65c / mile</b>		<b>€942.50</b>
February 2 <sup>nd</sup>	League Match Away	114
4 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training (Pitch A)	87
7 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training / Analysis (Pitch B)	96
11 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training (Pitch C)	117
15 <sup>th</sup>	Sports Psychologist	80
16 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training (Pitch C)	117
18 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training (Pitch C)	117
23 <sup>rd</sup>	League Match Home	75
25 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training (Pitch C)	117
28 <sup>th</sup>	Field Training / Sports Psychologist	96
<b>Total County Mileage February</b>		<b>1,016</b>
<b>Total Expenses at GAA Rate .65c / mile</b>		<b>€660.40</b>
<b>COUNTY TRAVEL COSTS FOR 2 MONTHS</b>		<b>€1,602.90</b>

\* A further 3 sessions missed due to work commitments in February not listed



**Table 8.3: Case Study / January & February 2020 / Senior Dual Player / Living In Own County / No expenses received for any of the following:**

DATE	PURPOSE	PASSENGERS	MILES
January 5 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	108
7 <sup>th</sup>	Gym & Pitch	0	104
8 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	2	108
9 <sup>th</sup>	Gym & Pitch	0	104
12 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	2	62
14 <sup>th</sup>	Gym & Ball Alley	0	100
15 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	2	108
16 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	104
19 <sup>th</sup>	Challenge Match	4	180
20 <sup>th</sup>	Challenge Match	4	195
21 <sup>st</sup>	Gym & Ball Alley	0	100
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Pitch Session	2	108
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Gym & Ball Alley	0	100
25 <sup>th</sup>	League Match	1	104
26 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	108
30 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	104
<b>Total County Mileage January</b>			<b>1,797</b>
<b>Total Expenses at GAA Rate .65c / mile</b>			<b>€1,168.05</b>
February 1 <sup>st</sup>	League Match	0	104
2 <sup>nd</sup>	League Match	0	104
4 <sup>th</sup>	Gym & Ball Alley	0	100
5 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	68
6 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	104
8 <sup>th</sup>	League Match	1	104
11 <sup>th</sup>	Gym & Ball Alley	0	100
12 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	68
13 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	104
16 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	108
18 <sup>th</sup>	Gym & Ball Alley	0	100
19 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	68
20 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	104
21 <sup>st</sup>	Gym Session	0	79
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Pitch Session	2	108
25 <sup>th</sup>	Gym & Ball Alley	0	104
26 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	68
27 <sup>th</sup>	Pitch Session	0	104
<b>Total County Mileage February</b>			<b>1,699</b>
<b>Total Expenses at GAA Rate .65c / mile</b>			<b>€1,104.35</b>
<b>COUNTY TRAVEL COSTS FOR 2 MONTHS</b>			<b>€2,272.40</b>

Players reported a spend of €55 on average per week on food. Over half (53%) of players receive nutrition specific advice through their county team and this equates to an average of €20 additional spend on food per week. Almost all players (90%) agree that they need to watch what they eat, but specific nutrition advice is more common among Senior players with 63% indicating it is received compared to 46% and 30% of Intermediate and Junior groups. Other costs related to players involvement in their county team are outlined in Table 9 below. Spend is most notable for physio, gym and playing equipment with 70-80% of players incurring costs in these areas. Approximately one in four players spend at least €200 per season on physio and gym costs.

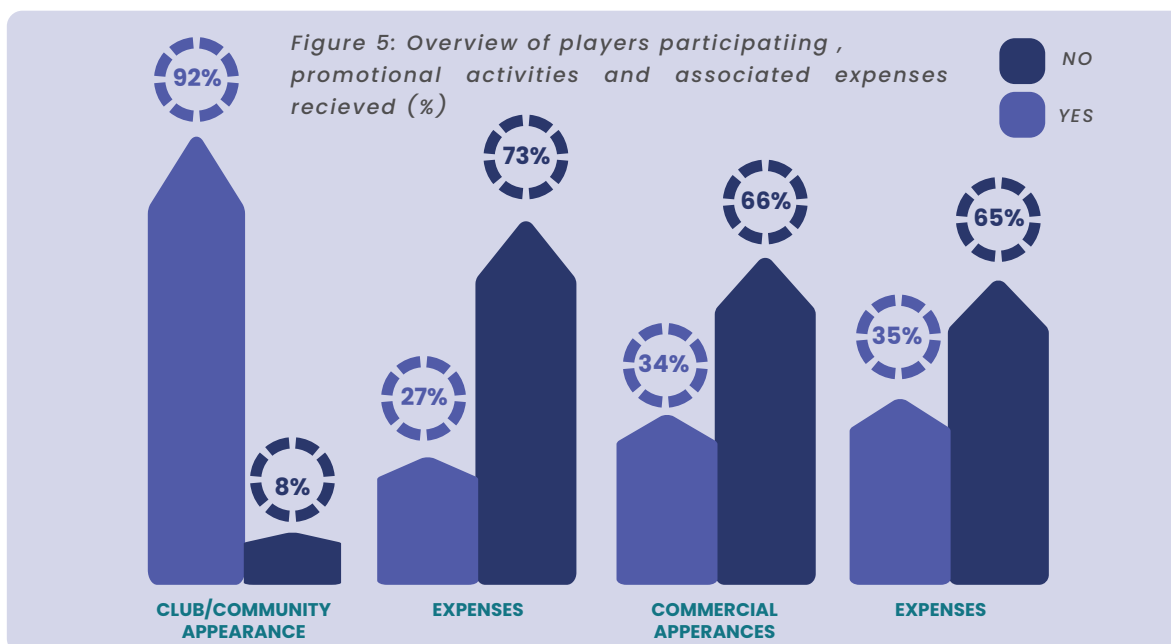
Spend on equipment was higher for camogie players; 85% of camogie players spend at least €100 per season compared to 65% of ladies footballers. Spend on physio and gym was also higher among Senior players.

**Table 9: Spend Per Season on Support Services**

	€0 (%)	€1-100 (%)	€101-200 (%)	€201-300 (%)	€300+ (%)
Physio	23	30	19	14	14
Gym	31	26	17	13	13
Recovery	40	49	7	4	-
Medical Services	45	36	12	4	3
Playing Equipment	18	35	27	14	6

Over half (52%) of players have private medical insurance, 43% have claimed insurance through their national governing body (NGB) insurance scheme with 70% of this group indicating that this claim did not cover all of their related expenses. At the same time, 12% of players have mentioned that they were not covered at all after applying to their NGB insurance scheme. There was no notable difference in injury claims through NGBs across players who did/did not have private medical insurance.

Finally, players were asked to report on promotional activities they have undertaken. Firstly, 84% of players enjoy taking part in activities to promote Gaelic Games and the majority (92%) of players take part in some club and community related promotional activity; 27% receive some compensation for this. A lower proportion (34%) of players participate in commercial related activity, and 65% did not receive any compensation. There are no notable differences across grade or code for appearances or expenses.



**92%**  
**OF PLAYERS**  
take part in club/community promotional activity

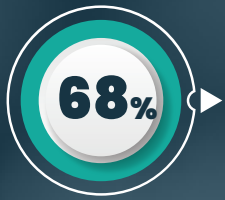
In addition, female county players expressed the following in relation to the financial impact of playing;



feel that travel expenses should be covered for county players



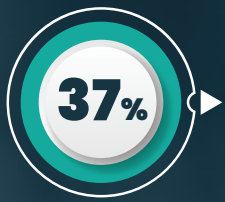
would like to see the financial burden reduced for future generations of players



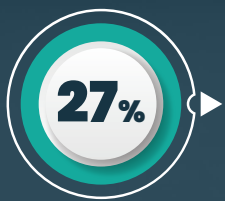
stated that they regularly thought about the financial impact of playing for their county



agree that it makes life more stressful



feel that it negatively affects their ability to reach their potential



feel it may make them retire earlier

# HOW MIGHT AN EXPENSES MODEL WORK?



Initial survey results highlighted the financial cost of playing as an issue for players. Subsequently, at the WGPA Reps Day, a group session was carried out on expenses. The four main discussion points and key themes of the feedback are presented in Table 10. It is to be noted that in the discussion at Reps Day and also in open responses collated in the survey, there was an appreciation of a progressive/relative model for expenses. This would acknowledge the greater travel commitment of some players and the different financial context for the female games.

**Table 10: Reps Day Discussion Outcomes**

### A Case for Why Female Players Should get Expenses?

- Disparity of public investment between male and female players – case for further investment
- Same levels of commitment & costs
- Principles of fairness, equality and respect within Gaelic Games
- Growth in popularity, standards & commercial interest in LGFA and Camogie in recent years
- Player retention by reducing financial stress and generating feelings of increased recognition
- The deficit of ‘in-kind’ support that male players receive such as gym subscriptions and nutrition support

### Potential Sources of Evidence to Support Expenses Model

- Member Survey on commitment, travel hours & training hours
- Research on cost of travel and food
- Data Collection on Mileage
- Survey on player stress, managing part time jobs and other expenses
- Apps for evidence of training load and gym sessions

### Consideration for an Expenses Model

- Appreciation of different context of games v males
- Damage of higher profile worst case scenarios e.g. when a team doesn’t field, this doesn’t reflect the whole group of players
- Female players ‘just get on with it’

### Potential Sources & Process of Expenses Model

- Government Investment in Grants
- Under one umbrella of GAA, LGFA, Camogie
- Joint sponsor incentive cross code in same county – One county model
- Overall sponsorships with fuel companies and/or petrol stations
- Players need to be vocal, raise awareness, set standards and encourage male allies



# WHAT ARE THE **BROADER IMPACTS** OF PLAYING AT COUNTY LEVEL?

Table 11 provides an overview of the impact of playing inter county Gaelic Games for female players. There is a notable toll attached to playing at this level, literally in relation to time (99% females v 96% of male players feel playing county takes up a lot of their time – Kelly et al., 2018) and in the lack of resulting discretionary time to engage in other activity. More significantly, there is an impact on available energy and enthusiasm to participate fully in professional activity. Being a county player requires flexibility in work and there is a sense among players that their professional potential is limited due to their involvement in high level sport.

**Table 11: Emotional and Professional Impact of Participation in County Ladies Football/Camogie**

	Agree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Disagree (%)
Playing county takes a lot of time	99	0.5	0.5
Need flexibility in work to play county	85	7	8
High pressure job not suited to playing	60	28	12
Can incorporate other hobbies	15	12	73
So tired from physical demands, struggle to work/study	82	9	9
So tired from mental demands, struggle to work/study	74	14	12
Mood impacted by success/failure	86	8	6



# HOW DO PLAYERS EXIST IN THE BROADER GAELIC GAMES ENVIRONMENT?



**35%**

Just over one third (35%) of female players are members of a GAA Club. It is not known if these are One Clubs or if players are joining their respective Camogie or LGFA club and their local GAA Club.

**94%**

Almost all (94%) of female players feel that formal partnership of the WGPA and GPA will have a positive impact. This is a positive outcome and reflects both organisations commitment to form a single player representation organisation



# HOW HAVE THINGS CHANGED SINCE MAKING THINGS BETTER 2014?

Off field opportunities continue to grow year on year for players with a support for player programmes such as scholarships, leadership training, counselling services, and careers advice all offered through our ongoing work through the GPA.

While data is not directly comparable, there are some worthwhile observations since the first WPGA Report in 2014. At that time, the majority of players took part in three group sessions per week with their county team while at least 80% took part in at least one additional individual session per week; comparable to this current profile of county players. In 2014, as in 2020, 7% of players indicated they received some travel expenses with 63% regularly out of pocket due to their county commitments (2014). In the original report, travel expenses were cited as the second most important element around minimum standards for female county players and in this iteration, they remain a priority for players.

It is important to note the impact of the introduction of the Government Grant Scheme since the 2014 report. In 2014, some of the most notable observations from players was the lack of regular provision of showers, food and injury supports.

The evaluation of the 2017 Government Grant Scheme showed that the majority of players felt the standards of their games had increased, mainly due to the greater provision of professional services by specialists and improved access to facilities, which could each be attributed to the Grant Scheme. Evaluation of the 2018 Scheme confirmed that 90% of players felt standards around Injury Prevention and Medical Cover had improved and 95% noted an improvement in standards around Maximising Player and Team Performance. Over two thirds of players felt the main benefit of the

Grant Scheme was that it enabled access to services that would otherwise not have been feasible. More recently, the 2019 Government Grant Evaluation Report showed that 71% of players receive no compensation for engagement in promotional activities (NOTE: these did include community related activities), 35% of which entailed players taking time off work.

In 2014, almost 80% of players had felt overwhelmed as an intercounty player. This had reduced to 56% in the 2017 Government Grant Scheme Evaluation. In this current report, ~78% of players in 2019 are so tired from the mental and physical demands of playing at this level that they struggle with working and/or studying. Also, involvement in decision making was low in the 2014 report (5% felt involved in decision making) but improved after the first iteration of the Grant Scheme (25% felt involved in decision making). Finally, in 2014, 41% of players felt respected as athletes by the general population. This increased to 63% in the 2018 Grant Scheme Evaluation. It is clear that the Grant Scheme is having a positive impact on the training and playing experience of players. In the context of this current report, it is important to note that the Grant Scheme does not extend to financial support for players.





# WHAT DID THE DATA SHOW & WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

## Results showed...

**55% OF PLAYERS** are students..

**91%** are aged <30

**8%** live **outside** their **county** full time

### FEMALE PLAYERS

participate in some form of training on **six days** per week

**CONTACT TIME** approx **3.7 hours**

per day for female players, which includes travel and training time

Almost half of players do not get sufficient sleep for recovery

**52% OF PLAYERS**

are not satisfied with the current split of their time to club and county.

**99% OF PLAYERS**

say playing county takes up a lot of time

**74-82%**

**OF PLAYERS**

are tired from the mental and physical demands of the game that they struggle to work/study

**60% INDICATE**

a high pressure job is not suitable to playing at county level

## Which calls for...

**Best practice for supporting the high performance female county player through all of their playing commitments**



## Which will involve...



Engagement with sports science specialists to provide and implement

evidence based recommendations on training time and overall performance management for high performance female Gaelic Games players



Consideration of the player, and their full sporting commitments as the

majority of players are college/school players as well as representatives of their club and county



Reviewing 'County time' in terms of quantity and quality to develop clarity

around best practice for high performance female Gaelic Games players across the full seasonal calendar including a debate on a fixtures calendar for female players at club and county level



A training model that supports players to balance personal, academic, professional and sporting commitments. Consolidation and growth of relationships with LGFA and Camogie Association. This relationship is key to progress on all recommendations

## Results showed...

**80KM** **AVERAGE ROUND TRIP**  
to training

**€55** Average spend on  
fuel per week

**7%** **OF PLAYERS**  
get travel expenses

**68%** **OF PLAYERS**  
regularly think about the  
financial impact of playing at  
county level.

**27%** **OF PLAYERS**  
feel the cost of playing may  
make them retire earlier

## Which calls for...

### A practical player expenses model



## Which will involve...



Establishing a Working Group with key stakeholders to develop an action plan to build towards a pragmatic and progressive travel expenses scheme



Review feasibility of commercial funding, government funding, NGB supports and / or identify other funding solutions

**34%** **OF PLAYERS**  
take part in commercial activity

**65%** **OF PLAYERS**  
do not receive compensation  
for this

**69%** **OF PLAYERS**  
pay gym fees

**60%** **OF PLAYERS**  
players contribute  
financially to their  
recovery costs

**55%** **OF PLAYERS**  
pay for medical  
services.

**82%** **OF PLAYERS**  
pay for playing  
equipment.

**70%** **OF PLAYERS**  
who have claimed for injury  
related expenses indicate that  
not all of their expenses were  
covered

**12%** **OF PLAYERS**  
were not covered at all after  
applying to their respective  
injury scheme

### Progress on minimum standards for female county players



Consistency on expenses for commercially linked activity through the development of a central players expense card in conjunction with the LGFA & Camogie Association



Support for the significant additional costs associated with playing intercounty Gaelic Games that are all currently provided for in minimum standards for male county players.

This would see the full implementation and standardisation of the squad charter model for all intercounty squads



Informed lobby for change in insurance cover offered in camogie and ladies football and alignment with the Enhanced Injury Fund.

## Results showed...

### FEMALE & MALE PLAYERS

train on **5.6 v 6.1** days per week for **2.7 and 2.9** hours respectively. Overall, the training commitment of male and female players is comparable

**99% FEMALES**  
**96% MALE** **VS**

players feel playing county takes up a lot of their time

### MALE PLAYERS

receive **over four times more** government funding than female players, €3million per year compared to €0.7 million per year in 2019

## Which calls for...

**Equitable funding and investment for county female Gaelic Games players**



## Which will involve...



Leadership from the WGPA to close the current gap in funding provided by the Government between male and female inter county players



Enhanced Government funding, which could be directed to the travel, gym and/or equipment costs borne individually by players

**94% OF PLAYERS**

of players feel that a formal partnership between the GPA and WGPA will have a positive impact

**35% OF PLAYERS** are members of their GAA Club

**53% OF PLAYERS**

feel the financial cost of playing at county level is something they should get on with

**90% OF PLAYERS**

want the financial burden reduced for future county players

**One player's voice**



Integration of the male and female player's bodies. There is clear support for one single player's organisation and this can be an advocate for integration across Gaelic Games



Consideration of the differences that exist for male and female players in this organisation. It is likely there are elements of both experiences (expenses for men, training load for women) that could transfer across codes and as a result, there will be different priority action areas for both male and female players. This is a key focus for any integration discussion



Player education around integration, the One Club Model and One County Model. Players are an important advocate in any progression around integration



Support for players to express their voice around the costs of playing at county level. This voice can be collaborative, responsible, it should be united, and also challenging to push towards a solution for current and future players

## Appendix I



Due to methodological issues, the majority of respondents did not compute their time spent in different activities to the required number of total hours, so data to present a complete 24 period is available for 42 players only (compliant group). Table 12 shows hours per day spent in different activities the overall group, and separately in the compliant (n=42) and non-compliant group. The trend for time spent in each activity is similar with data for the compliant group indicating that all activities are underestimated in the total sample.

**Table 12: Daily Hour Allocation to Different Activities**

	<b>FULL SAMPLE (n=543)</b>	<b>COMPLIANT GROUP (n=42)</b>	<b>NON-COMPLIANT GROUP (n=501)</b>
<b>Sleep time</b> <i>(hrs per day)</i>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>6.8</b>
<b>Total professional time</b> <i>(study, work, housework hours per day)</i>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>6.1</b>
<b>Total other time</b> <i>(relaxing, socialising, family, friends, hours per day)</i>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>
<b>County training time</b> <i>(hours per day)</i>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>County travel</b> <i>(hours per day)</i>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.0</b>



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