BALLYMORE EUSTACE GAA & LGFA

Go Games Explained

A parent's guide to football for Under 7 to Under 12

Ballymore Eustace GAA & LGFA · Bishopslane, Ballymore Eustace, Co. Kildare

What are Go Games?

Go Games are small-sided versions of Gaelic football and ladies' football for children from Under 7 up to and including Under 12. They are how all Gaelic Games Associations (GAA, LGFA and Camogie) run games for this age group.

The idea is simple: smaller teams on smaller pitches mean every child gets more touches of the ball, more chances to score and more fun.

The key principles

- **Everyone has a go.** All players play in the full game. Nobody sits on the bench all day.
- **Small-sided games.** Fewer players per team, so everyone is involved.
- **Modified rules.** Pitch size, ball size and rules are adapted to suit the age group, giving players time and space to learn skills and make decisions.
- **Fun and development first.** The focus is on learning and enjoyment, not winning.

What it looks like on the day

- Games are usually played at a **blitz** or festival, where several clubs or teams come together and each team plays two or more short games.
- If a club has more players than a team needs, it enters extra teams rather than leaving children on the sideline.
- There are **no knock-out rounds**, semi-finals or finals.
- **No cups or trophies** are presented to teams at Under 7 to Under 11. At memorial events, every child gets the same medal or certificate.
- Scores aren't used to rank teams. At Under 12, games are organised as a league and blitzes, still with no knock-outs.

Team sizes

Teams aim for small numbers so every child is involved. The minimum numbers recommended in the Go Games guidance are:

Age group	Recommended team size
Under 7	4 v 4
Under 8 and Under 9	5 v 5
Under 10 and Under 11	6 v 6
Under 12	8 v 8

Maximum team sizes and local rules are set by the county, so they may differ slightly. Your coach will explain the format for each blitz.

What about younger children?

There are no Go Games events for Under 6. Children aged 4 to 6 play in our club nursery, where they learn basic movement and ball skills through fun games like tag and "as many passes as you can".

How parents can help

Do

- Cheer for every child, on both teams
- Praise effort, not just scores
- Ask "Did you have fun?" after the game
- Help with lifts, water and setting up

Don't

- Shout instructions from the sideline
- Keep score out loud or compare teams
- Question the referee or coaches
- Worry about who "won"

Why no winners?

Research and experience show children stay in sport when they enjoy it, feel included and improve. Go Games are designed so that every child – not just the early developers – gets a fair chance to learn and love the game.

Questions? Talk to your child's coach or our Juvenile Coordinator, [name, contact].