

GAA

It's Cul for Camps this summer after all

HUNDREDS of children disappointed by the cancellation of the Tyrone Summer Camps have been given a boost with news that the Kellogg's GAA Cul Camps are to go ahead.

The GAA, in conjunction with Kellogg's and TG4, have announced new plans for the staging of the 2020 Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps.

Tyrone PRO Eugene McConnell welcomed the news and said it will be a major boost to many youngsters up and down the county.

"Tyrone has been to the forefront in organising summer camps for many years now, and any opportunity for young children to have the chance to get involved in coaching and playing the games has to be welcomed," he said.

"The issues over not having our coaches in place due to them being furloughed has led to difficulties, but in the wider perspective, any opportunity for young people to get out there and get involved in our games is a move in the right direction."

The camps themselves will start on July 20th with an exciting new GAA Cúl Camp TV programme airing on TG4 getting kids warmed up from June 29th.

This first phase of camp activity will be broadcast Monday to Friday from 10.25 to 11.00am and repeated at 5.15pm from June 29th to July 17th. It will also be available on the TG4 player making the return to camp activity, both live and on demand, available to everyone at home and abroad.

The GAA Cúl Camps series will be produced by Waterford based Nemeton TV, and presented by Gráinne Bleasdale.

Gráinne has had many roles on stage and television, as a puppeteer and as a presenter, including Operation Transformation -10@10 (RTE), Ros na Rún (TG4), Déan E! (TG4), Dig In Saol Faoi Shráid (TG4).

The series will include skills, drills, games, nutrition, and wellness segments that will appeal to all the family from multiple All-Ireland winning Cork Camogie and Football star, Rena Buckley, Dublin hurler Liam Rushe and former Donegal footballer star Kevin Cassidy.

Recent developments with the Government and GAA roadmaps, and extensive planning relating to health and safety, mean details for this year's camps can now be confirmed. In line with the Safe Return to Gaelic Games Document, children will be welcomed back to club venues around the country from July 20th.

A list of all venues will be confirmed on the cúl camp website gaa.ie/kelloggsculcamps when bookings reopen.

Prices are as follows;

First child €65.00/£55.00

Second child €60.00 / £50.00

Third+ children €50.00 / £45.00

Camp times may be altered in selected venues due to the current circumstances.

Morning: (09.30 to 13.30)

Mid-morning: (10.00 to 14.00)

Afternoon: (14.30 to 18.30)

These options will be clearly outlined on the camps website and details on specific camps safety protocols will be shared with all those registering for camps.

The Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps kit is a huge part of our camps with mass appeal among primary school children all around the country and beyond. Given current circumstances, camps schedules may be reduced in certain counties which has prompted the GAA to pursue the option of making kit available for sale for children who may not get the option to participate in the 2020 camp programme. Kit will be available for sale online at gaa.ie/kelloggsculcamps.

For the over 4,000 people who had pre-registered for 2020 camps, they have been contacted with three options; 1) a full refund 2) a delivery of kit and a refund of the remaining amount or 3) priority for a place on one of our re-scheduled camps.

To allow for all health and safety measures, capacity at certain camp locations and venues may be reduced this year and in some instances demand for places will outstrip availability. Early booking is strongly advised.

Since 2006, 1,389,539 children have participated in the cúl camps programme including over 156,000 children and nearly 6,000 coaches in 2019. We are committed to providing children with the opportunity to play Gaelic games this summer and look forward to a new season of both broadcast and live Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps.

GAA President John Horan welcomed confirmation of details for the 2020 camps.

He said: "I am delighted that we are in a position to confirm plans around arrangements for our 2020 Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps and acknowledge all of

the work that has taken place in recent weeks in an effort to get us to this point.

"2020 has been a very challenging year for everyone and we have had to revisit what are the most successful underage camps run by any organisation, anywhere.

"We were determined to run the camps this year and while they have to be organised differently, I hope the essence of what they represent will still shine through.

"I'd also like to acknowledge the support of long-term partners Kelloggs for their ongoing support and also TG4, who will play a central role in the first phase."

It was the absence of full-time coaches in Tyrone, who are currently on the furlough scheme and not working, that contributed to a decision to cancel this year's Tyrone Summer Camps.

More than 3,000 children were due to attend the hugely popular camps at around 50 venues this summer.

Tyrone Coaching Officer Damian Harvey explained at the time: "Tyrone took an early decision to cancel the summer camps this year. There was some debate around that, but we felt we needed to give parents clarity around whether or not the summer camps would go ahead.

"There was talk about restrictions on the number of people who could attend, and sanitising and all of that sort of stuff.

"But Tyrone GAA weren't comfortable with that, and whether we could provide a risk-free environment for these youngsters coming to these

camps.

"The summer camps require an awful lot of planning, and our coaches are not working at the minute.

"We can't plan without coaches, and we're not in a position to thoroughly set the plans out, because there are no coaches on the ground, they're currently furloughed.

"We're very disappointed to have had to cancel the camps, but it's down to being straight and honest with the parents, and giving them an early warning that we weren't comfortable about being able to provide a safe environment at each of the venues.

"Without proper planning and proper risk assessment at each of those grounds, it was just not possible.

"We're now in June, and these summer camps can't be organised over a four-week period. You need a three to four months lead-in to these camps.

"You need to make sure you employ enough coaches to go round all the venues, to resource all the venues with kit and so on.

"It just doesn't make sense to try and put it together in that time-frame, particularly when we don't have staff on the ground.

"I know the Cúl Camps are still going ahead down south, but there has been a lot of debate about how that can happen.

"It's disappointing that we have had to call off our summer camps, but the medical evidence isn't there and in terms of risk assessment, the evidence isn't there that we can provide a safe environment without a lot of planning and very clear and safe guidelines."

MOTORCYCLING

Getting back on track

THIS past week has seen some positive moves in relation to the Covid-19 situation, with two track days for race bikes and same for Pit Bikes, writes Baylon McCaughey.

This can only be seen as a positive step forward for the sport, and hopefully, it won't be too long before we can have racing.

Although track days have been running across the water for a few weeks now, this is still a positive step forward. As mentioned last week, the BSB hope to have a six round series beginning in August.

However, unlike before, things will be changing!

To be allowed to organise a race meeting, the organising clubs will have to prove they are practising safe social distancing and wearing PPE.

At present, some things are not viable, such as overnight camping.

It is most likely that everybody attending an event will have to fill in their information online, including competitors, officials, marshalls, mechanics medical staff to assist with traceability of persons in attendance.

No doubt, whatever changes that will be implemented will not please everyone, but one has to look at the broader picture to help the sport move



Newmills girl Paige Mullen getting in some valuable track time in order to be prepared for racing, whenever they get the go-ahead.

forward in these difficult times.

Although there has not been any word from the MCUI (UC) with regards to any short circuit racing as yet, I do know the Enniskillen Club applied for a date to run their short circuit meeting later in the year, but were turned down.

The reason given was "there is no room in the racing calendar at that time".

So does that mean, that we WILL have some short circuit racing? Does this mean we could have a glut of races? Unfortunately, unlike the ACU

on the mainland, who released a statement every fortnight, letting everyone know what was happening, at the moment, competitors here do not know when / if they will get racing!

Mondello Park announced a few weeks ago that it is their intention to run a few bike races, although there won't be any Mondello Masters championships this year, so, there is a glimmer of hope there.

Lets hope, over the next week or so, we will hear more positive news from both the government and our

governing body for the sport.

Heavy rain showers failed to dampen the enthusiasm of the large contingent of Pit Bike riders who took advantage of yet another track day organised by Enlightened Promotions and Nutts Corner.

The most positive sign from the event was the number of newcomers to the sport, along with a lot of new Junior riders, which can only be good for the future of the sport.

Max Robinson is the third generation of the Robinson family to take to the track, His father, Paul Robinson is a multi Irish and Ulster champion and the last rider to win the 125 race at the North West 200, whilst his grandfather, Mervyn Robinson, was a top road racer until his untimely death at the NW200.

Ryan Glasgow is another newcomer in the Bam Bam class.

The name Glasgow is synonymous with short circuit racing, His dad, Alan was a frontrunner in the super twins, as was his uncle, Mark. Ryan's grandad also competed on the tarmac.

Another newcomer was Cathal Casey, who is a son of Jim Leigh, a former competitor and now one of the leading Scrutineers in the south.

Grassroots stories sought for new book

A MAJOR drive is being launched to source and publish for the first time Tyrone GAA stories from the grassroots of the association.

The collaboration between the association and publishers, Ballpoint Press Ltd, aims to gather the most comprehensive treasure trove of Gaelic-related stories ever compiled in the 136-year history of the GAA.

As well as Tyrone and the four corners of Ireland, stories will also be sought from across the globe, in particular from those who have been GAA frontier people in the USA, UK, Canada, Australia and many other countries.

The story gathering will include oral accounts so that all kind of stories can be written down for the first time in book form and also feature in the GAA's archives at Croke Park.

Potential contributors who feel they have a story but may not feel up to writing it can get in touch with Ballpoint Press and relate their account. It will then be written and sent back for approval before being submitted for final publishing.

The president of the GAA, John Horan, said he welcomed the exploration through the GAA grassroots to find the diversity of stories that undoubtedly exist there.

"The grassroots are the lifeblood of our organisation and it is timely that that such an undertaking is finally going ahead. I'm delighted because it means that there will be a permanent home for these stories in both book

form as well in our own GAA archive section."

Well-known journalist and author, PJ Cunningham, will spearhead the work alongside GAA Communications Director, Alan Milton.

PJ said it had been an ambition of his for many years to bring what he believes is the great legacy of GAA stories together under one project.

"GAA is a way of life for most Irish people at home and abroad. It is packed with diverse stories from on and off the pitch. I grew up listening to them and enjoying their retelling, but the reality is that many of these stories exist only in word of mouth form.

"At present, we all have a bit more time to commit such stories to paper so that they can be preserved for future generations.

"Ideally the stories should have their own unique selling point rather than just normal accounts of winning or losing matches. They can also include inter-county fare and personnel because it is the grassroots people who gather in large numbers to support those encounters.

"Basically, we are interested in any story from 1884 onwards to the present day that has a special, novel or unusual twist to it."

For further information, contact pj@gaastories.ie or communications@gaa.ie

Letters can be sent to GAA Grassroots Stories, Ballpoint Press, 4 Wyndham Park, Bray, Co Wicklow, phone 086 8217631.