

## **ISOLATE YOUR NEEDS: GK COACH**

The GAA season has been suspended until the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at the very least. The next two weeks will be a difficult time for everyone on the island of Ireland especially as there are a lot of businesses and public services deciding to close on a daily basis.

Some may be voluntary, but others have been enforced via governmental direction.

With social distancing and social isolation closing down all GAA group activities there will always be a massive void to be filled by everyone but especially for coaches. For these dedicated people, now that they may have finished playing GAA activity is their life blood and to avoid the negative effects of 'football depression' (a sudden decrease in the amount of football activity), they will be trying to come up with various ways in which they can fill their abundance of time.

Looking onto social media and we can now see coaches galore inventing their own versions of different skills challenges to help encourage the youth to continue to develop their skills as best they can during this time. This is the typical nature of any coach, always putting the needs of others before themselves. For the next two weeks of GAA inactivity I propose to these coaches, this is the time for selfishness. You give so much of your time to help others improve but now is the time to think more about yourself and how you can make yourself better as a coach.

You have been gifted a gap in your coaching calendar, which may not allow you to attend any courses etc. (not that any have been scheduled) but now is your chance to explore yourself as well as the various avenues you can use to progress yourself as a coach. Here are a few ideas for all coaches to use over the next few weeks in relation to making themselves better coaches:

**Coaching Philosophy:** - have you got one? are you keeping to what you have philosophised? If you don't have coaching philosophy now would be a great time to set time aside and create one for yourself. These are your coaching principles that you will live by in every coaching decision you make. My advice is to start simple and as time passes you can always update and add to your philosophy as you go along. If you already have one, again this is going to be a great time to evaluate your philosophy and see if it is still relevant to your coaching ideology.

**Performance Reviews:** - review the performance of your players thus far and ensure that you feed this back to the players themselves. Discuss with your players what they done well and what you would like to see them improve as well as how you plan to use them for the coming year. With this openness and transparency, it will create a strong bond between you and the player which will be crucial for the coming season. "Players don't care about what you know until they know you care," so also make sure to ask how are they coping with the current situation and assure them that you will assist them in any way that you can should they need it.

**Goal Setting:** - take the time to set some personal and team goals or re-evaluate ones you have already made for the rest of the season. Ensure that the goals that you make are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific Measurable Attainable Recorded & Time framed) and you review them regularly to ensure they are being met. Also taking time to help your playing set their own personal goals for the season will keep the team focused as a while for the entire season.

**Periodisation:** - with the disruption to the GAA season all your training and match plans will now have to be changed and rescheduled to coincide with this pandemic. With the two weeks being lost you will now have to plan according for whenever we can return to training/games.

**Resources:** - this would be a fantastic time to create or add to a drills library where you keep all the drills and game plans that you have used are would like to use in the future. Creating a library like this gives you a valuable resource that you can regularly refer to whenever you are planning sessions or looking for inspiration when creating new drills. Also, you can look at your resource library and look for any gaps in coaching materials that you feel you have. You can also look for new coaching books/resources that you feel may be of use to you and your players/team moving forward. Building a good library of resources is vital for any coach looking to progress their coaching ability.

**Inventory:** - with time on your hands it can also be prudent to take stock of the equipment that you currently have. Check all of your equipment by setting it out in front of you and count everything you have and record it into your coaching journal, so you know what exactly you have available to you. Count every cone, every pole, every football and I guarantee you will find something that you forgot you had or something that you have not used in a while that you will be looking to use again. Alternatively, it will also allow you to consider what equipment you feel you need or would like to obtain to assist you with your coaching.

**Future Learning:** - plan out future courses, workshops and conferences that may be still running for after the current pandemic passes. Learning for any coach is never done and is also ever-changing. With the exponential evolution of our games it is important to try and keep up with the most recent and best coaching information available. When in attendance always make notes and record any ideas you may have during each course/workshop/conference, make a note of any coaches/speakers you would like to get speaking to and either speak to them at the event or get a contact for future correspondence.

I hope you find some of these ideas useful over the coming weeks and I do hope that they help you improve yourself as a coach overall. You have been gifted some time to self-improve so make sure make the most of the time you have been afforded. The time is now to **'Isolate Your Needs.'**