

# Development Strategy

GAA Handball Antrim

2020 - 2025







# Antrim Handball

## History

Handball in Antrim officially started in 1976 as the 'Belfast Handball Association'. Dr Robert Maguire and Seamus Collins canvassed the GAA clubs to gain interest and get handball started. Seamus Collins, who was a student of Queens University at the time, became the first Chairman.

Moving forward when the players were ready to compete, they created the County Antrim Handball Committee (A.H.C) where Richard Murphy was the first Chairman.

In 1976 the league started with 6-man teams playing two singles and two doubles games. There was one division which grew steadily. In 1985 there were 8 divisions, with 8 four-man teams per division. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday were the league nights and Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday were the training times. 256 players were competing weekly.

By 1990 it had dropped to 7 divisions and has gradually declined to the two divisions at present.

Currently there are nine courts in Belfast, six of those courts are as good as any in the country. Two courts belonging to Queens University serve well as training courts and O'Donovan Rossa only needs a small refurbishment. The facilities are in place to accommodate all future proposals within this development plan.

At present all internal competition has been in 40x20, however 1-Wall handball will be developed to introduce school children and juveniles to the game and to steer players who wish to use handball as an assistance to their Gaelic or Hurling/Camogie off-season.

In the past few years, GAA Handball have launched a host of new initiatives which includes the 1-Wall Schools Handball. One key aim of A.H.C is to grow this into a vibrant schools competition in conjunction with Cumann na mBunscol and Gaelfast.

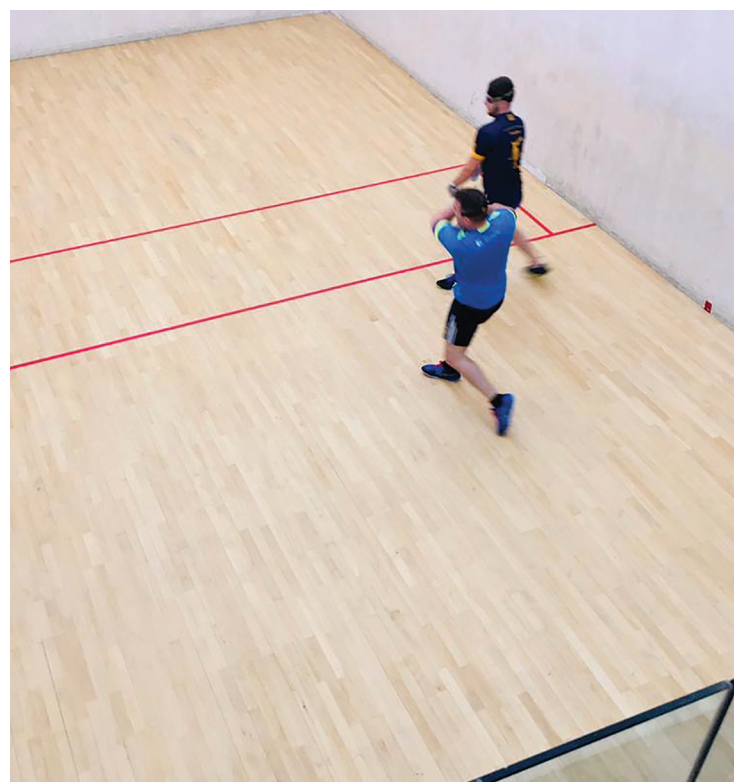
The current plan is that the Gaelfast coaches will coach Handball and if possible the schools will supplement those sessions with further training from one of the Antrim coaches, ideally from a club that the school may feed in to. 1-Wall is undoubtedly the most cost effective and quickest way to introduce kids to the game of Handball.

Our plan within A.H.C is to grow participation numbers through 1-Wall in schools and 40x20 in clubs. The Club Hubs we wish to fully utilise are Rossa and St. Paul's as the Shaws Road hub, Gort Na Mona as the Springfield Road hub, Sportlann Na hEireann as the Falls Road hub and the Queens Sports Centre as the South Belfast hub.

The strategy of the club hubs will include having one coach plus one adult per 5/6 boys and one coach plus one adult per 10 girls. The hubs will provide two sessions per week in a club environment for children aged 8 years and onwards.

Then after four years, if the children are ready, a county squad of five children from each category will be selected for additional coaching with the aim to be ready for U14 Provincial Championships. This strategy creates a conveyor belt of coaching, with a long-term view/goal of the Antrim facilities being in constant use and championships for both males and females being common place.

By the end of 2022, we will update this document with a list of schools and clubs as well as the number of participants.





# Goals & Objectives

Action Planning	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2023	2024
<p><b>Governance, Committee Structures &amp; Organisation</b></p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Antrim Handball Committee (A.H.C) &amp; Gaelfast.</p>	<p><b>February</b> Antrim County Handball elect a full new County Antrim GAA Handball Development Committee, a sub committee of Antrim GAA, to oversee all key areas of governance and development.</p> <p><b>June</b> Development plan proposal presented to Antrim GAA for funding and agreement regarding the development of Handball within the County.</p>	<p><b>January 2022 (Revised Date)</b> A.H.C to take a seat on the main GAA Committee. Full report of GAA Handball Antrim to be presented to the main committee. A.H.C to be revised and roles continued.</p> <p>All finance and corporate governance is managed by A.H.C and administration is approved by GAA Handball.</p>	<p><b>January</b> County GAA Handball Antrim Development Committee to be in place and working closely with Gaelfast and the County Board to continue developing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Development of Handball</li> </ul> <p>The committee will also assess and review the previous two years. They will reflect on 'lessons learnt' and document this.</p>	<p><b>January</b> County GAA Handball Antrim Development Committee to be in place and working closely with Gaelfast and the County Board to continue developing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Development of Handball</li> </ul> <p>The committee will also assess and review the previous two years. They will reflect on 'lessons learnt' and document this.</p>
<p><b>Media, Communications &amp; Promotions of GAA Handball</b></p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Antrim Handball Committee (A.H.C), Antrim GAA, Antrim GAA Public Relations Officer (P.R.O), GAA Handball Ireland.</p>	<p><b>September</b> Antrim Country P.R.O develops GAA Handball Antrim section with regular updates of activity and development within the main official Antrim GAA website. Official GAA Handball press requests to have automatic repost onto the Antrim website.</p> <p><b>October (Covid-19 Permitted)</b> Launch of the 'FonaCab 2020 Golden Gloves'.</p> <p><b>December</b> Communications review.</p>	<p><b>January 2022</b> Review and develop media communication plan and links to Ulster and GAA Handball Ireland promotions. Publicity, funding and sponsorship awareness to be reviewed by A.H.C.</p> <p><b>February 2022</b> Training of club P.R.O / coaches all in line with the national GAA Handball strategy.</p>	<p>Full review of P.R.O and link to media within the County website required. Relationship with County P.R.O to be reviewed and if required, media to be managed internally within A.H.C.</p> <p>Links to Ulster Handball and National Handball to be fully operational to create a pathway for the coming years, when Antrim participation in all competitions should be common place.</p>	<p>Full review of P.R.O and link to media within the County website required. Relationship with County P.R.O to be reviewed and if required, media to be managed internally within A.H.C.</p> <p>Links to Ulster Handball and National Handball to be fully operational to create a pathway for the coming years, when Antrim participation in all competitions should be common place.</p>
<p><b>Coaching</b></p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Antrim Handball Committee (A.H.C), Gaelfast, GAA Handball Ireland Development Officer (NDO).</p>	<p><b>Revised to September 2021</b> Short-term plan involves getting 15 coaches Foundation Level and Access NI approved by November.</p> <p><b>October</b> Foundation Level Course.</p> <p><b>May 2021</b> A.H.C to meet with Gaelfast to agree a coaching plan to link boys and girls from schools to the clubs. A.H.C to be included and assistance to be sought.</p>	<p><b>February 2022</b> A further 15 coaches complete the National GAA Handball Foundation Coaching.</p> <p><b>March 2022</b> 2021 Foundation Level coaches to do their Level 1 coaching course. Ongoing Club Hubs coaching system to be reviewed on a consistent basis. All Club Hubs to review numbers and consistency of attendance. Links to schools to be further emphasised.</p>	<p><b>February</b> A further 15 coaches complete the National GAA Handball Foundation Coaching.</p> <p><b>March</b> 2022 Foundation Level coaches to do their Level 1 coaching course. Ongoing Club Hubs coaching system to be reviewed on a consistent basis. All Club Hubs to review numbers and consistency of attendance. Links to schools to be further emphasised. 8 year old age group competitive standard to be assessed to see if external games are possible.</p>	<p><b>February</b> A further 15 coaches complete the National GAA Handball Foundation Coaching.</p> <p><b>March</b> 2023 Foundation Level coaches to do their Level 1 coaching course. Ongoing Club Hubs coaching system to be reviewed on a consistent basis. All Club Hubs to review numbers and consistency of attendance. Links to schools to be further emphasised. Review of the 2020 10 year old age groups to be tested with guest games (Cavan, Tyrone, Monaghan) to check the standard of play.</p>





# Strategic Plan

Action Planning	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023	2023 / 2024
<p><b>Competitions</b></p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Antrim Handball Committee (A.H.C.) &amp; Schools</p>	<p><b>September 2021</b> Adult season to be reviewed. Antrim League to be reviewed. A.H.C to meet, review and decide on the new format for the 2021 season.</p> <p>New dates for the Antrim Championship to be in the competition year i.e. 2022 Championship will be in Jan / Feb 2022, not in December 2021. Additional League Championships to be created to have groups of 4 or 8 players to play round robin with opponents in the same league position. Look at 1-Wall Championship in Whiterock. Weekend tournament for Summer 2021.</p> <p><b>August 2021</b> World Championships in Dublin (cancelled).</p>	<p>Full season to be promoted from October 2021 through to 2022.</p> <p><b>October 2021</b> League Championships.</p> <p><b>November 2021</b> Golden Gloves (Covid-19 Permitted)</p> <p><b>November 2021 - January 2022</b> Adult Leagues and Ulster Championships.</p> <p><b>February / March 2022</b> Adult Antrim Championships.</p> <p><b>April 2022</b> One wall League Championships and local tournaments.</p> <p><b>May / June 2022</b> Off season for adults.</p>	<p>Target is to have developed 3 divisions.</p> <p><b>October 2022</b> League Championships.</p> <p><b>November 2022</b> Golden Gloves</p> <p><b>November 2022 - January 2023</b> Leagues and Ulster Championships.</p> <p><b>February / March 2023</b> Antrim Championships.</p> <p><b>April 2023</b> One wall League Championships and local tournaments.</p> <p><b>May / June 2023</b> Off season for adults.</p>	<p>Target is to have developed 4 divisions.</p> <p><b>October 2023</b> League Championships.</p> <p><b>November 2023</b> Golden Gloves</p> <p><b>November 2023 - January 2024</b> Leagues and Ulster Championships.</p> <p><b>February / March 2024</b> Antrim Championships.</p> <p><b>April 2024</b> One wall League Championships and local tournaments.</p> <p><b>May / June 2024</b> Off season for adults.</p>
<p><b>Juveniles</b></p> <p>All coaching and development competitions targeted for 2022</p>	<p><b>October - November 2021</b> Juvenile plan to align with the Gaelfast coaching plan for the incoming term required.</p> <p>Strategy of Club Hubs to be agreed with coaches having gained the relevant certificates.</p>	<p>Juvenile schools coaching continues with each Hub being monitored and progression regularly recorded.</p> <p>Internal competitions to continue, no external competitions are required yet.</p> <p>All building towards 2025 / 2026 U14 competitors.</p>	<p>Juvenile schools coaching continues with each Hub being monitored and progression regularly recorded.</p> <p>Internal competitions to continue, no external competitions are required yet.</p> <p>All building towards 2025 / 2026 U14 competitors.</p>	<p>The county squad will be assembled from the Club Hubs development squads.</p> <p><b>2020-2024</b> A continuation of current system where juveniles enter Ulster directly.</p>
<p><b>Championships &amp; Coaching</b></p> <p>Juvenile coaching develops and continues with age groups from 8 years old and onwards.</p>	<p><b>January 2022</b> Adult Ulster entrants will be involved from January. Antrim Championships to push to February from December. Antrim League will potentially take place from November to January.</p> <p><b>October 2021</b> New tournament in October to be implemented, a League Championship as a pre-season tournament.</p>	<p>Another wave of coaches will be certified and this should be the 3rd wave of certifications.</p>	<p>Another wave of coaches will be certified and this should be the 3rd / 4th wave of certifications.</p>	



# Strategic Links to Clubs

Action Planning	2021 / 2022	2022	2023	2024
<p><b>GAA Club Links</b></p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Antrim Handball Committee (A.H.C), Antrim GAA, Gaelfast, GAA Handball.</p>	<p><b>Adult</b> Develop the club / tournaments as per Chart 2.</p> <p><b>Juvenile</b> Develop awareness of hubs and school participants. Gain momentum with school to club links and create a forum for parents to be involved.</p>	<p><b>Adult</b> Adult links to be further improved to hopefully increase the league teams and divisions.</p> <p><b>October - March</b> Adult League Championships, Pre-Leagues and Championships within this period.</p> <p>The Golden Gloves, Ulster and All-Ireland campaigns will also be in the Handball Tournament Calender. We hope to grow the number of key events at a national level.</p>	<p><b>Exhibition Games Invites</b> Exhibition games for social nights. Game to be streamed through Facebook Live where juveniles can watch.</p> <p>Use our Golden Gloves contacts to act as the foundation for top quality invites. Have all league players and juveniles invited.</p>	<p><b>Exhibition Games Invites</b> Exhibition games for social nights. Game to be streamed through Facebook Live where juveniles can watch.</p> <p>Use our Golden Gloves contacts to act as the foundation for top quality invites. Have all league players and juveniles invited.</p>
<p><b>Infrastructures</b></p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Antrim Handball Committee (A.H.C), Antrim GAA, GAA Handball &amp; Club Development Officers.</p>	<p>4-Wall courts are in great condition. 1-Wall courts inventory to be collated. Currently Queens and Whiterock have courts. There is potential in Sportlann Na hEireann.</p> <p>The main development requirement is in schools. Gym halls are to be marked out for courts and hopefully pre-school, P.E, lunchtime or after-school training can commence.</p>	<p>1-Wall infrastructure to be further developed. Schools, club halls and club hurling walls to be marked to suit 1-Wall Handball.</p> <p>Adult 1-Wall competition to be tested for 4-5 weeks after the 40x20 season.</p>	<p>1-Wall infrastructure to be further developed. Schools, club halls and club hurling walls to be marked to suit 1-Wall Handball.</p> <p>Adult 1-Wall competition to be tested for 4-5 weeks after the 40x20 season.</p>	<p>Continue the development of 1-Wall Handball and ensure 40x20 facilities are maintained to a high standard. Hopefully Casement Park will be underway and if so, ensure the highest standards are met. This will put Belfast and Antrim in the position to host World Championships, Irish Nationals, Ulster Opens, and Golden Gloves with ease.</p> <p>The next World Championships is taking place in Dublin, Ireland in 2021 (cancelled), USA in 2024 and Canada in 2027.</p>
<p><b>GAA GAMES &amp; Community Group &amp; School Links.</b></p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> Antrim Handball Committee (A.H.C), Club Development Officers &amp; Cumann na mBunscol.</p>	<p>By March 2022, a revised presentation will be approved by the A.H.C. This will then be issued to Antrim GAA, followed by the development of a workshop for clubs, Gaelfast and schools.</p>	<p>Juveniles to continue with the coaching program. Links between Gaelfast and Cumann na mBunscol to A.H.C should become more defined with a shared register of kids, schools, clubs, tournaments, Club Hubs, coaches, stand-out potential kids, and specific development plans.</p>	<p>Juveniles to continue with the coaching program. Links between Gaelfast and Cumann na mBunscol to A.H.C should become more defined with a shared register of kids, schools, clubs, tournaments, Club Hubs, coaches, stand-out potential kids, and specific development plans.</p>	<p><b>2024</b> This year will hopefully outline the numbers who are ready for competitions.</p> <p><b>Note</b> This program is not solely designed for competition success or for the most talented boys and girls only. However, it must also provide a pathway to maximise potential and allow children who are keen to progress to the highest standard as well as maximise participation.</p>



