

## Kilnadeema Leitrim Juvenile Hurling Club

### Children's Feedback 2015

In December 2015, feedback was sought from all teams at, and below, the U12 age group. This age group was targeted for two reasons:

1. Accessibility – it is possible to access the u12 age groups through the primary schools whereas, it is difficult to distribute and collect questionnaires for the older age groups once hurling season has finished.
2. These age groups are subject to GAA rule in relation to participation versus competition, where every child must be included and receive meaningful playing time at games that are non-competitive and based on the Go Games model. It is responsibility of the Children's Officer to ensure that this rule is maintained.

Questionnaires were drawn up and circulated through the primary schools. Out of approximately 70 forms, 14 were returned.

Q1: How do you feel about your club?

'I love it' 100% (14)

Q2: What do you like about your club?

'The people are nice'

'Matches and training'

'Making new friends and play on a team'

'Meeting my friends'

'Hurling'

'Playing'

'Meeting and playing hurling with my friends'

'Meeting my friends and having fun'

'Trying to hit the sliotar in the air'

'Going on trips to other counties and travelling to games'

'I fit in and all my friends are nice to me'

'Everything'

'Getting together and participating'

Q3: What do you not like about your club?

Nothing 57% (8)

'I don't get to play much at matches'

'The drills'

'I don't like it when some of the other guys say mean things to me like 'you're no good at hurling''

'I don't like it when other players won't pass the ball. I feel excluded. They think they are better than me.'

'I don't get on the team much.'

Q4: How does coming to your club make you feel?

'Happy' 50% (7)

'Excited' 29% (4)

'Good' 21% (3)

'Happy most of the time' 7% (1)

Comments:

'I like the training'

'I look forward to going to training and matches'

'I love hurling'

Q5: What, if anything, would you change about your club?

'Nothing' 42% (6)

Comments:

'Be fair'

'Subs get more match practice'

'I would like to play full matches'

'Players should not be allowed to play on lots of age groups. If they do, this means players of the right age groups often get left out because they may not be as good as the 'star' players. Everyone deserves a chance to play. You can improve if you get a chance to play.'

'Less drills, more matches'

'Get rid of the ball wall'

'Get half-zips'

'That I would get to have set days for training'

'If we go on a long trip, that the bus doesn't break down'

Q6: Do you think that you are being treated fairly in your club? Please tell me why you've said yes or no.

'Yes' 78% (11)

'No' 14% (2)

'Sometimes no' 7% (1)

Comments:

'No, I don't get on the team'

'Yes, because everybody gets to play in the game'

'No, because at matches, I really don't get to play'

'Sometimes, no. I go to training all of the time and kids that miss training still get to play and I might not get a chance. That's not fair'.

Yes, always felt I've been treated fairly

I have been treated fairly in my club because I start in every match

Yes, because everyone is so nice to me

Q7: Do you have anything else that you would like to say?

'No' 57% (8)

Comments:

'Thanks for a good club'

'Let everyone play at matches'

'When are we getting 'Ocean Hygiene' medals?

'If the weather was good during the winter, we should use Leitrim Astroturf or ball wall'

'Thanks'

Parents' Comments:

'Very happy with everything. No complaints or issues with anything'

'My child trained with both U12s and U11s all year. It is understandable the amount of game play he got with the U12s. The game play he got with the U11s was very disappointing and he was

overlooked in the last two tournaments. Whereby, U10 children were given preferential

treatment i.e. went on the team ahead of the boys who attended training and matches most of the year'

'We, as parents, are delighted for our child to be in such a well run club and our child is always happy at both training and at matches. The one issue we would have is the way a manager of U10 team manages the children. They would want to treat the kids like kids and not like adults and be told that it is a game of fun and not a competitive sport at that age. If this is not dealt with, it will turn a lot of kids off the game.'

'I have helped my son to fill out this form. Every child deserves to feel part of a team. It is very unfair to leave, for example, a 13 year old on the sideline on an u13 team and have younger players playing. It should not be all about winning. This is becoming very common in our club and needs to be addressed'.

'Very happy with everything. No issues with anything. Looking forward to next year'.

'My son is very happy with the hurling club. He doesn't seem to have any issues. He gets on well with his teammates and his coach'.

'This was our first year in the club. Trainers were excellent, dedicated and very encouraging. Our son absolutely loved going to training, despite an odd comment here or there from his peers about his skill level. We will be mindful of this going forward, but he is enthusiastic and really looking forward to starting up again in 2016. Thanks for all your hard work'.

'Training on the same day each week. A schedule of upcoming matches for the year. If matches are away, if parents would car pool. All kids get to play. Fundraiser for Kilnadeema Community Hall'.

'Great club for hurling'

'This boy is just 4 and just joined in for two sessions. He really enjoyed it and was encouraged by both trainers. He is looking forward to being a member'.

'This guy is just 8 and loves hurling but is often left on the sideline for entire matches or just on as a sub when another player has to get a jumper or inhaler. I really don't believe such treatment at a young age will increase the numbers playing hurling but will only lead to elitism of the sport. When the East Galway League finished, there was more fairness displayed in the selection of the teams but the 'Go Games' policy was not followed for many matches. Other than above, it was a very positive hurling year for this boy. Thanks to his managers and the club'.

Key findings:

1. All of our children love their club.

2. People, friends and hurling are what children like best about their club.

3. For most children (57%), there's nothing they don't like about their club. Things that children don't like about their club included not being played at matches, being teased or excluded by other players because of their performance; and drills.

4. 92% of the children feel good, happy or excited about coming to their club. 8% were happy 'most of the time'.

5. 42% wouldn't change anything about their club. The other 52% would change such things as:

The club being fairer; subs getting more matches; being allowed to play full games; children from younger age groups not taking the place of children in their own age group; set days for training; less drills, more matches, less ball wall; getting half zips and on trips away, that the bus wouldn't break down!!

6. 78% feel that they are being treated fairly in the club. Reasons given for this are - everyone getting to play, starting every match, people being nice to me.

14% feel that they are not being treated fairly and 7% felt that they treated fairly sometimes. Reasons for this are - not getting on the team, not getting to play at matches, attending training and matches all year and children who don't attend being played instead of them.

7. 57% had no additional comments to make.

Others said: let everyone play at matches; when the weather is bad in the winter, can we use the Astroturf or ball wall; when do we get our Ocean Hygiene medals?; and, thanks!

8. Parents Comments included:

Very happy, no issues.

Thanks for all the hard work.

Child at not being played.

Younger children getting preferential treatment

Children who don't attend training regularly being passed over for children who do.

Manager of young team being very competitive and treating children like adults when it should be fun, not competition at that age - 'If this is not dealt with, it will turn a lot of kids off the game'.

My son is very happy with the hurling club.

Trainers were excellent, dedicated and very encouraging.

Our son absolutely loved going to training, despite an odd comment here or there from his peers about his skill level.

Great club for hurling.

Training on the same day each week and a schedule of upcoming matches for the year.

All kids get to play.

Fundraiser for Kilnadeema Community Hall.

My child really enjoyed it and was encouraged by both trainers.

My child is often left on the sideline for entire matches or just on as a sub when another player has to get a jumper or inhaler.

When the league finished, there was more fairness displayed in the selection of the teams but the 'Go Games' policy was not followed for many matches.

Other than above, it was a very positive hurling year for this boy. Thanks to his managers and the club.

Conclusions:

Very positive over all. It appears that we are doing a very good job with the majority of children in the club. The children are happy, encouraged and are being treated well. Their parents are happy with how their children are being treated and are grateful to the managers, coaches etc who give their time to the club. This is a really great result and we should be very proud that we are getting it right in so many ways.

However, there are a minority of children for whom their hurling club experience isn't quite so positive. There are children who are reporting being excluded, left on the sideline and passed over for younger children who belong to younger age groups. This research was conducted with children from ages U12/11/10/8/6, where GAA rule dictates that there should not be competitive games - there should not be exclusion and there should not be a situation where younger children, from younger grades, make the team ahead of a child from their own age group. Despite the fact that this is a minority of children, we should be very concerned. Not even one child should have these experiences at these age levels.

Another concern has arisen out of this feedback. Although it is again from a minority of children, we must take it seriously. Two children reported being excluded and teased by their peers because of their performance. This places a responsibility on team managers, coaches and mentors to be observant and to intervene in any cases of teasing, exclusion and/or bullying and report same to the Children's Officer.

We have taken the trouble to consult with the children and their parents. We must now hear what they have to say and allow it to influence us as we go forward into a new year.

Recommendations to address issues arising from feedback:

1. Games at U12/11/10/8/6 are played in a non-competitive manner and as per the Go Games policy, in line with GAA rule.
2. All children at these age levels are to have meaningful match time at every match.
3. Children from younger age groups are not played in favour of children from their own age groups.
4. Parents to be informed specifically of the above rules so that they can intervene if the policy is not being carried out.
5. Children to be reminded of their Code of Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy, so that they know what to do if they are being teased, excluded or bullied.
6. Managers, mentors, coaches to inform parents that they are available to them to discuss concerns as they arise.

To finish up – a couple of quotes from our young players:

‘Thanks for a good club’

‘Everyone deserves a chance to play. You can improve if you get a chance to play’