



Frequently asked questions



What is camogie?

Camogie is one of the fastest field sports in the world – combining skill, fitness and technique – and has been described as ‘aerial hockey’, or a mixture of hockey and lacrosse. It also has many features in common with the Scottish sport of shinty.

The male equivalent is hurling, a sport that is coordinated by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), which also oversees men’s Gaelic football, handball and rounders. Ladies Gaelic football is organised by the Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA).

Teams are made up of between twelve and fifteen players, depending on the level and competition, and comprise a goalkeeper, full and half backs (defenders), midfielders, and full and half forwards (attackers).

The Camogie Association has released a short video to promote the game which can be view on YouTube – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70ePVvm1tU4>. Please do not be put off by the skill level on show (the players featured are some of the best in the world!), it is just intended to give you a taste of camogie – and remember, even they were beginners at one stage!

How is it played?

Camogie is played on a grass pitch which is approximately 50% larger than a standard football field. At either end of the field are H-shaped posts, which resemble rugby posts with a football net attached.

Players use a wooden stick made of ash, called a hurley (or *camán*), to move a small ball, known as a sliotar (pronounced ‘slitter’), across the field. The sliotar can be struck along the ground in a fashion similar to hockey, caught in the hand or scooped up using the hurley, and then struck in the air or passed with the hand.

Hurley (*Camán*)



Sliotar

Players retain possession by taking four steps with the sliotar in their hand or balancing it on the hurley (‘egg and spoon’ style), before passing or scoring. The hurley can also be used to block other players.

To score, the ball is hit between the opponents’ goalposts – either over the crossbar for 1 point, or into the net for 3 points. The final score is based on total number of points so, for example, a team scoring 0-15 (no goals and fifteen points), would take victory over a team scoring 4-1 (four goals and one point, totalling thirteen points).

Is it safe?

Absolutely! Wearing helmets with full facial protection is compulsory during all training sessions and matches and players are also permitted to wear shin pads and ‘ash guards’ – a glove worn on the non-dominant hand to offer protection when catching the sliotar. The Camogie Association also requires clubs to take out insurance for all of its players, coaches and officials before they participate in any capacity.

All this being said, the risk of injury is actually very low. Players are taught the correct techniques to reduce the chance of getting hurt, with most injuries sustained being limited to grazes and minor bruising.

What is the competition structure like?

In Britain, there are three grades of competition – Junior, Intermediate and Senior.

Brothers Pearse Camogie Club is currently graded 'Junior', so we compete in the British Junior League and Championship competitions.

For practical reasons, Britain operates as a county, in the same way that each of the thirty-two counties in Ireland (Cork, Kilkenny, Derry, Galway etc.) run their own competitions and affairs.

The highest level of competition is Inter-county, in which each of the counties in Ireland enter representative teams made up of the best players from their clubs to take part in the National League and All-Ireland Championship competitions.

From time-to-time, there are also one-off competitions featuring representative teams from countries, or even continents; the most recent of these was the GAA World Games which took place in Dublin in 2016, with all of the finals played at the headquarters of camogie and the GAA: Croke Park.

Regardless of level, however, all camogie competitions are run on an amateur basis, with players participating for the love of the sport rather than any financial reward.

When does the season run?

Camogie is predominantly a summer sport, with most fixtures taking place between April and September. Pre-season training typically starts in mid to late March and the season is often extended with one-day tournaments or club tours to Ireland.

The timing of the season makes camogie the ideal sport to fit in during the off-season period of other sports, such as hockey, football and rugby, and many players use it as a fun way of keeping up their fitness in preparation for the new season in their other sports.

Is it an expensive past time?

No. At the start of each season, members are asked to pay a set fee – which includes registration with The Camogie Association, insurance and pitch fees for the year – and there are reduced rates for students and those under the age of 18. Players are asked to contribute towards the cost of travelling to matches and help out with fundraising ventures throughout the year, but no-one will ever be turned away because of financial constraints.

When you first join, you will be provided with equipment to use but, as time goes on, you will probably want to buy your own hurley and helmet. A list of suppliers is available on request.

Is camogie for me?

In a word: yes! Camogie is a great way to keep fit, get some fresh air and (we hope) enjoy a bit of the summer sunshine! In addition to playing, there are a number of other ways in which members can get involved – including coaching, administration, or cheering us on from the side lines – so whatever your talents or interests, there is a place for you.

How can I get involved?

Prospective players – especially those who are new to camogie – are welcome to attend a few training sessions, meet our members and give the sport a go, before deciding whether or not they would like to join. Sessions are tailored to the abilities of all those present so you will be fully involved from your very first day, and coaches and players alike are always happy to share their knowledge and skills.

If you would like to join us, or simply find out more, please get in touch using the details below:

Email: bpscsecretary@hotmail.com **Phone:** 07732 392 749 (Frances), 07745 946 594 (Bronwyn)

Website: www.brospearsecamogielondon.com You can also find us on **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **Instagram**

We look forward to hearing from you!