



GPA Annual Report 2025

# REPRESENTATION & EQUALITY HIGHLIGHTS

# INDECON REPORT – ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACTS OF INTER-COUNTY GAELIC FOOTBALL, CAMOGIE AND HURLING PLAYERS IN IRELAND

Research completed by Indecon, released in 2025, showed that Inter-county players generate a total **economic impact of €591m annually**, an increase of 51% on 2018. Players support **4,212 jobs** and generate **€62 million in exchequer income** with over **2.5m spectators** attending the games.

The research also demonstrated that players are on average **€1,499 worse off** annually than in 2018, due to the effects of inflation on food and nutrition in particular, with players incurring a net loss of **€4,602 per year** to play. Inter-county commitments have a total negative impact on players' income is estimated at **€5,200 annually**, and by the time they reach 30, they earn a lower average income than the general population.





## POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN FOR INCREASED STATE FUNDING

Based on the Indecon research, players sought to increase state funding. In recognition of their economic impact, amateur intercounty players receive grants in lieu of tax relief that is available for professional athletes in Ireland. While state funding for female players was equalised in 2021, male players had seen no change since 2018, in spite of the and were actually receiving **24% less per player than in 2008**. Carded athletes saw a 203% increase in the same timeframe.

GPA staff and players met with a wide range of ministers, T.D.'s, M.E.P's, advisors and officials throughout 2025 to share the research findings and the lived experiences of players. A **pre-budget submission** was launched calling for increased support for players proportional to the economic growth they've delivered.

Grant funding is an essential contribution to prompting retention and performance of our elite players, who are the role-models in our games, prompting youth participation and generating revenue that is funneled back into GAA clubs and grassroots across Ireland; **a unique amateur model that must be protected.**

As a result of this engagement, **increased investment of €1.6m was delivered**, bringing total annual investment in Inter-county players to **€7.2m**.

This **28% increase** marked a strong result for players and growing recognition of the enormous contribution inter-county players make to the Irish economy and society.

# STATE FUNDING ADMINISTRATION

Funding for inter-county players is overseen by a joint committee of the GPA / GAA / LGFA and Camogie Association.

Funding for male players is administered by the GPA as an expenses grant, separate to GAA charter funding. In 2025 €3m in funding was disbursed among 2,408 players who were on their Championship panel in the 2024 season, with payments ranging between €941 and €1,684 per player.

Female state funding of €2.64m is combined with contributions from the LGFA and Camogie Association centrally and used to subsidise team supports, as well as direct mileage expenses and a nutrition allowance for players. In 2025, an average mileage rate of 26c/m and a weekly nutrition rate of €20 / week was delivered for 2,062 female players. Female players do not receive a separate expenses grant from the state.



# ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SURVEY 2025

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SURVEY REPORT

As part of their membership registration, players complete a comprehensive survey on their experiences and attitudes. This has been established annually as an essential tool for gathering and amplifying the collective voice of players, informing GPA policies and decisions, and influencing change within Gaelic Games.

The **2025** survey gathered responses from **3,676 players**, making it one of the largest player surveys in Irish sport. The findings highlight the increasing demands on elite amateur athletes who balance work, education, and sport, with the survey showing that over half of players are in full-time employment and more than a third are in full-time education.

The results point strongly to player welfare and season structure as the key issues facing inter-county athletes. **87% of players support a mandated off-season**, while **83% reported having less than two weeks' rest between county and club campaigns**, reinforcing concerns about burnout and workload.

The survey also highlights ongoing debates about fairness and recognition in Gaelic games: **92% of male players support equal travel expenses for male and female players**, and **87% believed players should receive recognition or a share of revenue generated from their name, image, and likeness** as the games become more commercial. While **64% of players remain content with the amateur status of Gaelic games**, the majority believe stronger welfare standards and support structures are needed to protect players operating in an increasingly a professional-level environment.

# CAMOGIE PLAYERS SKORTS CAMPAIGN

After much discussion in recent years on the mandatory wearing of skorts for Camogie matches, players used their collective voice to highlight their desire for a change in policy. **Research carried out by the GPA** showed that of 650 players surveyed:

- 70% reported **physical discomfort** with the mandated skort,
- 65% raised concerns about **unwanted media exposure** while playing,
- 49% reported anxiety regarding **potential period leaks** during games,
- 83% **desired the choice** to wear either shorts OR skorts for games.

Players actively protested against the skorts, leading to a special general meeting of the Camogie Association, where a **motion to change the policy was passed with 98% support**, allowing players to choose to wear either shorts or skorts.



# NEW GPA GAA PROTOCOL AGREEMENT

The GPA and GAA agreed a new Recognition Protocol for the next four years, following a lengthy period of negotiations. The new protocol will deliver enhanced support for inter-county players and help ensure the GPA's continued capacity to invest in education, scholarships, health and wellbeing and player development initiatives as well as supporting commercial recognition of inter-county players.



## Highlights from the new agreement include:

- A **15% share of Gross Central Council commercial revenue** to the GPA, a change from the previous agreement on net commercial revenue,
- The additional funding this delivers will be used for a **new GAA/ GPA bursary fund of €300k annually** (additional to existing GPA bursary awards) specifically for students who are not receiving any other forms of college financial aid,
- **Restructuring of Le Chéile** (GAA/GPA joint commercial venture) with GPA receiving 95% of profit after tax (up to €800k), 75% of profit after tax above €800k,

- Updated **growth strategy and defined commercial property targets** for Le Chéile and annual reporting on the impact of programmes it supports,
- Recognition for the first time that **players own their Name, Image, Likeness and Personality**. Implementation and **defined distribution pot** to be established and delivered via Le Chéile, jointly governed by the GAA and GPA,
- Agreement to jointly support **growth of GAA+**, GPA to now receive 15% of the platform's license fees and 15% of dividends annually. NILP-related activity, GPA representatives on editorial board, and **all players receiving free access to GAA+**,
- **€40,000 per annum** towards cardiac screening and/or dental protection for inter-county players, an increase from the previous €20,000,
- **Annual report to Central Council on GPA Player Development Programmes**, and the GAA to retain audit rights for all aspects of GAA / SI provided funding,
- GAA reaffirmed continued recognition of the GPA as an **independent representative body** and the importance of an independent player



## SQUAD REPS DAY

Over 100 player representatives came together in January in Johnstown House for our Annual Squad Reps, one of the most important dates in the GPA calendar. Reps work together to discuss common issues, challenges and opportunities, helping to set out the priorities for the year ahead in best serving all 4,000 GPA members.

Squad Reps participated in interactive workshops, leadership training in communications and negotiations, and engaged with GPA staff across the range of the programmes available. Domhnall Nugent facilitated a workshop on the 'Person Behind the Player' and Gerry Duffy presented on High Performance Leadership, before players heard from panel speakers Peter Canavan and Deirdre Murphy.

# GPA PRIDE CAMPAIGN 2025

The GPA Pride Campaign in 2025 celebrated inclusion, visibility and allyship across our playing community, creating meaningful opportunities for current and past players to connect, learn and share their experiences.

The campaign launched with a Pride Brunch in the old chocolate factory, Blas Café, welcoming over 40 current and former players. The event created a supportive space for open conversation, featuring an engaging and insightful players' panel that prompted important discussion and reflection. The morning also included a creative Pride art workshop delivered by former Roscommon footballer Neil Collins, offering players an additional way to express identity, community and solidarity. We had our partners BPerfect join us to support the event with CEO Brendan McDowell playing a DJ set for the morning.

Building on the momentum of the brunch, we delivered a Pride Players' Stories series, sharing contributions from four players across each code throughout the campaign. These stories were published across GPA social channels, amplifying player voices and helping to increase understanding and awareness across the wider Gaelic Games community.



# GPA PRIDE CAMPAIGN 2025

Alongside this, the GPA delivered an Inclusive Dressing Room campaign. Pride flags were distributed to inter-county teams nationwide, with one team in each county invited to hang the flag in their dressing room as a visible symbol that the dressing room is an inclusive space for everyone. This initiative reinforced the message that every player deserves to feel respected, supported and able to be their true self within their team environment.

The GPA remains committed to supporting players and driving progress in this area, and we look forward to continuing this work in 2026 as we help make dressing rooms and inter-county teams welcoming spaces for all.





## ENGAGEMENT WITH GLOBAL PLAYER MOVEMENT

The GPA continues to play an active role in collaborating with other player associations and representative bodies worldwide, most notably as members of the European Athletes and Players Association (EAPA) and the World Players Association (WPA) which opened an office in Dublin in 2025, with assistance from the GPA.

The GPA are partners in several European Erasmus + projects including the 'Athletes for Good Governance and Rights in Europe' (AGREE) project and 'Tackle Your Feelings Europe' (TYFE) project.

The GPA presented at several notable events including at the WPA Roar Room conference on Gender Equality, and at the Council for Europe EPAS Forum on Mental Health and Women's Sport.

# SOCIAL IMPACT

Players have demonstrated their ongoing commitment to making a positive contribution to their communities across many different areas.

Players and GPA staff attended Oireachtas hearings in 2025 on the themes of both integration in Gaelic games as well as harmful substance abuse and addiction. Westmeath footballer Luke Loughlin bravely shared his lived experience of dealing with drug addiction from a young age and his journey to recovery and rehabilitation. Aisling Maher, Conor Meyler and Shane O'Donnell spoke of the players' vision for a united future, where a new GAA represents men and women, boys and girls equally, as a powerful message to wider society on the value of gender equality.

These are just 2 examples of the player voice opening up conversations and influencing on broader important issues.



**Over 30 players** also took part in the annual **Plant The Planet** games initiative, where they travelled to **Kenya** to visit communities there, take part in tree-planting initiatives, and promote Gaelic games while supporting Self Help Africa's environmental and development projects.

# SOCIAL IMPACT

In 2025, the GPA was proud to partner with Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind as our official charity partner for the year. This partnership was founded on shared values of leadership, ambition, and care, and was supported throughout the year by our playing membership and GPA staff.

The partnership began with the recruitment of four playing ambassadors from across the GPA membership who demonstrated a genuine interest in, and connection to, the charity. Amy O'Connor, Shane Walsh, Clare Owens, and Dessie Ward came on board as ambassadors, providing invaluable support in promoting the partnership and championing the work of Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind across a range of events during the year.

The partnership was officially launched at the National Botanic Gardens, Dublin, held on a sunny day that set a positive and uplifting tone for the year ahead. The launch brought together GPA Ambassadors, representatives from Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind, guide dog owners and their dogs, and marked the beginning of a meaningful and engaging collaboration.

A number of heart-warming events followed throughout the year. One standout occasion was the GPA Non-Corporate Box Day in Croke



# SOCIAL IMPACT

Park, where guide dog owners were invited to attend the All-Ireland football quarterfinals. On the day, attendees were able to experience the matches through the immersive headset experience provided by Croke Park, while also having the opportunity to connect with GPA ambassadors, staff, and the guide dogs, and to soak in the atmosphere of the occasion.

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind also had a strong presence at the Hurling Legends Lunch, where they successfully raised much-needed funds through their services and engagement with attendees. This further increased awareness of the organisation's work and strengthened the impact of the partnership.

A particularly special part of the partnership was the GPA's sponsorship of two puppies, Páidí and Peil, who became a real source of pride and connection for our members and staff throughout the year. We were delighted to follow their journey as they progressed so positively through their guide dog training, showing all the early signs of the calm temperament, confidence, and ability that will help them thrive in the next stages of their development. We would like to extend a sincere thank you to their puppy raisers, whose time, care, patience, and commitment play such a vital role in preparing future guide dogs for the important work they go on to do. We wish Páidí and Peil every success as they continue their training, progress into their guide dog careers, and ultimately go on to make a life-changing difference.

The partnership concluded with a wrap-up event in the GPA offices towards the end of the year, providing an opportunity to reflect on the shared experiences, positive outcomes, and the strong relationships built throughout 2025, connections and friendships that will continue well beyond the year itself.

The GPA would like to sincerely thank Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind for their collaboration, commitment, and the invaluable work they do in supporting people with vision impairment across Ireland. We also extend our gratitude to our playing ambassadors; Amy O'Connor, Shane Walsh, Clare Owens, and Dessie Ward, whose enthusiasm, advocacy, and genuine care played a central role in the success of the partnership throughout 2025. We wish Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind, and all involved every success in the years ahead.



## PLAYER AWARDS

The PWC GAAGPA All Star awards were again hosted in spectacular surroundings at the RDS, celebrating the best players in Gaelic football and Hurling.

The 2025 Champion 15 Awards were held in Croke Park to honour the top players across the Tailteann Cup (football), and the Joe McDonagh, Christy Ring, Nicky Rackard, and Lory Meagher Cups (hurling).

The GPA jointly sponsor the Player of the Year awards in Camogie across Senior, Intermediate and Junior, presented at the PwC Camogie All Star awards.

The GPA hosted 2 Annual Legends Lunches events in Croke Park, with 1,000 past players in attendance to celebrate and reconnect with former teammates and opponents.

Special mention to Joe Connolly (Galway hurling), Margaret Leacy (Wexford camogie), Seán Boylan (Meath football) and Áine Wall (Waterford ladies football) who were presented with GPA Lifetime Achievement Awards in recognition of their outstanding contribution to Gaelic games.