



## Opening Statement

### GAA Rounders

A Chairde, good afternoon.

My name is Iain Cheyne, and I am the President of GAA Rounders. This afternoon I will speak on behalf of GAA Rounders, with a specific focus on integration and how this is an area which is already working well within the association.

GAA Rounders has grown rapidly over the last six years. What once started as three championships in senior men, ladies and mixed, has developed into a total of nine divisions spanning junior, intermediate, and senior championships. This growth is replicated in the numbers of clubs registered with the association. In the same six-year period, GAA rounders registered clubs has prospered from thirteen clubs to over sixty in 2024, with eleven new clubs registered to date in 2024 alone with nineteen counties adopting the code of Rounders in some form – Mens, Ladies, Mixed as well as Juvenile.

Currently, GAA Rounders is set up like as a large county structure. As the organisation continues to grow, a move to provincial style structures will be required to ensure that the correct level of supports is afforded to all clubs. Currently, amongst all the championships, over three-hundred national fixtures are held in any given championship year. In addition to these, national events for novice adult clubs and our newest junior clubs, are also undertaken to help them gain experience in the game.

Rounders may be a unique Gaelic game in structure, but replicates similar skills used in football and hurling. Its non-contact nature is a welcome difference. Furthermore, it has afforded non-traditional GAA groupings the opportunity to play rounders with like-minded individuals, to form clubs, and importantly be a part of the Gaelic Games family. The competition structure of GAA Rounders consists of a Mens Championship, a Ladies Championship, and a Mixed Championship at Junior, Intermediate & Senior Level. Indeed, it is the GAA Mixed Championship which demonstrates the integrated nature and unique selling point of GAA Rounders. Differing from all other Gaelic codes is the fact that both male and females can play alongside one another on the same team. This inclusive nature of the mixed championship brings families together and speaks volumes to the underlying ethos of the GAA organisation, underscoring that GAA rounders is a sport for all.

Currently, GAA Rounders use facilities which are GAA owned, but plans would include provision of GAA Rounders specific facilities in not too distant future.

The shared membership system, which is already used by all codes, has been very positive. Rounders having access to shared services through the Croke Park team has been very beneficial, having people in specialised roles to advise and guide us on how to promote and manage an organisation. This can only improve when the whole organisation will be fully integrated into one GAA Family.